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THE LAURENTIAN IDIOM IN AMERICAN LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES

By

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ABSTRACT

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IN

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This dissertation explores the relation between D. H. Lawrence's Studies in Classic American Literature (1923) and American literary and cultural studies until the appearance of Richard Slotkin's Regeneration Through Violence (1973). These years are marked by a clash of various critical ideologies vying for supremacy in the interpretation of American literature and culture. Among these critics, D. H. Lawrence's is the only voice not committed to an established school of criticism. However, despite the highly unconventional nature of his essays, he creates a lasting impression on the criticism of this period. This study examines the intuitions and insights controlling his critical idiom, and also the factors responsible for American critics incorporating, not only his ideas, but even his methods in their writings.

This work consists of an introduction, three chapters, and a conclusion. The introduction underlines the special relation in which D. H. Lawrence stands with America--its

literature and culture. Chapter one starts with a survey of the critical preoccupations of the first two decades of the twentieth century. It discusses D. H. Lawrence's work against the background of the challenges hinted at by these critics and addressed by D. H. Lawrence himself, and concludes with an analysis of Lawrence's own critical method. The second chapter documents and accounts for the intrusion D. H. Lawrence's pronouncements made in the critical writings on American Renaissance literature and culture. The third chapter examines some key American literary and cultural texts, and their affinity to the Laurentian critical idiom. The conclusion sums up the relevance of D. H. Lawrence's ideas on narrative, history, and culture, by placing them in the context of explorations being carried out in these areas at present.

Dedicated to the memory of my parents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I look back on the beginning of this study, I am reminded of a young graduate student writing his first Ph. D. dissertation at the University of Allahabad, India on the non-fiction prose writings of D. H. Lawrence. While working on my chapter on D. H. Lawrence's reaction as a critic to American literature and culture, I was struck by the way American criticism most enthusiastically embraced this foreign voice in its interpretation of American literature and culture. This was in 1965; at this point, the only major critics who had responded directly to Lawrence's call for a radically different approach toward the reinterpretation of American literature were R. W. B. Lewis, Richard Chase, and Leslie A. Fiedler. Since then, Lawrence has grown into an important voice in American critical studies, and my earlier belief that American critics might tend to incorporate more and more of his insights in their assessment of their literature and culture has been sufficiently vindicated.

This background to the present study is only to emphasize the difficulty I face in acknowledging my debt to all who have, either directly or indirectly, contributed to the making of this work that has gone through such a long

period of gestation. I give to my dissertation committee the most credit for their help, guidance, and encouragement during the period this work was in progress. My director, Professor Michael R. Lopez, with his penetrating questions on American Renaissance literature in the context of Lawrence's criticism, and his confidence in my ability to successfully complete this project has not only been a source of inspiration but also a source of strength. Professor Roger K. Meiners' intellectual rigor and passion combined with his humanity always stimulated me. Professor James E. Seaton's comments on American culture helped me give final shape to my sometimes half-formed ideas on the subject. Professor William E. Johnsen's fresh insights in some of D. H. Lawrence's works opened up new possibilities. All these bore my sometimes unusual demands on their time and patience with admirable cheerfulness, and I can not thank them enough. This work would never have been possible without their encouragement and help.

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INTRODUCTION

AMERICA AND D. H. LAWRENCE

When D. H. Lawrence appeared on the American scene with his Studies in Classic American Literature in 1923, American criticism was at the crossroads. Questions about America's literary and cultural heritage which had challenged some of the great minds in the post-revolutionary period were being discussed and debated afresh by the intellectuals of the new century. To these young intellectuals, the closing years of the nineteenth century were a period wallowing in rigid gentility and inflexible conventionality. Van Wyck Brooks, Lewis Mumford, Paul Elmer Moore, Irving Babbit, Stuart Pratt Sherman, H. L. Mencken, and Waldo Frank were some of the leaders of this intellectual ferment, and represent this new spirit of change and dissent. These minds tried to explore new directions not only in art, literature, and politics, but also in the quality of American cultural life as a whole. Herbert Croly's The Promise of American Life (1909), John Macy's The Spirit of American Literature (1913), Van Wyck Brooks' America's Coming-of-Age (1915), and Waldo Frank's Our America (1919) laid the foundation of this sense of adventure which reached its climax during the years around World War I. Richard Ruland, in The Rediscovery of

American Literature, traces the course of the warring ideological platforms during this period, culminating in the arrival of T. S. Eliot with his "Tradition and the Individual Talent (1917), of D. H. Lawrence with his Studies in Classic American Literature (1923), and of William Carlos Williams with his In the American Grain (1925). Ruland characterizes this period as an attempt to forge "new pasts for a new present" (167). Paradoxically, however, while T. S. Eliot, with his predilection for Europe and its age-old cultural traditions, renounced the country of his birth he thought lacked cultural cohesiveness, D. H. Lawrence, disgusted with the very tradition Eliot embraced as an alternative, undertook the role of a "midwife" facilitating the birth of "the unborn homunculus" (Studies 4), he suspected lay hidden in classic American literature.

As a writer, D. H. Lawrence's relationship with America begins as early as the year 1911 when his second novel The White Peacock was published first in America by Duffield, even before it appeared in England one year later.[1] Lawrence was intimate with the American intellectual climate of his time through his association with Smart Set, Seven Arts, and The Dial.[2] Between him and Waldo Frank there was a long and lively correspondence. Especially during the Great War, Lawrence's preoccupation with America was at its peak. Again and again, in his letters, he associated the new continent with a place of refuge, his Rananim. Lawrence had been an enthusiastic reader of American literature as early

as his school days.[3] However, what intrigued Lawrence during the War years was that, despite the presence of a new voice in American classic writers, America was moving in the same direction as the culture of Europe. Lawrence visualized America as capable of creating a potentially vital, organic, and living cultural tradition. While the unease of the American intellectuals bordered on a sense of frustration, D. H. Lawrence's was characterized by a sense of unfulfilled promise of the American experiment. He set himself to diagnose the source of this failure in the essays on American literature he began writing during the war in 1917, essays later published as Studies in Classic American Literature in 1923.

Lawrence's essays contain a rather unconventional, and, in certain respects, highly personalized response to American literature. This accounts for the mixed reception they received when they appeared in 1923. For the British public of his time, D. H. Lawrence was simply a highly controversial figure. Even as a novelist, recognition came very slowly to him in England. Lawrence was very severe in the indictment of the land of his birth, and was shocked to see the extent to which he dreaded "the tightness of England" (Huxley, Letters 106). He found that over England, "like the grey skies, lies the doom of the dark moral judgement and condemnation and reservation of the people" (120); he abhorred the "beastly, tight, Sunday feeling which is so blighting" (124) in England, a country he described as

a "mud bathos" (512). The English critics, therefore, except for writing some critical reviews of his American essays, largely ignored them. The first full-length study of D. H. Lawrence's writings came not from an English critic, but from the American Herbert J. Seligman who published his slender volume D. H. Lawrence: An American Interpretation in 1924. Disparaged and censured for his dark philosophy in his own country, from across the Atlantic Lawrence was felicitated for offering America wisdom "unique, lyrical yet penetrating." Seligman thanked Lawrence for warning Americans against the machine, "the finest flower of Gerald Crich's impotence" (55), and for speaking to America in a way relevant to the American situation through Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious. According to Seligman, Lawrence "criticized the amoralism of psychoanalysis by which it had been made an instrument of American materialism" (56).

While Seligman's views may be considered too worshipful and adulatory to be sound literary criticism, they do underline two important facts about D. H. Lawrence: Lawrence's ceaseless engagement with America, American literature, and American thought throughout his literary career and America's willingness to listen to his voice. D. H. Lawrence's confrontation with American literature and culture, compared with other critics of the first two decades of the twentieth century, is marked by greater

freshness, incisiveness, and articulation. Like these critics, Lawrence also attempts to define a past relevant to the beginning of a new cultural awareness commensurate with the urges and aspirations of a new people. For him, however, the true American past does not reside in the surface manifestations of American culture, but lies buried deep in the unconscious of the classic American writers. Therefore, the past that can usher in a new present needs to be explored from deep inside their unconscious promptings.

His essays are, therefore, closely related to his books on the unconscious he published in 1921-1922. In these he enunciates his view of the unconscious, not as a storehouse of repressions but as the very source of human creativity. This is a view different from that of Freud. Lawrence is also indifferent to Jung's archetypal collective unconscious. Although the Jungian theory was influential in the myth-ritual approach to mythography, Lawrence's emphasis on the personal unconscious as a myth-making faculty is close to the view of myth developed later by Leslie Fiedler and other myth critics. These critics follow Lawrence's emphasis on the interaction of the unconscious with the "Spirit of Place." Lawrence considers the unconscious confrontation of classic American writers with the "different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation, different polarity with different stars" (Studies 12) to be the source of American myths. These critics are one with Lawrence in their belief that

whatever was repressed by the pressure of social conventions expresses itself unconsciously in a text and is a source of myths. These myths are not always racial, communal, or universal, but products of a specific creative moment. D. H. Lawrence belongs to the tradition of Romantic visionaries, and for him the metaphor for the commodified world of today is "cerebral consciousness," as opposed to "blood consciousness," or the unconscious. This quality symbolizes the whole, the unique, and the pristine in us.

The apparently ahistorical approach of D. H. Lawrence to culture is closely related to his romantic concept of history. He is very close to Giambattista Vico's anti-rationalistic theories of human development. For Lawrence, too, myth is history because it is the imaginative representation of historical events and movements. It articulates the cultural processes that often lie hidden under the weight of historical events. The history of America and its culture, according to D. H. Lawrence, can be best recreated from its literature. This literature does not, as today's "graphic or scientific history" does, "shut out the strange, vast, terrifying reality of the past," as the "charming cosiness of a garden shuts out the great terror and wonder of the world." It articulates the "great motions from the soul of mankind" (Movements x-xii).

Lawrence arrived in America with his Studies in Classic American Literature at a fortuitous time. America was ready to hear new voices in the interpretation of its history and

culture. In an America being slowly transformed from a comparatively homogeneous culture into a heterogeneous society, Lawrence's emphasis on "wholeness" achieved not through compromise and conciliation but through conflict between antithetical forces was what America needed. Although Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman had all emphasized this difference between the American culture and the European culture, it needed to be reiterated; Lawrence performed this task.

The present work attempts to highlight the main concerns of the Laurentian critical idiom with a view to explore the affinity between D. H. Lawrence and American criticism that followed the appearance of his essays on classic American literature. Because of its very personal nature, the Laurentian critical idiom defies precise definition. Not allied with any critical school, it is inspired by the intuitions and perceptions available only to an artist. It is precisely this quality which rendered his criticism so valuable to American critics in their exploration of new ways to perceive their literature and culture.

NOTES

1. Armin Arnold, in D. H. Lawrence and America (London: The Linden Press, 1958), presents a factual account of D. H. Lawrence's relations with America.

2. An exhaustive account of D. H. Lawrence's association with these periodicals, especially with the Dial, is to be found in Nicholas Joost and Sullivan Alvin, D. H. Lawrence and the Dial (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970).

3. D. H. Lawrence's boyhood friend, Jessie Chambers, recalls in her memoirs (D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record. London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965) that as early as his school days, Lawrence had read Fenimore Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans and The Pathfinder, "with its impression of the expanse of level lake and silence" (94). He read and liked Emerson's Essays and "became wildly enthusiastic over Thoreau's Walden. Jessie Chambers recalls Lawrence's telling her one morning about Thoreau's essay, "The Pond," and Thoreau's building a hut in the woods beside the pond: "It was a still, sunless morning, with a brooding light over the landscape and the atmosphere he [Lawrence] conveyed in his description seemed to tally perfectly with the particular morning" (101). She remembers Lawrence telling her that Whitman's Leaves of Grass was "one of his great books" (91).

CHAPTER ONE

TOWARD NEW STANDARDS

In the very beginning of Studies in Classic American Literature, D. H. Lawrence strikes a note familiar to American literary and cultural studies for more than a century:

> We like to think of the old-fashioned American classics as children's books. Just childishness, on our part. The old American art-speech contains an alien quality, which belongs to the American continent and to nowhere else. But, of course, as long as we insist on reading the books as children's books, we miss all that. (7)

It is unlikely that Lawrence was familiar with Sidney Smith's disparaging question, "Who reads an American book?" Smith had, a century earlier, dubbed American writers a "scribbling brotherhood," in their infancy with "neither history, nor romance, nor poetry, nor legends, on which to exercise their genius, and kindle their imagination" (Ruland, The Native Muse 154-155). It surprises us today that this indictment was repeated in almost identical terms by a famous American, T. S. Eliot, as late as 1919, in a review article on Cambridge History of American Literature:

> It is inevitable that any work on American literature should contain a good deal of stuffing. The fault is not in the lack of material so much as in its lack of cohesion. There could be written a very cohesive account of American

> Puritanism, with its interesting transition to Transcendentalism; but this would be a history not of American but of Boston literature, and it would turn out to be not so much a history of the Brahminical canon or Boston literature as of Boston society. (236)

Eliot does not deny American writers their genius, but like Smith, he does bemoan their "starved environment," and the "defect of society in the larger sense." He finds their "world" as "thin" and "not corrupt enough. Worst of all, it is second hand; it is not original and self dependent--it is a shadow" (238).

The question of a literature characteristically American had occupied the national mind ever since the Revolution that gave birth to a new nation independent of England, the mother country. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, two distinct schools of criticism had emerged: one searching for an American literature and culture as distinct from the continental culture, and another continuing to interpret the national literature as an appendage to and extension of the European, and more especially the British, tradition. The nationalist and internationalist debate frequently was an ongoing battleground in the critical warfare waged in this century in the pages of the Democratic Review, the North Atlantic Review, and the Whig Review, to name only the leading periodicals of the day. Benjamin T. Spenser in The Quest for Nationality states that the intensified campaign for a national literature continued unabated during this century

because of the emergence of periodicals devoted mainly to literary criticism, and also because of the "influx from the continent of a nationalistic and relativistic critical theory which encouraged writers to express their own time or indigenous tradition rather than the universal Reason" (74). However, even before this debate on national literature reached its climax in the 1840s, Royall Tyler, though largely influenced by the English Restoration comedy, had urged his readers, as early as 1789, to accept his plays primarily for their use of native material. Charles Brockden Brown, in his preface to Edgar Huntley, in 1802, was also aware of the special appeal his use of "the incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the western wilderness," had for the "native America" (Ruland, The Native Muse 64). Edward Tyrell Channing, writing in the North Atlantic Review in 1816, made a strong appeal for national independence in literature by condemning blind imitation of foreign models, not only British, but even those from classical antiquity. This habit resulted, "in many cases, to make what is foreign, artificial, and uncongenial, the foundation of a man's literary habits, ambition, and prejudice." It is not possible, continued Channing, "that a man, thus trained and dependent, should not lose all self respect and come to think everything vulgar at home" (Ruland, The Native Muse 89).

The two most prominent names challenging Americans to declare their intellectual and cultural emancipation are

Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman. They added a new dimension to the idea of intellectual freedom by addressing themselves to the creation of an American mind aspiring for an ever-expanding intellectual horizon. Emerson, in "The American Scholar," his Phi Beta Kappa address at Cambridge in 1837, while accepting the value of the past, warned the nation that each age "must write its own books; or rather, each generation for the next succeeding. The books of an older period will not fit this" (49). Whitman in his 1855 preface to Leaves of Grass shares Emerson's faith and exultantly declares that the United States "themselves are essentially the greatest poem" (411). He is, however, not so sanguine in 1871 in his Democratic Vistas. He does accept that in the material realm the country had made great progress, but finds that what "has filled, and fills today our intellect, our fancy, furnishing the intellect therein, is yet foreign." Whitman finds the models of literature imported from other lands, "ultramarine, have had their birth in courts, and bask'd and grown in castle sunshine" (474). America, Whitman laments, "is singularly unaware that the models of persons, books, manners, etc., appropriate for former conditions and for European lands, are but exiles and exotics here." No wonder, he says, "America has yet morally and artistically originated nothing" (478). He finds the United States "ignorant of its genius, not yet inaugurating the native, the universal, and

the near still importing the distant, the partial, and the dead" (490).

Emerson and Whitman attacked the traditional and conventional standards behind the literary, intellectual, and cultural climate of the age. William Charvat, in The Origins of American Thought: 1810-1835, suggests that even in the area of literary criticism during the early part of the nineteenth century the standards that defined a critic's role were out of tune with the needs of a new age. Charvat traces the roots of the "genteel" tradition in American thought in the latter half of the century to the role that the early nineteenth century had prescribed for the critic. The critic's role, this age believed, was to be the "watch dog of society." Literature "must not condone rebellion of any kind against the existing social and economic order," and should "not contain anything derogatory, implicitly or explicitly, to religious ideals and moral standards." It should be optimistic," and "should not condone philosophical pessimism or skepticism." It should concern itself with "the intelligible, not the mystical and obscure," and it should be "social in point of view, not egocentric" (7-23). Charvat observes that some of these notions "changed or disappeared when romanticism came to dominate the times, but others have remained typically American, and have been basic in the main currents of American Criticism" (7). A survey of the main trends of American criticism in the nineties of

the last century and in the beginning of the present shows that many of these beliefs were dominant during these years.

Floyd Stovall points out the irony that after the Civil War, "which assured our political unity, our cultural unity began to disintegrate." Instead of articulating a new cultural idiom, this age elevated Longfellow, Holmes, and Lowell, who pleaded for "the continuation of European culture," to the "stature of Olympians." They were followed closely by William Dean Howells. Stovall considers them to be the "founders of the genteel Tradition" (8). In his critical writings, William Dean Howells prescribed truth, morality and optimism--three basic tenets of idealism--to be the controlling tenets of American culture. In "Criticism and Fiction," Howells emphasizes morality in art, but his measure of morality remains vague and undefined. His principal enemy is naturalism which he considers immoral because of its tendency to use only the gloomy and the dreary in life as the substance of art. Howell's standards of judgement are all continental. In much of what he says, his principal inspiration and support come from Senor Valdes' views on naturalism as illustrated from what the latter says about Flaubert's Madame Bovary. Howells, by his emphasis on the smiling at the cost of the gloomier aspects of life, fastens the act of creation to a partial, fractional, and fragmented morality: ". . . for though it is not the business of art to preach morality, still I think that resting on a divine and spiritual principle, like the

idea of the beautiful, it is perforce moral" (Howells 33). With this limited view of morality, his concept of truth in art was bound to be equally circumscribed. Howells considers Jane Austen as the supreme artist because she is honest with her material: "Realism is nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material, and Jane Austen was the first and the last of the English novelists to treat material with entire truthfulness" (38). It is not surprising that with his emphasis on optimism as a supreme virtue in art, Howells pays such a tribute to Jane Austen and her country-house comedies. Howells' conformist stance is nowhere more evident than in a statement like this:

> The tests are very plain and simple, and they are perfectly infallible. If a novel flatters the passions, and exalts them above the principles, it is poisonous; it may not kill, but it will certainly injure; and this test will alone exclude an entire class of fiction, of which eminent examples will occur to all. (47)

E. K. Brown characterizes the 19th century criticism of Howell and his school as "a tea-table conception of the range and spirit of literature" (145). It is against such an attitude that the new century directs its revolt.

Henry May points out in The End of American Innocence that this tradition was still thriving in the twentieth century. Referring to the dinner held in honor of Howells on March 3, 1912, May says that the dinner was "really a testimonial to the unity, excellence and continuity of American nineteenth century civilization." It affirmed the

country's allegiance to the three cardinal principles of the existing civilization: "first, the certainty and universality of moral values; second, the inevitability, particularly in America, of progress; and third, the importance of traditional literary culture" (6). Jay B. Hubbell also remarks that the beginning of the new century was in fact a continuation of the old, and that "the nineteenth century, we may say, came to its end not in December 1900, but in August, 1914, with the outbreak of the First World War" (155). However, both May and Hubbell have failed to grasp the complex nature of the two decades that preceded the outbreak of the War by characterizing them merely as a continuation of the earlier decades. Peter Conn rightly suggests that "the years from the turn of the century to the First World War were among the most eventful in American history." This period was marked by a "profound internal dialectic, a conflict between tradition and innovation, between control and independence, between order and liberation," best summarized by the manner in which Henry Adams characterizes himself in the "Teufelsdrockh" chapter of <u>The Education of Henry Adams</u> (1906)--a "Conservative Christian Anarchist." This underscores the complex nature of the age, and serves "as an epigraph to the cultural history of the period" (1). Henry May's allusion to the continuation of the nineteenth century American culture through a belief in its cardinal tenets does represent the traditional profile of the period, but

underneath this apparent complacence simmered a disenchantment with the establishment.

This non-conformist aspect of the age was, however, slow to emerge, as is clear from John Macy's The Spirit of American Literature. At the time of its publication in the year 1908, this work was hailed as a landmark inaugurating a new epoch in the study of American literature. Macy himself, in his foreword, claims to be radically different from the earlier literary historians, and criticizes them as "subservient to an ideal of encyclopedic completeness and traditional values" (vi). Despite his claim to transcend traditional lines, Macy remains transfixed to the idea of American literature being "a branch of English literature, as truly as are English books written in Scotland or South Africa" (3). He declares that the "American spirit in literature is a myth, like American valour in war, which is precisely like the valour of Italians and Japanese," because the "dominant power is on the British Islands, and the prevailing stream of influence flows west across the Atlantic" (5, 7). He brushes aside the place of Herman Melville in the American tradition by dismissing Moby Dick merely as "a madly eloquent romance of the sea" (16). However, Macy does concede that "in the course of a century a few Americans have said in memorable words what life meant to them. Their performance, put together, is considerable, if not imposing" (17). After thus analyzing the general characteristics of American literature, we can only wonder

why Macy was surprised that American writers wrote "about everything except American life" (13). Barrett Wendell's A Literary History of America (1900) is another example of the narrow confines to which American literature had been consigned by the academic historians. Wendell identifies American literature with the literature of New England, and gives even Whitman, Poe and Melville a minor place in the American literary canon. Fred Lewis Pattee, in "A Call for a Literary Historian," says that Wendell's "bulky" work should have been called "A Literary History of Harvard University, with Incidental Glimpses of the Minor Writers of America" (Foerster, Reinterpretation 5).

In contrast to these half-hearted attempts to break through the stalemate in literary studies, the appearance of Irving Babbitt's Literature and the American College (1908) inaugurates one of the more forceful critical movements of the day--New Humanism. Babbitt saw, as Matthew Arnold had seen in the England of his time, the decline of the classical spirit as the main source of the cultural malady stifling the emergence of a genuine American culture. The New Humanists were justified in their disenchantment with the disintegrating ethical and moral values in an age of expanding industrialization and urbanization; their target of attack was emotionalism and the cult of the individual as represented by nineteenth-century Romanticism. It is true, C. I. Glicksberg remarks, that "in an age of violent dissension, of disintegrating values, where nothing is

certain and men wander lost in a forest of confusion, the austere emphases of Humanism" appeared to show promise. However, their philosophy was soon challenged as "a diluted brand of religion smuggled back into a skeptical scientific, despiritualized world" ("Two Decades" 234). The new humanist faith in the classical virtues of balance and discipline is best expressed in Babbitt's insistence on frein vital, the vital check. Frederic I. Carpenter points out the weaknesses in the New Humanist manifesto. They "emphasized selection rather than humanity--classical culture rather than human sympathy." They rejected, "the indecorous elements of the broadly humanistic past," and "sought to establish a strict cultural tradition, just as latter day puritans had rejected the unknown God to establish a strict moral tradition." Carpenter goes on to say that humanism "recaptured some of the religious enthusiasm and logical rigor of old Puritan theology" (438-439). This should not surprise us because the Humanists believed that "the most important part of the American past was New England Puritanism" (Hoffman The Twenties 165). Another reason for their identification of American culture with the Puritan heritage was that "they were much concerned over the presence and the exercise of a moral will, and the Puritan will most nearly represented it in the American tradition" (166). It is not easy to accept Norman Foerster's claim that the New Humanists carried out the program of Emerson and Lowell because of the former's debt

to Plato and the latter's to Dante (American Criticism 235). We can, indeed, see the relation between Lowell and the new Humanists, but they hardly have any similarity with Emerson's program. It is true that Babbitt makes use of Emerson, as Richard Ruland observes, as an ally, and considers Emerson's acceptance of the material world as his most enduring mark. But Babbitt also sees in Emerson a representative of the Rousseauistic cult of the ego and criticizes Emerson for his refusal to acknowledge the dual nature of man (Rediscovery 33). Babbitt criticizes Emerson's "Transcendental Mysticism." Rene Wellek, in "Irving Babbitt, Paul More, and Transcendentalism," remarks that, although Babbitt drew from Emerson, "not only some of his favorite slogans, but, I think, much of his basic scheme of the mind and soul of man," he suspected Emerson of "Rousseauism, of undue optimism, unwarranted trust in the goodness of man and particularly of the common man" (193-195). As George Santayana was to observe in "The Genteel Tradition at Bay," the New Humanists reinstated a belief in a "supernatural human soul and in a precise divine revelation" (137), and thus continued rather than abolished the concept of "moral integrity and its shadow, moral absolutism, which were always a chief part of the genteel tradition in America" (Santayana 139).

George Santayana used the term, "genteel tradition," as the source of America's cultural and intellectual poverty in his famous address, "The Genteel Tradition in American

Philosophy," at the University of California in 1911. Unlike Babbit, Santayana established no distinct school of American thought, and, in essence, no two minds could be so much in variance in their assessment of the contemporary intellectual and cultural climate. Santayana emphasized a search within the American situation for a living culture and found in the "genteel tradition" a spurious philosophy because it fails to inspire and express "the life of those who cherish it" (Santayana 37). On the contrary, Babbitt found nothing within the country to inspire a cultural revival and recommended a return to the ancient classical past. E. K. Brown's comment that "for a Harvard and Princeton Professor to appeal from the ways of his contemporaries, not to the standards of Emerson and Whitman or that of Franklin and Jefferson, but to that of Sophocles and Homer is to beat the empty air" (145), best summarizes the Humanist fallacy.

George Santayana's indictment of American culture stems from his belief that it had become a cozy, complacent, self-satisfied, smug and unquestioning perpetuation of colonial thinking nurtured and nourished by Puritanism, on the one hand, and Anglo-Saxon literary conventions and patterns of thought on the other. Because of this predicament, "what has happened is that the hereditary philosophy has grown stale, and the academic philosophy has caught the stale odor from it" (Santayana 37). It was Santayana's California address that gave birth to the term

"genteel tradition," a term traditionally used by future critics in disapprobation and disparagement of all that has been wanting in American culture and literature. However, as Howard Mumford Jones observes, "the genteel tradition, which has been more often traduced than analyzed, was a necessary major phase in the development of American culture," because it signified "an operative fusion of idealism and the instinct for craftsmanship which dominated high culture from 1865 to 1915, and which infiltrated the culture of the middle class." Jones believes that it was our "cultural norm," and was a "central principle of aesthetic values, philosophy, upper class religion and higher education." Jones remarks that this tradition was also "consonant with a renewed admiration for important aspects of European culture, particularly British literature." It was a many-sided movement, because its "idealism was at once moral, aesthetic and philosophical (The Age of Energy 216).

It was the "genteel tradition" that counteracted, according to Jones, some unsavory aspects of American art and literature before the Civil War. The defects include the "weaknesses of American romanticism," which tends to emphasize "loftiness of purpose rather than perfection of workmanship." This overaccentuation of "inspiration" at the expense of technique, Jones remarks, makes Emerson "aphoristic," Irving "diffuse," and Lowell "subject to learned whim." Hawthorne never touches "the pitch of

perfection of Scarlet Letter again." Thoreau has "unity of tone, rarely unity of structure." Melville pads Moby Dick with "chapters the ordinary reader wishes away," and Whitman moves toward the "uncertain diction of his prose," and "equal uncertainty of his aesthetic judgement" (217). Jones attributes to the genteel tradition the rise of American music, architecture, sculpture and painting through such works as William Cary Brownell's French Traits, French Art and Victorian Prose Masters (222). Jones is right when he says that "the genteel tradition sought to know and acclimatize the best that had been thought and said in the world" (259). Robert P. Falk agrees with this view in "The Literary Criticism of the Genteel Decades: 1870-1900," and says that "it is unjust to hold that the genteel tradition in criticism urged an escapist program or a priestly withdrawal in the academy or the drawing room." According to Falk, it showed that "the frictions of an increasingly industrialized and stratified society might be assuaged by a literature" that, without losing its "authenticity which a realistic and analytic method could bring, still upheld a broad standard of ethical and aesthetic decorum" (qtd. Stovall 154). However, our experience with the cultural and intellectual history of the world shows that compromises, though often aimed at expediency, tend to generate their own steam in their struggle to achieve permanence. The compromise sought by the genteel generations in the last century was no

exception, and showed signs of perpetuating itself. It was against this tendency that Santayana and others in the new century reacted so vociferously.

The United States of the new century, ready to end its period of apprenticeship, was a different country than it had been before, and was ardently searching for a new dialectic to define its cultural, intellectual and literary heritage. In a more direct statement of his perplexity at the character of the new age, Henry Adams wrote to Elizabeth Cameron in 1915:

> Seventy-Seven all told, and I've outlived most things at that. As far as I can see, I've outlived the world too, and have nothing to go on looking for. I've outlived at least three quite distinct worlds since 1838, but this last one exploded ten years ahead of my calculated time, and caught me unexpectedly. (Qtd. Stovall 159).

Henry James, after twenty years' absence, returned to his country of birth in his 61st year with a desire to reassess his past. From what he writes in The American Scene (1907), he obviously failed to recognize its new face. His comments do not appear to be any different from what they were in 1879 when he wrote his study of Hawthorne. In Hawthorne, James wrote of the United States as a country where history has left a "thin and impalpable a deposit" (10); in Hawthorne's journals he discovers "the image of the crude and simple society in which he lived," and even suggests that it was unfortunate that Hawthorne was an American and not a European:

> If Hawthorne had been a young Englishman, or a young Frenchman of the same degree of genius, the same cast of mind, the same habits, his consciousness of the world around him would have been a very different affair; however obscure, however reserved, his own personal life, his sense of the life of his fellow-mortals would have been almost infinitely more various. The negative side of the spectacle on which Hawthorne looked out, in his contemplative saunterings and reveries, might, indeed, with a little ingenuity, be made almost ludicrous; one might enumerate the items of high civilization, as it exists in other countries, which are absent from the texture of American life, until it should become a wonder to know what was left. No State, in the European sense of the word, and indeed barely a specific national name. No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, no manors, nor old country houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages, nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great Universities nor public schools--no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class--no Epsom nor Ascot! (34-35)

This observation and catalog of the "appalling" negative side of American life is only further reinforced in his comments after the later visit. After visiting the Independence Hall in Philadelphia, James writes:

> The collective consciousness, in however empty an air grasps for a relation as intimate as possible, from which it may more or less have proceeded and around which its life may revolve--and its dim desire is always, I think, to do it justice, that this object or presence shall have had as much as possible an heroic or romantic association. But the difficulty is that in these later times, among such aggregations, the heroic and romantic elements, even under the earliest rude stress, have been all too tragically obscure, belonged to smothered, unwritten, almost unconscious private history; so that the central something, the social <u>point de repere</u>, has had to be extemporized rather pitifully after the fact, and to consist of the biggest hotel, or the biggest common school, the

> biggest factory, the biggest newspaper office, or, for climax of desperation, the house of the biggest billionaire. These are the values resorted to in default of higher, for which some coloured rag or other the general imagination, snatching its chance, must dress its doll. (The American Scene 290-291)

James' shock and indignation at the new America he saw is not surprising. Various forces were at work to transform the America of the last century. The first among these was the rise of the United States as a colonial power after the Spanish-American War of 1898-1899. This meant a greater self-confidence in the country's position in the world and the attendant desire to express it in the easiest form--wealth and ostentation. The population grew from about 75 million in 1898 to almost 100 million in 1917. Within these years about 15 million aliens, 1.25 million of whom came in 1907 alone, arrived in the country, and by 1910, one-seventh of the population was foreign born. This gave an entirely new complexion to what until now had been characterized as American culture. The accelerated pace of technological development, leading to greater centralization put the country at the threshold of a new era.

In the face of this transmutation, what the country needed was not the compromise attempted by the genteel generation, but a new paradigm of culture. In this quest the age turned its barbs against Puritanism and its baneful influence on the American mind. Frederic I. Carpenter is right in pointing out that Santayana's identification of Puritan theology, rather than of an attitude of mind, with

the genteel tradition was a mistake. Carpenter says that Santayana failed to distinguish between the two halves of Puritan history; historically, the genteel tradition "derived only from the conservative half of the Puritan religion," which led to its later decadence, while "the Puritanism of early New England had included a liberal, and even radical, element (428-429). However, as Carpenter himself concedes, Santayana was not oblivious to the value of the transcendental revolt against the forces of conservatism. Santayana accepts that transcendentalism "embodied, in a radical form, the spirit of Protestantism as distinguished from its inherited doctrines; it was autonomous, undismayed, calmly revolutionary" (Santayana 43), but he also says that Emerson left no system, and that he was "detached, unworldly, contemplative" (45). Santayana's view of Emerson is, however, not surprising. During these years, Emerson was considered primarily as the prophet of transcendentalism. Santayana believes that Walt Whitman is "the one writer who has left the genteel tradition entirely behind," and in him a foreigner like himself finds "not the polite and conventional American mind, but the spirit and the inarticulate principles that animate the community, on which its own genteel mentality seems to sit rather lightly." Although in Whitman, Santayana says, "Bohemia rebelled against the genteel tradition; but the reconstruction that alone can justify revolution did not ensue." This is why, Santayana says

Whitman's work "is so rudimentary, contains a beginning, or rather many beginnings, that might possibly grow into a noble moral imagination, a worthy filling for the human mind" (47-48).

Richard Ruland, in The Rediscovery of American Literature, argues that Santayana's identification of the New Humanists with the genteel tradition was not entirely accurate:

> Both could be called 'custodians of culture,' but the cultures being championed differed greatly. Both could be described as ethically oriented, but the refined propriety of the nineteenth-century school hardly suggests the searching psychological and cultural analyses of the Humanists or the coherence or philosophical depth of their position. The genteel critics were conservative in that they defended the status quo by upholding the literary and moral codes which maintained commercial stability. As defenders of this cultural situation, they were assured of its sympathetic support. The conservatism of the Humanists, on the other hand, wrenched them violently from the scientific and humanitarian civilization of the time. They were more properly, reactionary, and the position they assumed left them with few contemporary allies. (12).

The humanists failed because the American tradition they sought to build was a very thin one, and, as Ruland observes, "there is perhaps no better illustration of the past being used selectively than the literary criticism of Irving Babbit" (22). Paul Elmer More's critical work, on the other hand, shows greater promise. He is "more consciously searching for an American tradition," but he does so only within "those values central to his humanistic position" (33). This conservatism was attacked by the

younger critics like Van Wyck Brooks, H. L. Mencken, Randolph Bourne, Lewis Mumford, Paul Rosenfeld, William Carlos Williams, and Waldo Frank. It is significant that even Stuart P. Sherman, who started as an ardent Humanist, soon moved away from the basic beliefs of the humanist manifesto.

The struggle to discover a genuine American tradition was taken up most vigorously by Van Wyck Brooks, through his search for a "usable past," in America's Coming of Age (1915), Letters and Leadership (1918), and "The Literary Life in America" (1921). Unlike the New Humanists' rather quiet entry into the American literary scene, Brooks and the younger generation of critics arrived with a belligerent manifesto of scathing indictments of American culture. The short-lived periodical, The Seven Arts, founded by James Oppenheim and Waldo Frank, served as their platform for some time. Their intellectual orientation can be best summed up in the call issued by Romain Rolland in the opening number of The Seven Arts. Romain Rolland challenged America to build a new cultural edifice unencumbered by outworn modes of thought:

> The diverse personalities that compose your States must dare to express themselves, freely, sincerely, entirely, in art . . . . Above all, dare to see yourselves; to penetrate within yourself--and to your very depths. Dare to see true. And then, whatever you find, dare to speak it out as you have found it. (qtd. Vitelli xxii-xxiii)

Lawrence, after he had finished writing his essays on American literature, also issued a similar injunction in the December 15, 1920 number of the New Republic. Lawrence, perhaps one of the earliest writers to include in the American tradition the native American psyche as manifested in the ancient civilization of the New World, told Americans to "take up life where the Red Indian, the Aztec, the Maya, the Incas left it off." The responsibility, Lawrence says, "for the producing and the perfecting of this life form devolves upon the new American." Only this "new American" can meet the challenge:

> It is time he accepted the full responsibility. It means a surpassing of the old European life-form. It means a departure from the old European morality, ethic. It means a departure from the old European emotions and sensibilities. The old emotions are crystallized forever among the European monuments of beauty. There we can leave them, along with the old creeds and the old ethical laws outside of life. Montezuma had other emotions, such as we have not known or admitted. We must start from Montezuma, not from St. Francis or St. Bernard. ("America, Listen to Your Own" 90-91)

Van Wyck Brooks, in America's Coming of Age, found in American culture a continuing antithesis between the "highbrow" and the "lowbrow":

> On the one hand, a quite unclouded, quite unhypocritical assumption of transcendent theory ('high ideals'), on the other, a simultaneous acceptance of catchpenny realities. Between university ethic and business ethic, between American culture and American humour, between Good Government and Tammany, between academic pedantry and pavement slang, there is no community, no genial middle ground. (17-18).

What Brooks sees in the America of his times had already been observed by Matthew Arnold in 1888. Arnold commented that as England is divided into "Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace, America is just ourselves." The only difference, Arnold found, was that in America there were neither "Barbarians" nor "the Populace." This leaves the "Philistines for the great bulk of the nation" (79-80). Brooks attempts to create the foundations of a new culture for America. Arnold had said that "we in England have to transform our civilization, so America has hers still to make" (Arnold 79).

Brooks' "usable past" was an attempt to create this very culture out of the "vast Saragossa Sea--a prodigious welter of unconscious life, swept by ground-swells of half-conscious emotion" (America's 100). Matthew Arnold remarks that "the human problem there is as yet solved in the United States most imperfectly; a great void exists in the civilization over there; a want of what is elevated and beautiful, of what is interesting" (Arnold 181). This view is clearly echoed in Brooks' analysis of the American cultural ethos. His program of discovering a "usable past" involved the use of literary history in the criticism of American literature, and, as Howard Mumford Jones points out, this interplay between literary history and literary criticism is fundamentally valid, because whenever "literary history abandons evaluation, it becomes archaeological and dry; whenever literary criticism neglects history, it grows

absolute and inhuman" (The Theory of American Literature 118).

However, Brooks' attempts to discover a living past for American culture and literature remain essentially traditional and conservative despite the revolutionary flavor he seeks to impart his interpretations. The similarity between Arnold and Brooks mentioned earlier was no mere coincidence. Jones is right in his comment that "even amid the iconoclasms of his earlier volumes," Brooks remains an "American Arnold, and in his later, more historical work, though his style is no longer Arnoldian, his standards have become traditional and conservative" (119). Edmund Wilson remarks that in his early criticism, "which exasperated us with its gloomy and negative presentation of the American cultural and intellectual scene," but "did confront us with a "sense of national failure," his standards "of judgement were not infrangible. In his later work, The Flowering of New England, we suddenly find him "chortling, beaming, and crooning in a manner little short of rapturous," over those very writers like Lowell, Longfellow and Emerson whose weaknesses "he had so unflinchingly brought to our notice," in America's Coming of Age ("Mr. Brooks'" 452).

In spite of its shortcomings, Brooks' criticism, by attempting to discover within American literature writers who have something to say to us, by accounting for the failure of the American tradition, and by exhorting the

American writer to create an environment in which literature could flourish, succeeded in emphasizing an American past as against the kind of tradition which the New Humanists were recommending--the classical past giving sustenance to the national culture. The main problem with Brooks is his almost total rejection of the American past and his equating it with Puritanism and the culture of the pioneer. This tendency to condemn everything in the American past culminates in the publication of Civilization in the United States (1922), a collection of essays by thirty eminent Americans edited by Harold E. Stearns. The editor characterized the American culture by the "sharp dichotomy between preaching and practice," its "emotional and aesthetic starvation," and the absence of "heritages or traditions to which to cling except those that have already withered in our hands and turned to dust" (vi- vii).

Waldo Frank describes Our America (1919), in his later volume Rediscovery of America (1929), as the integration of the critical work being done in the early years of the century. It was, Frank claimed, "projected by the vision of an artist who was moved to create a world in which he could go on living." He attempted in Our America to form a usable past and "from the analysis of background to distil an energy for the future" (319). This work indeed imparts a new dimension to American cultural studies by relating our cultural tradition to the spirit of the continent, "a land with a shrieking rhythm," whose "physiography bears the

stamp of titanic struggle" (Our America 5-6). In the earlier writings on American culture, the primordial nature of the American continent had either gone almost unnoticed, or had always been perceived only in terms of what the early European settlers had made of it. Before Frank's book was published, D. H. Lawrence's essay, "The Spirit of Place," had already appeared in the English Review of November 1918 (The Symbolic Meaning 5). Lawrence's plea was to consider the American continent, not as a place found ready-made by the Pilgrim Fathers as a refuge from the oppression of Europe, but as a homeland with "some subtle magnetic or vital influence inherent in every specific locality," which "keeps the inhabitant stable" (20), and gives the race its peculiar quality. D. H. Lawrence, in a letter to Waldo Frank on September 15, 1917, wrote about this spirit of the American continent, what Frank was to call its "shrieking rhythm":

> There is a quality in your sky, a salt in your earth, that will, without the agency of man, destroy you all, and procreate new beings--not men, in our sense of the word.-- Oh, for a non-human race of man! (Moore Collected Letters 524-25)

Frank gives his reason for the colonization of America: "Primarily America was colonized because the spiritual energy of the middle ages had passed its bloom and was transmuting into the reactive channels of material growth " (Our America 13). D. H. Lawrence, in the 1918 version of his essay "The Spirit of Place," offers the same idea

imaginatively when he writes that with the Renaissance, the magnetism that kept Europe together during the middle ages broke down and "Europe fell directly into the polar unison with America. Europe and America became the great poles of negative and positive vitalism." Lawrence continues:

> And it was on the wings of this new attraction that Europe discovered America. When the great magnetic sway of the medieval polarity broke, then those units which were liberated fell under the sway of new vital currents in the air, and they were born helplessly as birds migrate, without knowing or willing, down the great magnetic wind towards America, towards the centrality in the New World. (The Symbolic Meaning 21)

Lawrence explains the movement of Europe towards America, not conditioned by the conscious human will as is often thought, but as "prior to all knowledge and all option" (21). Thus, while Frank's understanding of the American culture is based on his belief that from the very beginning "America has had no tradition, no articulation outside of the industrial revolution which threw it into being" (Our America 14), Lawrence's paradigm of American culture underlines a positive urge present under its apparent idealism and materialism--an unconscious urge towards the fulfillment of an inner inspiration which transcends the mere exercise of the human will.

As Gorham Munson points out, Waldo Frank's Our America "had a powerful negative argument about our culture" (65), and we can place it in the mainstream of criticism created by Brooks, H. L. Mencken, Randolph Bourne, and the New

Humanists. Alan Trachtenberg considers Waldo Frank as "one of the most versatile and complex of the cultural critics," who used the figure of the pioneer in a "broad metaphoric sense" of a "self-willed creature" single-minded in his pursuit of material wealth (Critics of Culture 119). Frank's discussion of the American writers centers around their tendency to perpetuate the pioneer spirit. Frank considers Emerson a failure, although he concedes that Emerson "had the equipment of a true cultural leader. He had vision, he had considerable mental power, he had the genius of aspiration." But his books "are vague, his instances remote . . . . The true motif of Emerson is an hysterical plea," because "his works are essentially discards from weakness" (Our America 69). Frank's assessment of Emerson, for whom "the gesture of human aspiration was a transcending leap away from all that was mortal-human" (70), is, however, too extreme and has been questioned by modern scholarship.

Like all other culture critics of the period, Frank also identifies American culture with the New England puritan tradition and concludes that its supremacy resulted in "the practical convergence of Puritan and pioneer":

> From their ways and their problems, they construed a culture. Puritanism was at last articulate. It could therefore serve throughout America as the rationale for pioneering. America was a nation of frontiers. New England only could supply a complete philosophy to meet its needs. In its moralities, its gospels, its seats of learning, its cultural decorations, New England fitted" (75).

This proclivity to equate American culture with New England literary tradition has been sharply attacked by Lawrence Buell who says in "The New England Renaissance and American Literary Ethnocentrism," that "Puritan-legacyism might be nothing more than an artifact of the researcher's wishful hope to break through to a unified theory of American culture" (410).

However, Waldo Frank was perhaps one of the earliest critics to include Jews in his rubric of American culture, only to find that they also had been infected with the virus of materialism under the ready made pioneer culture they met in the United States (78-79).[1] Frank's association of America with the "Land of Buried Cultures," is also a significant attempt to push the American culture back to the Red Indian.

Speaking of the Mexican inhabitants of Peublo, Colorado, which the United States acquired from Mexico in 1848, Frank finds them devoid of the pioneer spirit, because each one of them "became attached to his soil and loved it, and drew pleasure and drew beauty from it." This proves that he was not an ideal pioneer, who must be "forever ready to move on, must have more 'serious' ambitions" (95); this is the reason "he alone had won a certain culture from the arid soil of that high country," and also because he met the Indian "and learned from him. Much of what is beautiful in Mexican life has its clear source in the ancient Indian cultures" (96). Thus we find Waldo Frank discussing the

American culture both in terms of time and place. One wonders if it was Frank's close association with Lawrence that led him to emphasize this concept of America as not only a national entity but also a place with its own peculiar vibrations.

This short survey of American literary criticism in the first two decades of the twentieth century highlights the conflicting critical approaches to American literature and culture which set the stage for the various trends that were to pervade critical endeavors for many years to come. Russell J. Reising in The Unusable Past: Theory and the Study of American Literature has classified these theories, "according to methods and assumptions," into three major schools: (1) "Puritan origin and historical theories" of Perry Miller, Yvor Winters and Sacvan Bercovitch, (2) "Cultural Theories" of Lionel Trilling, R. W. B. Lewis, Richard Chase, Leslie Fiedler and Leo Marx and (3) "Self Reflective theories" of Charles Feidelson, Richard Poirier and John Irwin. Reising, however, excludes "frontier theories" and "psychological theories" as distinct categories, because "while insights gained from both approaches have influenced all other 'schools', they have not generated a tradition of studies" (5). This is a rather facile generalization; in all cultural and literary theories of the period succeeding the early decades these two approaches have been quite significant and do represent a distinct school. Critics like Lewis Mumford in The Golden

Day, William Carlos Williams in In the American Grain, Ludwig Lewisohn in Expression in America, and Richard Slotkin in Regeneration Through Violence have used these approaches as their basic methodology.

Reising's main quarrel with these critics is that they "narrow the American canon and discourage us from viewing literature as a form of social knowledge or behavior" (6). Another attack on these critical theorists stems from their belief in something called 'American literature'. Reising does not believe that "there is a 'thing' one can call American literature." American literature "does not exist in the abstract. It does not offer itself to our scrutiny. It does not present itself in or as a unified phase or tradition in American writing" (10). What has been called American "exceptionalism" has met with the sharpest rebuke from some contemporary critics. William C. Spengemann in A Mirror for Americanists has advanced a strong plea for the classics of American literature to be read in the context of English literature:

> As poems, novels or plays, they belong to a genre; and as products of a certain time, they belong to a period in literary history. Observations about their subjects, themes, and techniques similarly must be made, not on the assumption that these details are representative of, or unique to, the culture in which the works were written but in the light of some wider knowledge about the employment of analogous subjects, themes, and techniques in other literatures. (26)

Spengemann, however, concedes that the "literature of the United States in English is an American literature, to

be sure, and ought to be studied as one." He only prescribes that this literature should be studied in conjunction with other literatures. A sound proposition as far as the study of American literature is concerned, but, as he himself admits in the words of Columbus, "the farther one goes, the more one learns" about the "terra incognita" known as American literature (27).

It is this "terra incognita" which D. H. Lawrence set himself to explore when he started writing his essays on American literature in 1914, and published their revised version as Studies in Classic American Literature in 1923. Alan Trachtenberg says that culture critics of the early part of the twentieth century--Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, Randolph Bourne, Lewis Mumford and others--were responsible for revaluing the American literary tradition:

> With the help of D. H. Lawrence's Studies in Classic American Literature (1923), [they] opened the entire field to the reconsideration that gave rise to the present study of American literature and culture in colleges and universities . . . . The change they hoped for most, however, was intellectual and moral, a change in consciousness, in culture. (11-12)

D. H. Lawrence of all the critics of this period studies American literature primarily as an expression of the American cultural situation. When he declared, in a letter to Edward Garnett in the autumn of 1912, that he "was no critic at all" (Huxley, Letters 75), Lawrence was in fact dissociating himself from the kind of academic criticism that indulged in "critical twiddle-twaddle about style and

form, all this pseudo-scientific classifying and analyzing of books in an imitation-botanical fashion," which he found "mere impertinence and mostly dull jargon." For Lawrence, literary criticism "can be no more than a reasoned account of feelings produced upon the critic by the book he is criticizing," the "touchstone is emotion, not reason." Lawrence believes that "a critic must be emotionally alive in every fibre, intellectually capable and skilful in essential logic, and then morally very honest" ("John Galsworthy" 539). Lawrence's emphasis on the moral purpose of art--the exploration of a new awareness, a new morality--by discovering "a perfected relation between man and his circumambient universe" ("Morality and the Novel" 527), brings him very close to moral criticism. He wrote in his essay on Whitman that "the essential purpose of art is moral. Not aesthetic, not decorative, not pastime and recreation. But moral. The essential function of art is moral," but he also declared that this morality is a "passionate, implicit morality, not didactic. A morality that changes the blood, rather than the mind. Changes the blood first. The mind follows later, in the wake" (Studies 180). Lawrence believes that art should portray man's passionate struggle to "rip the old veil of a vision across, and find what the heart really believes in" (Fantasia 9-10), and thereby reject a morality which insists on a partial mechanical state of being by providing the artist with "a

metaphysic of self-justification, or a metaphysic of self-denial" ("Study of Thomas Hardy" 479). We, therefore, find Lawrence emphasizing a dual responsibility for the artist: to create a new awareness through a new morality of perfected relationships, and also to help destroy those forms and monuments of dead beliefs which hamper the new life from taking roots. With his belief in a personal rather than an abstracted morality, Lawrence combines his moral stance with his essentially romantic beliefs. F. R. Leavis remarks that this essentially romanticized concept of morality is what distinguishes Lawrence from other moral critics and his "critical thought is immensely more subtle and deep-going than Arnold's, the other great critic who challenges a basic critical function for the word 'moral'" ("Genius as Critic" 414).

The critical method Lawrence was to use is first employed in his essay, "Study of Thomas Hardy," written in 1914, about three years before he started writing his American essays. It is not always remembered that the basic urge for writing both the Hardy essay and Studies comes from Lawrence's disgust with European civilization. The culture of Europe, he believes manifests its worst phase in the outbreak of the 1914 war. Lawrence is opposed to the war because it represented a "horrible, obscene ideal process," culminating in "a ghastly and blasphemous translation of ideas into engines, and men into cannon fodder" ("Education of the People" 658). Through his essay on Hardy, and later

through his analysis of American literature, Lawrence was attempting an approximation of art with the civilization of which it is a product. This approach also accounts for the formal attributes of his critical writings which, especially in his American essays, received severe critical censure. Lawrence, from the very nature of his critical persuasion, was an impressionistic critic. Not aligned to any specific critical creed, Lawrence was criticized for imposing his own often unfamiliar, even exotic, concepts about life and art on American literature and culture. Edward Shanks, reviewing Studies for the London Mercury, reacted vehemently against Lawrence's use of the personal equation in a work of literary criticism:

> Mr. D. H. Lawrence's book is not strictly a work of criticism. He has taken several American authors from Benjamin Franklin to Walt Whitman, and has used them as excuses for propounding that peculiar dark philosophy of his which seems to be the theme of his all later work. I do not understand that philosophy, and I make no pretence understanding it. In his novels it acts as a mist, now distorting and now terribly magnifying the persons of the tale, and has thus its aesthetic uses. But presented thus direct, it is, to me at any rate, simply incomprehensible; and I cannot discuss it, for I do not even grasp the beginning of it. (662)

Conrad Aiken, though he accepts that the book is "here and there lighted with an extraordinary fine bit of perception, beautifully given," condemns Lawrence for his assumption that "anything he says, no matter how he says it (and he tries perversely to make his saying of it as aggressively and consciously and peculiarly naked as

possible), will be important." Aiken assails Lawrence for his "astounding recklessness with language," and observes that "logic, in his hands, achieves monsters--fantastic structures grow, ascend, throng the universe, and disappear into the intense inane, in the twinkling of an eye" (482). The Times Literary Supplement, in an anonymous review, attacked Studies as "bohemian," and Lawrence's emphasis on "blood" in poor taste (461). In a review of the Studies published in Public Ledger of November 17, 1923, Robert E. Spiller condemned it as worthy of nothing more than being thrown "gently into the fire," characterized Lawrence as "antichrist" appearing in the guise of a critic of American literature, found his work "tame and conservative," and wrote that what Lawrence says are things that "the driest of students of American literature have been expounding in discourses and hammering over desks for at least a decade, if not longer" (Spiller 6-8). The last observation, coming from a critic of the stature of Spiller, is rather surprising, because Lawrence's was perhaps the most radical and least reactionary of interpretations that American criticism had seen to date.

It is clear from the above critical abuse hurled at Lawrence's work that the main attack was directed against the impressionistic nature of his criticism in which, as Charles I. Glicksberg observes, all judgment "resides in the critic himself." The critic becomes the "sole arbiter, and his appreciations and appraisals are conditioned, mutatis

mutandis, by his temperament, his sensibility, his taste." Such a critic records "the adventure of his soul among works of art, his immediate feelings and sensations." As a result, the impressionistic critic is inclined to be "subjective, personal, provocative, scattering his ideas and 'impressions' broadcast, without regard for the hobgoblin of consistency." Glicksberg gives the example of such impressionistic critics as James Gibbons Hunekar, H. L. Mencken, William Crary Brownell, whose criticism has the "tendency to obsolescence." However, when we see the extent to which D. H. Lawrence's criticism penetrated the discussion of American literature we have a critic who rises, what Glicksberg considers, "above the level of judicial academic studies or rank impressionism" (American Literary Criticism 16-20). Kenneth Dauber says that modern American criticism begins with "a grand tradition of impressionism," and although it has long been criticized, there "is good reason to rehabilitate it, for at its best it is a pre-theoretical recognition of the non-objectivity of the text" (57). Dauber confines his survey of American impressionistic criticism to Brooks only, and does not mention D. H. Lawrence in his "grand tradition," but what he observes about Brooks applies more pertinently to Lawrence, who went further than Brooks in reviving "our relationship to works which had become fixed as monuments," by "substituting himself for the works." Dauber considers such

a substitution as "a fundamental Derridean position," because such criticism keeps the meaning of the work alive:

> Since meaning is not embodied in the written but is a function of writing, of the discourse proceeding between writer and critic, energetic substitution, because it keeps discourse active, keeps meaning alive. (57)

Robert C. Pierle comments directly on D. H. Lawrence's impressionistic criticism, and says that Lawrence's rejection of "disinterestedness, a concept which since the time of Matthew Arnold has been the sine qua non of nearly all literary investigation," imparts his criticism the "spontaneity of reaction, which is responsible not only for the worst moments in his criticism but for the best as well" (334).

Through American literature, Lawrence was attempting a journey into American culture, a presence uppermost in his mind during the war years as a place of refuge away from England. In Europe, Lawrence felt, "the living part is overwhelmed by the dead part, and there is no altering it. So that life which is still fertile must take its departure, like seeds from a dead plant." He wanted to "transplant" his life to America where there still was "a hope of a future. He wished "to grow towards that future," away from the "decomposition" of Europe (Huxley, Letters 382). America was Lawrence's Rananim (500). Lawrence was disappointed that Americans had ignored the great promise of their own culture, and wrote to Waldo Frank that they had "studied the European world too much," and their "own world

too little." This has made Europeans exclaim, "those Americans are such children!" Lawrence disagreed, and since he believed he had really read their literature, he was inclined to consider Americans "so old," the "very painted vivacity of age.'--Pourrie avant d'etre mure some Frenchman said seventy years ago, about America--U. S. A., that is" (524-525).

It is this intense involvement with America, American literature, and American culture that renders Studies, as Richard Ruland observes, "an American book, right down to its completion during Lawrence's stay in New Mexico, and its subsequent impact on the critical thought of the last twenty years--an impact which shows no sign of subsiding" (The Rediscovery 178). Edmund Wilson included the complete text of Studies in his anthology, The Shock of Recognition, with these introductory remarks:

> The Studies in Classic American Literature have shots that do not hit the mark and moments that are quite hysterical; but they remain one of the few first rate books that have ever been written on the subject. To an American, American literature is a part of his native landscape, and so veiled with associations that he cannot always see what the author is really saying. D. H. Lawrence has here tried to do what it would be difficult for an American to do: read our books for their meaning in the life of the western world as a whole. (906)

David J. Gordon, commenting on the rather unorthodox critical medium Lawrence adopts for his essays, observes that the "flexible, freewheeling form of critical essay," developed by Lawrence enabled him to "pass naturally beyond

a concern for art proper and to emphasize its relation to the civilization of which it is a vital expression" (3). It is this unorthodox approach that makes Frederick J. Hoffman say, in The Twenties: American Writing in the Postwar Decade, that Studies may better be called, "Studies in Laurentian Responses to the Reading of Classic American Literature." This happens because "in almost every detail the insights are Laurentian and worthwhile for their revelation, not of the American past but of the Laurentian present." Hoffman concedes that, although the "American past gains from the exchange," this gain can "hardly be measured or evaluated." Like many other critics of Lawrence's work, Hoffman also finds fault with Lawrence's not being well informed about the "prevailing academic or scholarly forms of ordering the subject" (160). This, however, is a quality that accounts for the freshness of and abiding interest in his evaluation of American literature and culture.

D. H. Lawrence's work, despite its highly personalized commentary on American literature and culture and the intensely impressionistic approach to its subject, is marked by a critical methodology which incorporates within itself the diverse, often contradictory and poorly assimilated, analytical approaches American critics follow during the early years of the century. As already mentioned, Lawrence with his emphasis on morality in literature displays the humanist bias for the moral element in art. He also

continues Brooks' crusade for a "usable past," but with a difference. He considerably extends the province of this past by emphasizing the symbolic and the mythopoeic in American literature.

Although as a young man Lawrence had read Emerson and admired him, later, like many of his American contemporaries, he also found Emerson listening "to one sort of message and only one. To all the rest he was blank." Lawrence points out that Emerson knew only the "smooth-shaven Gabriel, But as far as we remember, there is Michael too . . . . Ashtaroth and Ammon are gods as well, and hand out their own credentials" ("Review of Americans by Stuart P. Sherman" 317). Lawrence is disappointed in Emerson's idealism, and excludes him from his study of classic American literature. Excluding Emerson, Thoreau, and other New England writers from the classic canon and substituting them with Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, Cooper, Dana, and Melville was Lawrence's way of proclaiming a new canon in the study of American literature. Although like all selections, his selection is also made with the purpose of illustrating his thesis, Lawrence, by including these lesser figures in his examination of classic American literature, does help extend the canon which had become frozen for a long time. Lawrence extends the usable past into a territory excluded earlier from serious consideration. Stanley Edgar Hyman rightly considers Lawrence's book as one of the two best books "erecting a

usable past for the creative writer," the other being William Carlos Williams' In The American Grain, published in 1925, and "much influenced by Lawrence's" work (96). Lawrence himself discerned the similarity, and wrote in his review of Williams' work, in 1926, that Williams emphasizes the local rather than the national in American letters: "Nationality in letters is deplorable, whereas the local is essential. All creative art must rise out of a specific soil and flicker with a spirit of place" (Phoenix 334). It is not easy to accept Horace Gregory's remark in his introduction to In the American Grain that Williams' work does not resemble Lawrence's. Lawrence admires Williams for recreating a new America, "the still unravished bride of silences. The great continent, its bitterness, its brackish quality, its vast glamour, its strange cruelty." Williams exhorts Americans to discover this America, and savor the "powerful, unyielding breath of the Americas, which Columbus sniffed, even in Europe, and which sent the Conquistadores mad." Americans must forget the political entity known as America, "a gruesome sort of fantasy," while "the unravished local America still waits vast and virgin as ever, though in process of being murdered" (335).

This emphasis on the local, rather than the national, in interpreting the usable past is the foundation of Lawrence's interpretation of American literature. Donald E. Pease considers Lawrence's work as a plea to use the "spirit of place" as a "revitalizing ingredient for American

culture." Lawrence, according to Pease, through his American essays forges "a visionary compact with the continuing goals, purposes, and aspirations of these figures from America's past." He emphasizes "positive freedom" as opposed to "negative freedom," the "desire to be merely free from a variety of constraints, whether of European tyrants, constrictive legislation, or, more pervasively, the past itself" (6). Pease summarizes the singular contribution of D. H. Lawrence to the study of American literature and culture:

> In studying the classics of American literature, Lawrence attempted to make a cultural entry into the modern world. Whereas Eliot and Pound turned away from modern America for traditional, Old World values alienated from it, Lawrence returned to modern America with his vision of the living tradition from America's premodern past. The founders of America's tradition, Lawrence believed had already found a way to transform the purely negative freedom at work in a modern existence into a more endurable form of liberty. In recalling what remains to be made of the vision of her classics, Lawrence felt himself called to an alternative experience of the modern world. (7)

Russell J. Reising, although he places Lawrence among the self-reflective theorists of American literature and culture, does concede that Lawrence anticipates two major tenets of New Criticism: the language of paradox and the intentional fallacy (164). Among all the critics of the period before the war, Lawrence is perhaps the only one recognizing, what Eric Gould calls the "numinous in literature." Lawrence believes in "the logocracy of writing, in the text establishing the dominance of writing

as expression, yet struggling with its limitations at the same time" (13). American classics articulate this very struggle, and, fall in the category of myth, because Lawrence shows that "it is the nature of language that determines myth and not the reverse" (12). Reising, however, embraces a rather limited view of Lawrence's approach, and says that it is merely indicative of his reading of American literature as "a slippage bordering on cultural schizophrenia" (165). Reising, consequently, jumps to this conclusion: "Since the author's expressed meaning cannot be trusted, Lawrence's theory denied the historicity of a particular writer reflecting a specific historical and social situation." Reising acknowledges that Lawrence's belief in "the American unconscious is a new historical development," but he also says that in Lawrence "the tension that the unconscious registers is finally more a static opposition than a dynamic historical construct" (166). Obviously, Reising does not take into account Lawrence's belief in history as "great motions from within the soul of mankind" (Movements xii). Reising's view of history is confined to "the impingement of modern economic and political forms on modern life" (167).

The Laurentian critical idiom is essentially romantic and is firmly entrenched in his highly personalized concept of the unconscious. Lawrence's American essays are contiguous with Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious (1921) and Fantasia of the Unconscious (1922), the two works on

psychoanalysis he was writing while engaged in the interpretation of American literature. He found both the Freudian and the Jungian unconscious too intellectually conceived to provide a true insight into the intricacies of the individual psyche. For Lawrence, the unconscious exemplified "that essential unique nature of every individual creature, which is, by its very nature, unanalyzable, undefinable, inconceivable." It cannot be conceived because it can "only be experienced, in every single instance. We call this aspect of human personality the unconscious exactly because it is inconceivable (Psychoanalysis 211). Closely allied with his concept of the unconscious, is his belief in history as a cyclic process underlying the story of cultures. The Laurentian critical idiom as he applied it to American literature and culture, therefore, is a romantically conceived method which incorporates his beliefs about the unconscious, about history, about myth, and about the nature of language and symbol. Within this critical paradigm Lawrence discusses American literature as the most significant expression of American culture. The following chapters explore the presence of this method in his essays on American literature and present an account of the new ways of looking at American literature and culture that these essays provided the critics who come after D. H. Lawrence.

NOTES

1. D. H. Lawrence's letter to Waldo Frank written on July 27, 1917 is very close to what Waldo Frank was to write about Jews: "The best of Jews is, that they know truth from untruth. The worst of them is, that they are rather slave-like, and that almost inevitably, in action, they betray the truth they know, and fawn to the powers that be. But they know the truth. Only they must cringe their legs and betray it. The material world dominates them with a base kind of fetish domination. Yet they know the truth all the while" (Moore, Collected Letters 520).

CHAPTER TWO

STUDIES AND AMERICAN CRITICS

The period between 1913 and 1921 is the most prolific in D. H. Lawrence's literary career. In addition to his three major novels--Sons and Lovers (1913), The Rainbow (1915) and Women in Love (1920), in which he searched for a way out of the impasse created by the claims of conventional morality and fixed ideas on the individual, he also wrote most of his non-fictional and polemical writings. In all these writings, Lawrence articulates his quest for the autonomous individual--one capable of striking a balance between the passionate life of the body and the demands of the human community. Although Lawrence has often been castigated as a devotee of the flesh and the primeval human instincts, he attempts simply to affirm the spontaneous by seeking to eliminate the dualism of mind and impulse. This antinomy, he believes, has infested the Western civilization from the time of the Renaissance, and is the chief source of the malady that afflicts modern man. The essays later published as Studies in Classic American Literature, his most significant contribution to literary criticism, were originally written between the years 1917 and 1918. They

were revised in 1920, and again in 1922-23, immediately before their publication.

Lawrence's genius as a literary critic is one with his genius as a creative artist. In his novels and poems, he strove to explore life, which he believed consisted in an ever-widening quest for the wholeness of the individual as against his imprisonment in the narrow confines of the subjective self. In his critical and polemical writings, Lawrence confronted a work of art not on the basis of the superficial interpretation pre-conceived abstractions lend to it, but by facing art as a whole man alive.

D. H. Lawrence started writing his essays on American literature after a feverish search for a concrete manifestation of the world of his dreams where mankind is not constantly shunted between the demands of the flesh and the mind. His journeys took him to all parts of Europe, to Ceylon, to Australia and later to the United Sates, in what he called a "kind of running away" (Huxley, Letters 556). Catherine Carswell says that this was because he needed "absolutely to run from the world he knew and to see the world he did not know. It was his initial quest to see if the two ends of humanity might not be brought together" (248). Mark Schorer attributes his travels to his search for a Rananim "that pre-Jeffersonian community of congenial and creative and cooperative persons," capable of creating "their own society, outside the destructive pressures of society at large" (293). In England, Lawrence saw the old

rural England being overwhelmed by the ugliness of industrial life; science and materialism were killing the wonders of spontaneous living. "The real tragedy of England, as I see it," he observes, "is the tragedy of ugliness. The country is so lovely: the man-made England so vile" ("Nottingham and the Mining Countryside" 137). His interest in the New World and his decision to write his essays on American writers was a direct result of, what John Lehman calls, his quest to seek symbols which would bring out in bold relief the inadequacy of living through mind and mind alone (151). Among the peasants of Italy and Sardinia, in the "sensuous spiritual voluptuousness" of the East (Huxley, Letters 545), in the wild wastes of Australia, and among the Indians of New Mexico, his quest was always the same. Aldous Huxley views his travels as "at once a flight and a search." He was searching for some society "with which he could establish contact," and for a world in which "the times were not personal and conscious knowing had not yet perverted living." It was, therefore, "a search and at the same time a flight from the miseries and evils of a society into which he had been born, and in which, in spite of his artist's detachment, he could not help feeling profoundly responsible" (Huxley, "Introduction" Letters xxvi).[1] Lawrence's letters reveal the restlessness of his spirit, "the restless changes of place, which become at last pathetic: and the hopes and despairs, the half-wistful

returns and savage outbursts of a lonely an disappointed rebel" (Times Literary Supplement xlv).[2]

Lawrence's travels resulted in his travel writings of this period: Twilight in Italy (1916), Introduction to Memoirs of the Foreign Legion (1921) and Sea and Sardinia (1921). Mornings in Mexico was published later in 1927. Of these, Twilight in Italy is the most significant. This is his first book-length work of non-fiction and only such work written between 1915 and 1920. Here, Lawrence, for the first time, expounds those beliefs which form the basis of much of his work immediately preceding and during the period he was busy writing his essays on American literature. Among these are: "The Crown" (1915),[3] "Study of Thomas Hardy" (1914), "The Reality of Peace" (1917), "Education of the People" (1918), Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious (1921), Fantasia of the Unconscious (1922), and "Democracy" (circa 1923).[4] In 1921, also came Movements in European History, which presents Lawrence's view of history and explains his rejection of the old world of Europe as an exhausted wasteland. This work also epitomizes Lawrence's belief in the New World as the source of realizing the untapped sources of life still available to us.

"Study of Thomas Hardy," D. H. Lawrence's first important venture in literary criticism,[5] establishes him as a critic who never separates art from life. The purpose of art is to express a new awareness, a new morality, consisting in a new relatedness, "a perfected relation

between man and his circumambient universe" ("Morality and the Novel" 527). The word "perfected" is important here, because a work of art does not recreate merely the reality it represents; it creates a more intense, more profound, and more lasting vision of which quite often the artist himself may not be aware. It is here that the "unconscious" comes into play. Lawrence discusses this almost undefinable relationship between the artist and his subject in Van Gogh's painting of the sunflowers. More than representing the sunflowers as tangible objects, Van Gogh "reveals, or achieves, the vivid relation between himself, as man, and the flower, as sunflower, at that quick moment of time." His painting is not an exact represention of the sunflower itself, because "we shall never know what the sunflower itself is. And the camera will visualize the sunflower far more perfectly than Van Gogh can." Lawrence believes that a work of art, therefore, tells the truth "only in the much-debated fourth dimension. In dimensional space it has no existence" (527). In his essay "The Crown," Lawrence further explores this "wholeness" born out of consummation through "relatedness." The purpose of art is to arrest these consummate moments. True art strives forever not to ossify these supreme moments into the frigidity of ideals, but keeps the balance between them "trembling and oscillating" (529).

Lawrence writes in his essay on Whitman that "the essential function of art is moral. Not aesthetic, not

decorative, not pastime and recreation. But moral. The essential function of art is moral." But this morality is "a passionate, implicit morality, not didactic. A morality that changes the blood, rather than the mind. Changes the blood first. The mind follows later in the wake" (Studies 180). All true art, therefore, portrays man's passionate struggle to "rip the old veil of a vision across, and find what the heart really believes in" (Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious 9-10). These supreme moments of creative fulfillment are unattainable if the artist blindly adheres to "a metaphysic of self-justification, or a metaphysic of self-denial" ("Study of Thomas Hardy" 479), and applies it to the world of human relationships. All art must create a new awareness by emphasizing a new morality of perfected relationships. In this way alone can art destroy those forms and monuments of dead beliefs which hamper the new life from taking roots.[6]

The Hardy essay is an example of D. H. Lawrence's quarrel with post-Renaissance Europe and the modern civilization in which the real "self" is all but obliterated by the monolith called society. This essay sets the stage for Lawrence's assessment of American literature and culture. In Thomas Hardy, characters who desire to break through "the hide-bound cabbage going rotten at the heart," and to "sprout into the unknown" by promoting "the vast, uncomprehended and incomprehensible morality of nature or of

life itself, surpassing human consciousness" are always thwarted by "a smaller system of morality, the one grasped and formulated by the human consciousness" (406-419).[7] In fact, Lawrence found this tendency in all British and European fiction--a quest for creating a homogeneous world in which the artist forces the individual to seek reconciliation with other individuals, groups, and ultimately society itself or be destroyed. In Twilight in Italy, Lawrence traces this movement of European culture from spontaneity to self-consciousness. As the Lawrences walk through Bavaria and the Austrian Tyrol into Italy, the roadside painted wooden figures of the crucified Christ change each time by the vision of the carver. In Bavaria, the Christ is a Bavarian peasant with 'broad cheekbones and sturdy limbs," having "the meanness of the peasant, but also with a kind of dogged nobility that does not yield its soul to the circumstance" (6). The Bavarian soul is the soul of an artist expressing a mystical comprehension of the blood and senses. Here the mind "is a suffusion of physical heat, it is not separated, it is kept submerged" (9). Toward Austria and the southern slopes of the Alps, the Christ is detached, "he meditates half-wearily, doggedly, the eyebrows lifted in strange abstraction, the elbow resting on the knee" (13). In Austria, the Christ figures portray, not the Bavarian ruggedness, but a Viennese elegance; the "blood-knowledge" of the highlander is decimated by the coldness of intellect. Lawrence's Hardy essay and other

writings of this period, therefore, initiate the critical method he adopts in Studies in Classic American Literature.

Not all critics are in agreement with D. H. Lawrence's amalgamating his literary criticism with his beliefs on the contemporary human condition. Rene Wellek remarks that in Lawrence's hands "literary criticism breaks down. Lawrence simply allegorizes books, destroys the content of a book, or the pattern of a writer's mind, and uses these allegories to expound his own ideology." Wellek accuses Lawrence of applying to books his "scheme of sexual psychology, combined with the scheme of history, which is not just primitivism but a utopia of rebirth." Lawrence, according to Wellek, discusses characters "without any regard to their function in a book, simply as human beings living today whom he examines for their morals and asks for right behavior in a situation abstracted from the book" (603-604). Wellek's criticism sounds very similar to the severe critical censure Lawrence's work was subjected to when it first appeared in 1923.[8] Wellek also belittles Lawrence's use of "overt and latent meaning" as a critical method and says:

> This sense of the double bottom, of the subtext, the latent meaning . . . is an old idea in criticism: well known to the Schlegels, prominent in such diverse unrelated critics as Dobrolyubov in Russia and De Sanctis in Italy, and used by Engels in his famous letter to Balzac. (602)

Obviously, Wellek criticizes Lawrence for not subscribing to any specific school of criticism, and employing a critical method which relies heavily on Lawrence's interest in sexual

psychology and his "wide reading in prehistory, anthropology, and philosophies of history (in Forbenius, Jane Harrison, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and many others)" (603). As if anticipating such an attack on his criticism, D. H. Lawrence himself had declared in a letter to Edward Garnett in 1912 that he was "no critic at all" (Huxley, Letters 75). He was, perhaps, aware that despite his strong views about the nature and function of criticism, he did not qualify as an academic critic acceptable to the literary establishment. Lawrence believes that literary criticism can not be a science because it must reflect the "feeling" a work of art produces upon the critic. An "emotionally educated" critic "feels the impact of a work of art in all its complexity and its force." Such a critic must himself "be emotionally alive in every fibre, intellectually capable and skillful in essential logic, and then morally very honest."[9] Even Wellek recognizes in Lawrence's reply to Arnold Bennett's criticism of his work,[10] Lawrence's defence of a "loose organic form." Wellek observes that Lawrence's statement is "the rejection of the well-made novel and the concept of unique fluid form and indeterminable character," and it sounds like a defense of the "innovations that could loosely be called modernism" (600-601).

However, in the course of time, D. H. Lawrence, in spite of his unconventional critical pronouncements, has been acknowledged as a critic with unusual insight.[11] After

the publication of David J. Gordon's D. H. Lawrence as a Literary Critic (1966), Lawrence has been established as a critic with unusual perception. According to Peter Bien, Gordon's work vindicates "the moral stance that governs Lawrence's criticism." Bien points out that Lawrence is no more viewed as a critic relying only on his instincts and his "dark philosophy," but as following a systematic critical methodology capable of creating deeper insights in a work of art. Peter Bien sees two principles combined in "the single theoretical position that underlies the many ideas which appear unsystematized in Lawrence's diverse critical writings." The first is "the attention to wholeness that produces his conception of art" as an ideal "vehicle communicating a state of being." The second is Lawrence's belief in an "ever-readjusting duality that produces both his conception of what art is, actually, and his practice as a workaday critic" (127-133).

It is not surprising, therefore, that even a critic like Michael J. Colacurcio, who is not in total agreement with the kind of criticism Lawrence himself and American critics who followed him in the 1960s and 1970s wrote, is forced to acknowledge that recent years have proved that "Lawrence's insights can be translated into very respectable scholarly prose but also that they can motivate and guide the most impressively detailed sorts of historical research" (488). Colacurcio, however, finds Lawrence's view of "unconscious" or the "symbolic" placed against the

"unconscious and the rhetorical," raising "some very thorny problems about the critical status of meanings which do, on the supposition, pass into a work as psychic (and beyond that, cultural) symptoms rather than as conscious verbal signs" (494). Colacurcio's comments on the problematic nature of the "symptomatic and symbolic" criticism are mainly based on E. D. Hirsch's belief that, before we try to unravel the writer's unconscious impulses behind a work of art, we must place it in its historical context and discover the writer's intended meaning at that historical moment: "Permanent meaning is, and can be nothing other than the author's meaning" (Hirsch 216). The question of authorial intention, however, has been thorny. On the other side, stand W. K. Wimsatt and M. C. Beardsley who profess that "the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art" (468). When Lawrence says that we "must look through the surface of American art, and see the inner diabolism of the symbolic meaning. Otherwise it is all childishness" (Studies 89), he becomes one of the earliest critics to comment on the "intentional fallacy."[12]

Since Lawrence's concept of validity in criticism depends not so much on the intellectual but on the emotional make-up of the critic, it is necessary to explore Lawrence's views on the human personality to understand his critical method. Lawrence was writing Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious (1921) and Fantasia of the Unconscious (1922)

almost the same time he wrote his essays on American literature. These two books constitute Lawrence's polemical attempt to "denigrate Freudian psychoanalysis and at the same time to systematize the philosophy of the unconscious he had been advancing in his fiction" (Hinz 251).

Lawrence found the Freudian unconscious too intellectually conceived, and thus reduced to a mere breeding ground for cruelty, lust and complexes. Lawrence objected to such statements by Freud which declared that the unconscious by itself had no independent existence, whose existence "we are obliged to assume-- because, for instance, we infer it in some way from its affects but of which we are not directly aware" (New Introductory Lectures 94). Freud reaches his "unconscious," not as an autonomous faculty, but by contrasting it with the "conscious." He defines it as a quality composed of the whole body of man's repressions: "We obtain our concept of the 'unconscious,' therefore, from the theory of repression. The repressed serves us as the prototype of the unconscious" (The Ego and the Id 12). D. H. Lawrence, on the other hand, repudiates the "gagged, bound, maniacal repressions, sexual complexes, faecal inhibitions, dream monsters" Freud parades in the name of the unconscious. Lawrence's unconscious is "not a shadow cast from the mind," but "the spontaneous life motive in every organism." The unconscious is "that essential unique nature of every individual creature, which is, by its very

nature, unanalysable, undefinable, inconceivable" (Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious (200-211).[13]

D. H. Lawrence is not alone in pointing out the gaps in the repression theories of Freud. C. G. Jung had already commented on the limited implications of the Freudian unconscious as "denoting the state of repressed or forgotten contents," which has "a functional significance thanks only to these." Jung, therefore, recognizes the independent existence of the "personal unconscious." However, Jung's agreement with Lawrence ends when he characterizes it as a "more or less superficial layer of the unconscious," and subordinates it to the "collective unconscious," a "deeper layer" which is not "individual but universal" (Jung 3-4). Lawrence's concept of the unconscious is opposed to Jung's who emphasizes the collective at the expense of the personal and the individual, and "dodges from his university gown to a priest's surplice" (Lawrence, Fantasia 13). Lawrence, therefore, blames Jung for turning the concept of the unconscious into a religious and mystical phenomenon, and demoting it to the level of an abstraction rather than aligning it to the source of creative fulfillment in the individual.[14] To label Lawrence's view as an "affirmation of the irrational" (Cowan 16), therefore, is an oversimplification more of complex notion. D. H. Lawrence's is an affirmation of the integrity of the human psyche, a bold attempt to save us from further alienation and

reification imposed by a culture struggling under the tyranny of a divided consciousness.

It is in this frame of mind that D. H. Lawrence initiates his examination of American literature and culture in Studies in Classic American Literature with the opening essay "The Spirit of Place." L. D. Clark describes this essay as "a symbology of being," which is "best anchored in the deepest perceptions of place" (The Minoan Distance 181). Lawrence in his travel books written during this period was intrigued by the extent to which place shaped and influenced individual perceptions. His letters of this period show that the spirit of the American continent was what attracted him the most.[15] He wrote to Catherine Carswell in January 1917: "I don't know why I go to America--except that I feel all right in going there. One instinctively takes one's way, and it is all right. I feel we shall get off" (Moore, Letters 498). Lawrence is convinced that the Pilgrim Fathers were motivated by a similar unconscious prompting when they left for the New World. They persuaded themselves to believe that "they came in search of freedom of worship," but, Lawrence says, "England had more freedom of worship in the year 1700 than America" (Studies 9). The Pilgrims, therefore, forced an idea to cover up an instinctual urge of moving to the New World because "the world fears a new experience more than it fears anything. Because a new experience displaces so many old experiences." The world, Lawrence believes, "doesn't fear a new idea. It can

pigeon-hole any idea. But it can't pigeon-hole a real new experience" (7). The Pilgrim Fathers also forced themselves not to hear the "invisible winds" rising within their unconscious selves carry them "as they carry swarms of locusts." They also refused to acknowledge "that invisible magnetism" of the spirit of place as it "brings the migrating birds to their unforeknown goal." They simply treated the New World as a place of refuge. Lawrence characterizes this unconscious urge as "IT," and says:

> That's why the Pilgrim Fathers came to America, then; and that's why we come. Driven by IT. We cannot see that invisible winds carry us, as they carry swarms of locusts, that invisible magnetism brings us as it brings the migrating birds to their unforeknown goal. But it is so. We are the marvellous choosers and deciders we think we are. IT chooses for us, and decides for us. Unless, of course, we are just escaped slaves, vulgarly cocksure of our ready-made destiny. But if we are living people in touch with the source, IT drives us and decides us. We are free only so long as we obey.[16] (13)

Instead of relating to this unconscious urge as promptings inaugurating a new experience heralding "positive freedom," they imposed on their pilgrimage a negative meaning--"to get away from everything they are and have been" (Studies 9).

Lawrence, therefore, believes that American literature and culture should not be interpreted merely "in terms of likeness and oneness" with the literature of Europe. It acquires an "alien quality" because it is the expression of a new "race idea" in which the European "race experience is surpassed and exceeded," an encounter actuated by the unconscious yearning for a "change in the way of experience,

a change in being" (The Symbolic Meaning 16-17). Unfortunately, Lawrence says, this craving remains unrealized because it is always throttled by the "conscious American motive," of "breaking away from all dominion." In commissioning the American ideal of democracy primarily as "the tool with which the old master of Europe, the European spirit, is undermined," and finally destroyed, American culture has perpetuated a "negative ideal of democracy" and failed to discover "the deepest whole self of man, the self in its wholeness, not idealistic halfness." Lawrence exhorts students of American literature and culture to rip through this "false dawn" of American consciousness (Studies 13-14). He advises them unravel the "unborn homunculus" (6) by pulling the "democratic and idealistic clothes off American utterance, and see what you can of the dusky body of IT underneath" (14).[17]

This emphasis on the individual attaining a selfhood known to the individual alone is the basis of Lawrence's concept of community--the living fraternity born out of the vitality of relationship, rather than out of a psyche torn between the demands of inherited ideas on the one hand, and those of spontaneity, on the other. Raymond Williams remarks that the "instinct of community" was "vital" in the thinking of Lawrence, "deeper and stronger, he argued, than even the sexual instinct" (205). In his essays on American literature, he is searching for a community growing out of such vital relationships emerging through a living

discourse. A community needs a place to grow in freedom, and the Pilgrim Fathers appeared to have been driven exactly to such a place--one untouched by, what Lawrence considers, the decadence of old Europe. History provided America the opportunity to revitalize Europe by offering it an alternative culture based on a new relatedness between them and the New World. However, since they were always haunted by the burden of their European past, they floundered. Their desire to break away from Europe rather than to move forward toward a new freedom, led them to establish a culture which partook much of Europe's decadence. Van Wyck Brooks comments approvingly on Lawrence's analysis of American cultural impasse:

> It is because America is still unformed that Americans tend to be overborne in Europe paying an exaggerated tribute to the forms of others. Here lies the grain of truth in D. H. Lawrence's statement that America is a 'spirit homeland' not yet a 'blood homeland'....Doesn't any sort of transplantation condemn them [Americans] still further to a surface existence? (From a Writer's Handbook 62).

Donald E. Pease, too, agrees with Lawrence's analysis of American culture. In his examination of American literature and culture of the 19th century, Pease quotes the following excerpt from Studies:

> Men are free when they are in a living homeland, not when they are straying and breaking away. Men are free when they are obeying some deep, inward voice of religious belief. Obeying from within. Men are free when they belong to a living, organic, believing community, active in fulfilling some unfulfilled, perhaps unrealized purpose. Not when they are escaping to some wild west. The most unfree souls go west, and shout of freedom.

> Men are freest when they are most unconscious of freedom. The shout is a rattling of chains, always was. (Studies 12)

Following Lawrence's interpretation, Pease attempts to discover in Emerson, Hawthorne, Whitman, Melville and Poe "forms of cultural agreement more lasting than the mere opposition to a past sanctioned by the Revolutionary mythos." He comments that this mythos "produced citizens who believed in nothing but opposition--to family, environment, cultural antecedents, and even their former selves." These writers "devised" in their work "visionary compacts." While the "Revolutionary mythos sanctioned a notion of negative freedom, keeping the nation's individuals separate from one another," these writers "sanctioned terms of agreement from the nation's past--capable of bringing together nation's citizens in the present" (ix-x). The thesis is clearly Lawrence's, who characterizes "the rhythm of American art-activity" as a "dual" process: a "disintegrating and sloughing of the old consciousness" and the "forming of a new consciousness underneath" (Studies 70). This process, Lawrence knows, is an excruciating process: "It is the shifting over from the old psyche to something new, a displacement. And displacements hurt. This hurts. So we try to tie it up, like a cut finger. Put a rag round it" (Studies 8).

In classic American literature--in the works of Benjamin Franklin, Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Richard Henry

Dana, Jr., Herman Melville, and Walt Whitman--D. H. Lawrence traces this process of culture formation.

Benjamin Franklin, Lawrence discovers, contributes the least in creating a genuine American culture. His emphasis on the perfectibility of man is Franklin's effort to convert the "forest" of man's soul into "a neat back garden. And we've all got to fit into his kitchen garden scheme of things" (Studies 16-17). Richard D. Mills comments that Lawrence's "wild soliloquy" about Benjamin Franklin shows that he "did not know Franklin at all" (143). Mills mentions that recent scholarship has presented "the most complete presentation of the man, certainly mirrored the theme of versatility and indicated the vastness of Franklin's amazing career" (143). Mills' comment on Lawrence's essay, however, is one-sided, because Mills ignores Lawrence's admiration for Franklin's "sturdy courage first of all, then his sagacity, then his glimpsing into the thunders of electricity, then his commonsense humour." All these, Lawrence considers, "qualities of a great man," but Franklin could never "become more than a great citizen" (Studies 19). He remained until the end a pioneer, trying to 'cultivate' the land, instead of confronting it in its naked rawness. He failed to relate with the great diversity which the New World presented to the American. Lawrence quotes from Franklin's observations about Indians who he visited to settle some dispute:

> And, indeed, if it be the design of Providence to extirpate these savages in order to make room for the cultivators of the earth, it seems not improbable that rum may not be the appointed means. It has already annihilated all the tribes who formerly inhabited all the seacoast. (qtd. in Studies 21)

Lawrence comments that Benjamin Franklin "in his sagacity, knew that the breaking of the old world was a long process." In the "depths of his own underconsciousness [he] hated England, [he] hated Europe, [he] hated the whole corpus of the European being." However, without going through a "gradual shedding," which is a "long and half-secret process" (Studies 25-26), Franklin wanted to be an American. Robert B. Sayre's comments that Franklin "translated" life as a series of "dramatic sense 'acts,' roles to some degree thrust upon him but also consciously selected and therefore open to whatever interpretations he wished to make of them" (23). Sayre's belief is very similar to what Lawrence has to say about Franklin. We never see the real Franklin, because, as Phillip Abbott observes, he always appears as a "hustler," and "appearance is really the only persona that Franklin ever reveals" (32). Abbot's portrayal of Franklin substantiates the kind of community Franklin's practical wisdom would provide for the rising nation:

> The hustler views society at large as a huge,powerful but lumbering giant that can be tricked and fooled. Society (or at least basic aspects of it) is exploitative and hypocritical. This belief provides the hustler with his rationalization for his own activities . . . . Betrayal or deceit is one of hustler's basic

> fears. I think this concern produces a peculiar conception of community for the hustler, and a particular style of political activity as well. (35)

This "theoretic and materialistic concept" of relationships that Franklin sees as the basis of the new society, according to D. H. Lawrence, renders Franklin "in the main a recreant European" (Studies 26). Echoing D. H. Lawrence, Key Seymour House summarizes Franklin's message to Americans: "Work, you free slaves, work" (170).

Franklin, in Lawrence's mind, serves not as an example of the dual rhythm of American art-activity, but as the "apotheosis of the ego." It is the ego, Lawrence believes, is our "unconscious undoing," because it assures us that "which we are is absolute. There is no adding to it, no superseding this accomplished self. It is final and universal. All that remains is thoroughly to explore it" ("The Crown" 391). From Benjamin Franklin, the "real practical prototype of the American," Lawrence moves to Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, who, because of his idealization of labor and his belief in the sweetness and purity of nature, strikes Lawrence as the "emotional" prototype (Studies 29) of the American.

After a long period of obscurity,[18] Ludwig Lewisohn resurrected the almost forgotten Letters from an American Farmer, and wrote an introduction to Letters, published in 1904, for the first time after the eighteenth century. Lawrence's admiration for Crevecouer goes to the extent to

of discovering in him a spirit very much like his own. It is not as the earliest singer of the American dream, as Lewisohn saw him, that "the French-born American author was a predecessor for Lawrence (Clark 274). Lawrence found in Crevecouer the first symptoms of the American psyche searching for a new meaning in the American landscape--a landscape waiting to be translated into a new culture. Crevecouer does "not put NATURE in his pocket, as Benjamin put the Human Being" (Studies 30). The artist in Crevecouer, "intellectualizes on top, and his dark under-consciousness goes on contradicting him beneath." This internal dialectic raises him into an artist, "Franklin isn't anything" (31). Crevecouer's engagement with the American Spirit of Place helps him confront the multifaced challenge American culture faced in its struggle to shed its negative quest to be "masterless" and move toward a positive act of creation. Although at times he listened to the "sweet-and-pureness" of Nature, Crevecouer recognized diversity and conflict. Lawrence cherishes those moments in Crevecouer when he sings in "the voice of the artist in contrast to the voice of the ideal turtle" (30-32).

This emphasis on the diverse and complex nature of the process of culture formation, almost absent from the discussion of American literature and culture of his contemporaries, is Lawrence's lasting contribution to a proper understanding of the dilemma America has faced and is still facing. The spirit of the land demands a recognition

of diversity, but this urge is always hampered by our obsession with preconceived ideals of oneness and conformity. Crevecouer, despite his idealization of the American landscape, could discern a new spirit in the new continent. True to his credo of "saving the American tale from the American artist" (Studies 9), Lawrence perceives in Crevecouer's Letters the idealist putting over "a lot of stuff about nature and the noble savage and the innocence of toil, etc., etc. Blarney!" However, when Crevecouer the artist enters with "glimpses of actual nature, not writ large," and describes the lower forms of natural life like "insects, snakes and birds, he glimpses in their own mystery, their own pristine being. And straightway gives the lie to Innocent Nature" (Studies 31). Lawrence admires this quality in Crevecouer in the American farmer's description of the fight between a swallow and a wren for the possession of their nest, and also his letter, "On Snakes; and on the Humming Bird." Commenting on Crevecouer's description of the fight between the two birds, Lawrence wrote in the original version of his essay:

> This event Crevecouer watches with full delight. He takes no sides and feels no pangs. We can imagine Franklin, in a similar case, applying justice. But Crevecouer only delights in the little living drama, watching the mysterious nature of birds asserting itself in arrogance and pugnacity.[19] (The Symbolic Meaning 48-49)

It is this evocation of the spirit of conflict, rather than the idealization of the harmony, purity, and sweetness of the natural world, that Lawrence admires in Crevecouer.

Crevecouer's question, "Where did that little bird learn that spirit of injustice? It is not endowed with what we term reason" (Letters from an American Farmer 34-35), convinces Lawrence that the artist in Crevecouer was capable of breaking through the straitjacket of ideas and had the capacity to marvel at nature's mystery and mindlessness--its otherness.

Lawrence bears a special relation to Crevecouer's letter on the hummingbird.[20] Their similar perception of the spirit of the new continent is symbolized by the hummingbird. The presence of this spirit makes Lawrence wonder why, despite such examples of artists in classic American literature whose art-speech unconsciously establishes a spontaneous relationship with the new land, we have failed to penetrate the veneer of imitative idealism that lies so thick on the surface. In addition to the hummingbirds, Lawrence sees in Crevecouer's description of the fight between two snakes his ability not only to perceive but also to articulate and welcome the eternal opposition between irreconcilable forces that manifests itself in creation. It is this consciousness, rather than a blind quest for conformity, that alone can lead to spontaneous human relationships in a culture teeming with irreconcilables. Lawrence was the first critic to discover the singer of the American dream in his new role as a catalyst of a new consciousness, articulating the conflict of dream and reality. Following D. H. Lawrence, James C.

Mohr criticizes the over-simplified view of Crevecouer as idealizing American society, and observes:

> [In Crevecouer] the larger pattern is almost circular and involves not simply the fulfillment of social ideals but their failure as well. The idyllic image of America which Crevecouer develops during the first eight letters of his book becomes the dream against which the intensity of later disillusionment is measured. (355)

Lawrence, in his essay on Benjamin Franklin, quoted Franklin as saying that it was "the design of providence to extirpate these savages in order to make room for the cultivators of the earth" (Studies 21). This is one extreme of the American attitude to the Red Indian. The other extreme Lawrence finds illustrated in the last letter of Crevecouer. In this letter Crevecouer admires their ease, decency, and simple manners, and romanticizes them. Lawrence believes that Crevecouer does so because he is "determined to know the savage way of life, to his own mind's satisfaction. So he just faked the last Letters. A sort of wish-fulfillment" (Studies 36). However, Lawrence misunderstands Crevecouer's use of the Red Indian by calling it overintellectualized.

E. A. Rapping is closer to the truth in his remark that Crevecouer employs the Indian, not to "represent a real opinion, "but as a fictitious model of relief," and "as a contrast in his treatment of America" (718). In fact, Crevecouer, like Lawrence, sees the salvation of the new culture in moving west, away from the center of civilization.[21] What made Lawrence look westward toward

America during the war was exactly what Crevecouer was searching for by moving toward the western frontier during the revolutionary turmoil in America. Richard Slotkin explains Crevecouer's proclivity for moving westward in terms Lawrence would approve:

> Crevecouer employs this chapter as the ultimate characterizing stroke in his portrait of the American farmer. His response to the evils of civilization is not to withdraw behind the hedge of civilization; rather his sufferings determine him to move still more deeply into the land. The solution to the problems and distresses of living in a wildness America is, not a return to Europe, but a move outward to a frontier less trammeled by Europe and civilization. (Regeneration 264)

Slotkin quite succinctly supports Lawrence's thesis that American culture, because it finds the promptings of its dark unconscious so uncomfortable, must not turn back to Europe for succor, but should instead delve deeper into the true American psyche, represented by the American wild. Charles Feidelson, Jr., in Symbolism and American Literature, considers symbolism as "one of the most sophisticated movements in literary history," a mode of expression already being employed by the nineteenth-century American writers. However, Feidelson traces the roots of symbolism mainly to the puritan "sensibility" and puritan "methodology" (4). Lawrence is the first critic who discovers the symbolic mode in Crevecouer, a writer not within the puritan tradition. Crevecouer, Lawrence says, though "affecting a naive simplicity, [is] in reality most sophisticated" (The Symbolic Meaning 54).

Like Lawrence's own, Crevecouer's art-speech creates "The greatest symbolic language of mankind, greater than any esoteric symbolism." Making a distinction between "the art-symbol or art term [which] stands for a pure experience, emotional and passional, spiritual and perceptual, all at once," and "the authorized symbol [which] stands always for a thought or an idea, some mental concept" (18-19), Lawrence attributes to Crevecouer the same unconscious process of symbol creation Marcus Bewley later discovers in Crevecouer's description of a caged negro. Following Lawrence, Bewley discovers in Crevecouer a writer to whose age symbolism meant nothing, but who could still "slip the leash of the external limitations imposed by the objective data it describes, and, rising to a high imaginative level, live in the mind with essentially symbolic life which is intrinsically related to the facts it records." Giving examples from Crevecouer's letter on the negro, Bewley, as Lawrence did, emphasizes the unconscious artist in Crevecouer working on his description. Bewley's distinction between the two kinds of symbolism is typically Laurentian:

> But Crevecouer was creating a symbol without knowing it. It is not the fact that arrests us, but the way he recreated in language. The language is not merely in touch with the immediate tragedy; it has its roots in a reality that was vaster than Crevecouer was consciously aware of. From the implicitly ironic interplay between his polite and measured prose reflecting the illusion of external order in the universe, and the hideous, torturing fact of the caged negro, there open the richest symbolic perspectives. This kind of symbolism, so deeply immersed in the reality of human experience, is worth more, it seems to me,

> than a symbolism which is only interested in intellectual method, and whose roots are cut off from life. (105-106)

It is through Benjamin Franklin and Crevecouer that D. H. Lawrence reaches James Fenimore Cooper, and locates in his works too the same tension between the conscious and the unconscious artist that American literary criticism was to explore later as a distinguishing mark of American literature. One of the earliest critics to make a serious effort to bring the Red Indian within the gambit of American literary and cultural tradition, Lawrence equates the native American with the "daimon, or demon, of America." In the "desire to extirpate the Indian," on the one side, and the "contradictory desire to glorify him," Lawrence finds the distinguishing feature of the American relationship to this spirit of place (Studies 41). While Franklin, who had no trace of the artist in him, had "a specious little equation in providential mathematics: Rum + Savage = 0" (40), the artist in Cooper weaves a "wish fulfillment" fantasy around the Red Indian, "some strange atonement: expiation and oneing" (43).

In Cooper's White novels, Homeward Bound, Eve Effingham, The Spy, and The Pilot, Cooper is pre-occupied with the conscious American obsession with the inherited ideals of democracy and equality. These novels, in Lawrence's view, are "only historically and sardonically interesting." Cooper's characters in these novels "are all pinned down by some social pin, and buzzing away in social

importance or friction, round and round on the pin" (48).[22] They never become real human beings. This is the Cooper of "Notions of the Americans," who believes that the "literature of England and that of America must be fashioned after the same models." Cooper writes:

> The second obstacle against which American literature has to contend is in the poverty of materials. There is scarcely an ore which contributes to the wealth of the author, that is found here, in veins as in Europe. There are no annals for the historian; no follies (beyond the most vulgar and common place) for the satirist: no manners for the dramatist; no obscure fictions for the writer of romance; no gross and hardy offences against decorum for the moralist; nor any of the rich artificial auxiliaries. (773)

In Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales, however, Lawrence is the first critic to discover evidence that Cooper was not aware, as most American writers are not, of the infinite creative power lying dormant in the artist's unconscious self. This power of the unconscious, which links the artist to the spirit of place, more than counterbalances, according to Lawrence, the apparently overwhelming poverty of material Cooper and other American artists often complained about. By discovering this unknown quality in Cooper, D. H. Lawrence inaugurated a new chapter in the appreciation of Cooper's writings. Cooper was not regarded highly as an artist before Lawrence wrote his essays on American literature. Armin Arnold, in <u>The Symbolic Meaning</u>, quotes from a talk by T. S. Eliot at the University of Washington on July 9, 1953, in which even Eliot, a severe critic of Lawrence, concedes:

> Cooper has suffered, like Walter Scott, from being read in early youth, and by many people never read again: it remained for D. H. Lawrence who discovered Cooper later in life, to write probably the most brilliant of critical essays on him. (62)

In their introduction to a selection of Cooper criticism, George Dekker and John P. McWilliams observe that "appreciation of Cooper's achievement couldn't get very far until it found a critic of Romantic genius who was in touch with Freud on the one hand and with Crevecouer on the other." D. H. Lawrence's essays are "revolutionary in their reading of Cooper as proper stuffed shirt," who "at deepest and largely unconscious levels, was a symbolist poet expressing the racial myth of America." According to these critcs, Lawrence's essays have been more influential in reawakening "serious interest in Cooper than any other critical study," both because of "their own direct impact on non-specialist readers and through their patent influence on such widely read critics as Henry Nash Smith, Leslie Fiedler, and R. W. B. Lewis" (48-51).

The misunderstanding about Cooper's stature as a classic in American literature stemmed mainly from critics like Mark Twain, Frank Norris and Yvor Winters who attempted to place him in a realistic tradition. Edmund Wilson remarks that Twain's essay, "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses" and Norris' "An American School of Fiction?" both "miss the point about Cooper." The Leatherstocking Tales, according to Wilson, "have nothing to do with either Mark

Twain's or Norris' kind of realism." He believes that Lawrence appreciates Cooper better when he treats his novels, not as "a picture of actual life, but a kind of romantic myth like the stories of Poe, Melville, and Hawthorne" (The Shock 581). Stanley Edgar Hyman criticizes Yvor Winters' efforts "to establish Cooper as a realistic writer, defending the factual accuracy of such things as the feats in the Leatherstocking Tales." Hyman supports D. H. Lawrence belief that "the only possible basis for treating Cooper with any seriousness is as a mythmaker" (58-59). Leslie Fiedler accepts Lawrence's "immensely illuminating" interpretation of Leatherstocking tales as "the simplest kind of wish-fulfillment fantasies" (Love and Death 196-197). A. N. Kaul attributes the truth in Lawrence's assessment of Cooper to "his usual apocalyptic insight" (137).[23] Michael Colacurcio is right in considering Lawrence's study of Cooper as a "classic" example of his influence on American criticism:

> Lawrence's judgement that the most significant meanings of the Leatherstocking series arise not so much from the conscious thematic implications of the individual works as from the epic sweep or mythic progress of the whole project has become something like dogma.[24] (492)

Key Seymour House comments that D. H. Lawrence's essay on Cooper has been helpful because of Lawrence's "ability to sense that the process of character formation was complicated. Old forms had to be sloughed even while a new man was forming himself underneath" (7). This remark

captures the true spirit of Lawrence's essays. His main concern in his survey of American literature, as already emphasized, is not to attempt their critical evaluation on traditional lines, but to find in them those positives that give a new meaning to human relatedness. L. D. Clark observes, in "Lawrence and the American Indian," that Lawrence through "the symbolic configuration of white man, red man and spirit of place" was visualizing a new community (315), which had no option but to lay the foundation of the future American culture on the principles of diversity. Lawrence believes that "the lovely American landscape is the pure landscape of futurity: not of our present factory-smoked futurity, but of the true future of the as yet unborn, or scarcely born, race of Americans" (The Symbolic Meaning 111). Lawrence identifies Cooper's literary efforts with this new cultural and historical enterprise. In Cooper American literature glimpses the first clear evidence of the roots of a new community emerging--a community founded on a new historical paradigm, on a movement from old age to youth rather than progressively from youth to old age:

> The Leatherstocking novels create the myth of this new relation. And they go backwards, from old age to golden youth. That is the true myth of America. She starts old, old, wrinkled and writhing in an old skin. And there is a gradual sloughing of the old skin, towards a new youth. It is the myth of America. (Studies 60)

Lawrence, in all his writings of this period, attempts a reconciliation between birth and death, ecstasy and pain, creation and corruption. In the Cooper essay, when Lawrence

declares that the "essential American soul is hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer" (68), he is hinting at the emergence of a culture not trying to impose its own image on others through the assimilation of "the grinning, unappeased aboriginal demons," because the "white man's spirit can never become as the red man's spirit. It doesn't want to. But it can cease to be the opposite and negative of the red man's spirit," by opening out "a new great area of consciousness, in which there is room for the red spirit too." This is possible only by sloughing through the old consciousness which has "become a tight-fitting prison to us, in which we are going rotten" (56-58). Following Lawrence closely, David W. Noble remarks that Lawrence's interpretation was "at once exact, poetic, and inimitable" delineation of the myth of America in Cooper who, "it would appear, is aware that the myth is of European origin," but "in his unconscious self he also knows that the myth must be transformed to answer the demands of history. The myth is a prisoner of time; it is a prisoner of the historical culture which gave it birth." The new myth, therefore, Noble believes, instead of creating a world of harmony, must play a different drama in the newly-discovered Eden--a drama that depends on "disharmony" (420-421).

Edgar Allan Poe's contribution to the formation of the emerging American culture, in Lawrence's opinion, is of a different nature. Poe "has no truck with Indians or Nature. He makes no bones about Red Brothers and Wigwams," and is

"absolutely concerned with the disintegration processes of his own psyche" (Studies 70). Almost twenty years before the publication of Arthur Hobson Quinn's Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography (1941) which seriously discussed Poe as an artist, D. H. Lawrence was shedding a new light on Poe's place not only in American literature but also in the formation of the new American culture. It is in the context of Lawrence's own preoccupation during this period to reconcile death and pain into an ecstasy that his acute insight in Poe's art can be fully appreciated. Artists like Poe and Baudelaire, according to Mary Freeman, exploit this technique as "a literary stock-in-trade." Lawrence, however, considers Poe's kind of "romantic sensationalism," this "gratification from incongruity," a destructive rather than a creative process (74). Lawrence believes in the coming together of opposites to create a sense of wholeness. In his earlier comments on Poe's art in his essay, "The Crown," noticing that Poe's desire of identification of love leads to disintegration, Lawrence observes:

> And then, when a man seeks a woman, he seeks not a consummation in union, but a frictional reduction. He seeks to plunge his compound flesh into the cold acid that will reduce him, in supreme sensual experience, down to his parts . . . . His cruelty-lust is directed almost as much against himself as against his victim . . . . He is immersing himself within a keen, fierce, terrible reducing agent. This is true of the hero in Edgar Allan Poe's tales, "Ligeia," or "The Fall of the House of Usher." The man seeks his own sensational reduction, but he disintegrates the woman even more, in the name of love. In the name of love, what horrors men perpetrate, and are applauded! (Phoenix II 394).

Love in Poe is not only "terribly obscene," but is also "a frictional, destructive force" (Studies 73). In him, "the mystic, spontaneous self is replaced by the self-consuming ego." In this reductive process, the individual becomes "a unit of will rather than a unit of being." Love is reduced to "an electric attraction rather than a communion between self and self." The man becomes "a lodestone, the woman is the soft metal. Each draws the other mechanically." They both press one another "intolerably till one is bound to disappear: one or both" (The Symbolic Meaning 118-119).

Richard Swigg says that Lawrence's remark, in his review of Max Havelaar, concerning the later Mark Twain's "bitter, almost mad-dog aversion from humanity" (Phoenix 238), is equally applicable to Poe (Swigg 192). In a way both Lawrence and Poe were seeking to free their characters from the hold of consciousness. David Halliburton says that, in this attempt, Poe's characters undergo a series of changes, and this "process fulfills the requirements of a Laurentian lapsing out through which the energies of being are released from the hold of consciousness." This results in the "sloughing off [of] inessential ties--those of family, for example--the lapsing individual moves toward membership in a more essential unit, the primal couple" (273). Greatly influenced by Lawrence's reading of Poe, Halliburton is, in fact, repeating what Lawrence considered to be the substance of Poe's largely negative, but

indispensable prelude to any creative endeavor that would encourage the movement of American culture toward a new beginning. Poe accomplished the thankless task of breaking down the old white psyche before a new relationship could emerge:

> Poe had a pretty bitter doom. Doomed to seethe down his soul in a great continuous convulsion of disintegration, and doomed to register the process. And then doomed to be abused for it, when he had performed some of the bitterest tasks of human experience, that can be asked of a man. Necessary tasks, too. For the human soul must suffer its own disintegration, consciously, if ever it is to survive. (Studies 70)

This is an extraordinary tribute, especially because it comes at a time when, despite J . H. Ingram's attempts to rehabilitate Poe in his Edgar Allan Poe: His Life, Letters, and Opinions (1900), Poe's literary reputation had not recovered from the damage inflicted by Rev. R. W. Griswold's memoir.

However, it took almost a decade for Lawrence's essay on Poe to penetrate American literary criticism. Allen Tate, in his address before the Poe Society of Baltimore in 1949, comments that "D. H. Lawrence was no doubt right in describing as vampires his [Poe's] women characters; the men soon to join them as 'undead,' have by some defect of the moral will, made them so" ("Our Cousin, Mr. Poe" 42). Mario Praz is another early critic to acknowledge the value of Lawrence's interpretation. Commenting on the similarity between Poe and Baudelaire, Praz observes:

> The tales of Poe, as D. H. Lawrence observed, are always a symbolical, mythological translation of the same thirst for unrealized love . . . and of the desire for that complete fusion with the beloved being which ends in vampirism. It is a nervous ecstasy, which becomes localized in actual genuine obsessions--the eyes of Ligeia, the teeth of Berenice, a yearning for the absolute knowledge which coincides with annihilation and death" (145).[25]

Closely following Lawrence, Henry Levin comments that Poe's works are a good study of what Lawrence called the "demonic side" of American literature. Levin agrees with Lawrence's description of Poe as an adventurer into vaults, cellars and underground passages of the human mind (The Power of Blackness 154). Richard Swigg almost repeats Lawrence's thesis on Poe's contribution to the disintegrative process as a necessary phase in the cultural regeneration the new continent was seeking. Describing Poe's tales as "assertions of individualism" (191), Swigg believes they "carry us directly to the psychological and artistic dilemmas which, in less obvious ways, hinder the attempts of Hawthorne, Melville, and Cooper to sustain an authentic moral stability in their differing arts" (190). Swigg also agrees with Lawrence's emphasis on the symbolic significance of Poe's tales which substitute "patterns of arabesque deadness in place of the real mysteries of life and spontaneity," and seek to find "health by traversing the pathways of disintegration" (195). Herold Kaplan, who discusses the nineteenth-century American literature primarily in its cultural context, on lines suggested by

Lawrence, characterizes Lawrence's essay on Poe as "particularly rare and valuable" (113), because it articulates the emergence of "a new myth of America," which strips away the old consciousness so that "the new man in a new skin takes on life" (119).

In moving from Poe to Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter, D. H. Lawrence rejoins the main currents of classic American literature: "a disintegrating and sloughing of the old consciousness" and the "forming of a new consciousness underneath" (Studies 70). When Lawrence comments that the "blue-eyed darling Nathaniel knew disagreeable things in his inner soul," but "was careful to send them out in disguise" he was not condemning Hawthorne as a liar or a hypocrite, an accusation often hurled at Lawrence's interpretation. He was, in fact, underlining the predicament all artists, including himself, face when they tend to be overwhelmed by their own conscious persona, and thereby fail to hear the promptings of their unconscious as contained in their "art speech." It is perhaps this misunderstanding of Lawrence's comment that has been responsible for the rather slow penetration of his views in in Hawthorne criticism. Lydia Blanchard observes that although "Lawrence's central position in Cooper and Whitman studies is well established, his influence on our interpretation of Hawthorne is more recent, "because critics have read The Scarlet Letter "with different generic expectations, seeing the text as romance or novel rather

than satire." Blanchard mentions critics like Harry Levin , James Mellows and Richard Harter Fogle who see the novel merely as a study of original sin, a story of human weakness and sorrow (169-170). In his recent work, Contexts for Hawthorne: 'The Marble Faun' and the Politics of Openness and Closure in American Literature, Milton R. Stern comments that "conservative Hawthorne's choice of vocation . . . influenced his narrative technique." Hawthorne, in choosing to become a writer of romances, "challenged the priorities of his society." Because he did not follow a "manly" vocation, "he felt a psychological displacement, a withholding of allegiance." Therefore, Hawthorne's "triple citizenship in the realms of his vocation, his ideology, and his utopia was a source of psychic disruption, a citizenship in which Hawthorne constantly belonged somewhere else" (ix-x). In substance, Stern discovers the same "duplicity" that Lawrence finds in Hawthorne's fiction.

Lawrence is quick to see in Hawthorne's novel "not a pleasant pretty romance," but "a sort of parable, an earthly story with a hellish meaning" (Studies 89). He finds Dimmesdale committing the sin of "self-watching, self-consciousness. The sin, and the doom. Dirty understanding" (Studies 91). Dimmesdale's conduct "is a form of masturbation." He is out to "get a mental grip on his body. And since he can't quite manage it with the mind, witness his fall--he will give it what for, with whips. His will shall lash his body" (96). Lawrence sees Hawthorne,

the unconscious satirist in him, not aiming at eliciting sympathy for the exaggerated suffering of Dimmesdale, but a conduct to be ridiculed. However, the conscious artist in Hawthorne appears to be sympathetic to Dimmesdale's torment as a form of atonement. Lawrence, therefore, pulls Hawthorne's novel out of its limited context as an attack on Puritanism, and places it into its wider cultural context.

Perhaps the best part of Lawrence's essay on Hawthorne is his analysis of Hester's character, not as Hawthorne's conscious artistry portrayed it, but as she is within her unconscious self. Lawrence underlines her "demoniacal self-will," not her humility, and her basic aversion from both lover and child, not her profound sacrifices for them. This renders The Scarlet Letter, an unconscious satire, "the most colossal satire ever penned," of nineteenth-century American life. "Hester Prynne," according to Lawrence, "is the great nemesis of woman. She is the KNOWING Ligeia risen diabolic from the grave. Having her own back. UNDERSTANDING" (Studies 90-95). This is possible only because Dimmesdale has lost his manliness by offering his beliefs to her.[26]

Lawrence had touched on this theme of relationships as the basis of culture formation in his essays on Cooper and Poe. In the Leatherstocking Tales, Judith represents "the dark, fearless, passionate" woman, and Hetty the "frail and innocent . . . white lily" kind of woman. Judith tries to master the "quiet, reserved, unmastered Deerslayer," who

refuses to be mastered (67). It is this contest of wills between the sexes, Lawrence believes, that characterizes today's man-woman relationships. Instead of nourishing each other's identity, and entering into a genuine relatedness, the clash between sensuality and spirituality goes on until it reaches fatal proportions in the stories of Poe. Here, "it is pushed to extremes in a battle of wills between the lovers" (74). The "thwarted will," returns "for vengeance on life" (81), as a vampire to feed on the living.

D. H. Lawrence has often been accused of treating women as inferior to men. However, Mary Freeman points out that "women in Lawrence's life and books are not quenched inferior beings, but usually energetic, often clever, always vital persons, equal matches for Lawrentian males. In many cases they dominate the men around them" (198). It is true that Lawrence makes a distinction between men and women. But this distinction is not the same as between two egos. It is, rather, between two autonomous individuals, and serves as the basis of a true relationship. Today, according to Lawrence, man-woman relationship is reduced to "a terrific struggle and conflict of the two oppopsing egos or individualities . . . the inevitable result of trying to snatch an intensified individuality out of the mutual flame" (". . . Love Was Once a Little Boy" 445). Lawrence believes that our education continues to "make the sexes alike, destroying the original individuality of the blood, to substitute for it this dreary individuality of the ego"

(454). This separateness between men and women, Lawrence says, is because of "greater and greater abstraction from the physical, towards a further and further physical separateness between men and women, and between individual and individual" ("Men Must Work and Woman as Well" 589). Because Lawrence's view on women can easily be misrepresented, it is not easy to read his essay on The Scarlet Letter as a feminist tract. However, Lydia Blanchard says that Nina Baym, in her "seminal book," The Shape of Hawthorne's Career (1976), reads The Scarlet Letter in relation to gender problems, and her findings are "consistent with Lawrence's identification of the central issues in the novel." Baym, like Lawrence, believes that "Dimmesdale's offense is to have repudiated patriarchal rule by acknowledging Hester's matriarchal dominion." Hawthorne's world, according to Baym, consists of "strong women and weak men." Although Baym agrees with Lawrence's view of Dimmesdale's behavior as "hypocritical," she does not subscribe to Lawrence's assessment of Hester. Blanchard, however, observes: "These differences are clearly important, but less important than the belief Baym and Lawrence share that Hawthorne writes as a feminist with secular, gender related, and political concerns" (170-172).

With Richard Henry Dana's Two Years Before the Mast, D. H. Lawrence enters the romance of the sea. James M. Cox is surprised that Dana's work could ever "have been chosen

by D. H. Lawrence to appear in his extremely select list of classic American literary works." Cox remarks that Dana is largely ignored as an American writer even today and "of the thousands and thousands of items on American writers and writing, only four or five are devoted to him." The obscurity in which Dana had fallen was mainly because he came to be "associated with the genteel tradition" (55-56). Also, the revival of Melville, for which Lawrence was mainly responsible, led to Dana being overshadowed (57). However, Cox laments that, despite Lawrence's success in rediscovering Dana, whatever struck Lawrence about him in his "arresting chapter--and his treatment of Dana, like his treatment of every writer in his remarkable book, is arresting--no longer strikes anthologists" (55).[27]

Lawrence's essays on Dana and Melville show that in these two writers "the human relationship is no longer the chief interest. The sea enters as a great protagonist" ("The Two Principles," The Symbolic Meaning 175). Lawrence interprets Dana's work as the beginning of the great American experience of trying to establish rapport with the sea, after artists like Thomas Hardy, Tolstoi and Verga in the Old World and American writers in the New world had failed to establish a passionate relationship with the soil, Dana's attempt was both "the greatest trial. And the most vivid failure"-- a great trial because Dana "turned to the sea, the naked mother," and an equally great failure because he also aimed at knowing the sea and forgot that "KNOWING

and BEING are opposite, antagonistic states. The more you know, exactly, the less you are, the more you are, in being, the less you know" (Studies 115-116). Lawrence traces this tension between being" and "knowing" in Dana's style also, a style both "great and hopeless, the style of a perfect tragic recorder." However, Lawrence pays an unusual tribute to Dana by quoting from his work more extensively than from any other author he discusses in Studies. The flogging scene in Dana's narrative is considered pivotal by many critics. But most critics read in this scene an urgent call for the reform in the condition of seamen, especially the abolition of flogging. Lawrence, however, looks at this scene differently. He considers Dana, the idealist, struggling with his other persona--the typical sailor who "understood spontaneous passional morality, not the artificial ethical" (128). Despite Dana's idealism, Lawrence admires his marvellous act of mediation between the reader and the natural elements:

> Dana's small book is a very great book: contains a great extreme of knowledge, knowledge of the great element.
> And after all, we have to know all before we can know that knowing is nothing.
> Imaginatively, we have to know all, even the elemental waters. And know and know on, until knowledge suddenly shrivels and we know that forever we don't know.
> Then there is a sort of peace, and we can start afresh, knowing we don't know. (Studies 138)

To D. H. Lawrence also must go the credit of rediscovering Herman Melville whose Moby Dick was dismissed as simply "a mad eloquent romance of the sea" by John Macy

(16), and whose writings were completely ignored by Van Wyck Brooks who excluded Melville when he called "Thoreau, Emerson, Poe and Hawthorne as possessions for ever" (America's Coming-of-Age 44). Lawrence begins his study of Herman Melville by characterizing this grossly underrated writer as "the greatest seer and poet" (139) of the sea in his essay on Typee and Omoo. Although himself criticized for recommending a return to primitivism, it is significant that Lawrence finds Melville's quest to discover a primitive paradise in the two novels as doomed from the very beginning. Melville was trying to enact unconsciously "a rebirth myth," not knowing that "one cannot go back . . . . Melville couldn't go back....Back towards the past, savage life. One cannot go back. It is one's destiny inside one" (Studies 144). Melville's anguish is a byproduct of the same psychic chasm Lawrence discovers in other American writers: in his soul, Melville was "proud and savage," while "in his mind and will he wanted the perfect fulfilment of love" (150). Richard Chase accepts Lawrence's analysis of Melville's anguish, but comments that it is "somewhat limited by Lawrence's own preoccupations." Chase observes: "It serves, however, to remind us of the personal anguish that underlay Melville's flights of thought and imagination--the anguish of a powerful need for love which he never found" (Herman Melville 8).

In Omoo, however, Lawrence discovers Melville's obsession with the ideal diminishing. Here lies the fascination of this work:

> Perhaps Melville is at his best, his happiest, in Omoo. For once he is really reckless. For once he takes life as it comes. For once he is the gallant rascally epicurean, eating the world like a snipe, dirt and all baked into one bonne bouche (Studies 148-149).

Newton Arvin endorses Lawrence's opinion of Omoo (Herman Melville 62). In all writings of Melville, Lawrence discovers the same tension he found in other American artists. In the "darkness of his soul," Melville was "proud and savage," but in his conscious will "he wanted the perfect fulfilment of love; he wanted the lovey-doveyness of perfect mutual understanding" (Studies 150).

D. H. Lawrence's essay on Moby Dick starts with a categorical declaration that the white whale is a symbol and even Melville did not know what it symbolized. This view synchronizes with Lawrence's general attitude toward the symbol as "a complex of emotional experience whose power is to arouse the deep emotional self, and the dynamic self, beyond comprehension" ("Introduction to The Dragon of the Apocalypse" 296). However, in the Melville essay Lawrence attempts an extended analysis of the nature of Melville's symbolism. In doing so, Lawrence again underlines the duality of American art: superficially, Moby Dick is a fantastic sea romance, but symbolically it makes us aware of the doom that awaits the over-conscious and intellectualized

white psyche. Lawrence sees Moby Dick as a struggle between the white whale, "the deepest blood-being," our "deepest blood-nature." The Pequod, "the ship of the white American soul" is a "symbol of this civilized world of ours" (Studies 169). When the ship goes down, it takes with her "Negro and Indian and Polynesian, Asiatic and Quaker and good, business-like Yankees and Ishmael: she sank the lot of them" (169-170). Lewis Mumford, who published The Golden Day in 1926 and his full-length study of Melville's writings in 1929, is the first important American critic who follows Lawrence's interpretation in his own writings on Melville. Mumford observes that it was Lawrence who first pointed out that "Moby Dick is one of the first great mythologies to be created in the modern world," and, instead of being a mere sea romance or a whaling story, as previously believed, it is a "battle between the blood-consciousness of the white race and its own abstract intellect, which attempts to hunt and slay it" (Herman Melville 132). Mumford, very much like Lawrence, views Moby Dick as "the external force of Nature and Destiny," and not "the kindly, milk-fed Absolute, in which all conflicts are reconciled and all contradictions united into a higher kind of knowledge" (The Golden Day 74-75).

Lawrence gives a detailed analysis of two chapters--"The Grand Armada," which Lawrence calls "the most stupendous chapter," and "The Cassock," the "oldest piece of phallicism in all the world's literature" (Studies 163-164).

H. P. Vincent points out that "ninety percent of Melville's readers miss entirely the meaning of 'The Cassock'." Vincent adds that before the full significance of this chapter can be properly explained, "one must accept D. H. Lawrence's recognition of it as one of the greatest pieces of phallicism in all literature" (328). Eric J. Sundquist remarks that Lawrence's view that Moby Dick is an "assault on the last phallic being of the white man" may be one of the many "plausible readings," and concedes that even "Melville might have taken it that way" (145). Lawrence demands a special critical aptitude in the reading of Moby Dick, a recognition of two separate yet artistically integrated strains:

> As a soul history, it makes one angry. As a sea yarn, it is marvellous; there is always something a bit over the mark, in sea yarns. Should be. Then again the masking up of actual seaman's experience with sonorous mysticism sometimes gets on one's nerves. And again, as a revelation of destiny the book is too deep even for sorrow. Profound beyond feeling. (Studies 157)

H. Bruce Franklin, in "Moby Dick: An Egyptian Myth Incarnate," comments on Melville's presentation of the Whale as more and more "qualified and equivocated even more," and says that "this equivocation lies at the heart of Moby Dick, partly because the heart of Moby Dick is the central mystery in a world of mysteries." Explaining Melville's use of the Egyptian myth of the struggle between Osiris and Typhon, Franklin identifies Ahab with Osiris, the sun god, and comments on "the symbolic identity of the storm and the

whale," the "pre-adamite" leviathan, representing the dark forces of nature which our mind has always considered malignant and tried to destroy (53-98). Although different in details, Franklin's interpretation does follow Lawrence's belief that Melville's work is "a book of esoteric symbolism of profound significance" (Studies 168). A. N. Kaul quotes Lawrence's view of Melville as an apt description of Melville's struggle as an artist:

> Melville had to fight, fight against the existing world, against his own very self. Only he would never quite put the knife in the heart of his paradisal ideal. Somehow, somewhere, somewhen, love should be a fulfilment, and life should be a thing of bliss. That was his fixed ideal. Fata Morgana. (Studies 148)

A. N. Kaul remarks that Lawrence's interpretation of Melville's writings is equally helpful in understanding the "singular absence of the earlier hopefulness" in Melville's work after Moby Dick. Kaul comments that even if we do not follow "D. H. Lawrence in interpreting the Pequod as the 'symbol of this civilized world of ours,' it is true that the tales which follow its catastrophe are the tales of a civilization that has floundered" (275).

It is this ship of American civilization, according to D. H. Lawrence, that Whitman salvages by tracking down Moby Dick, and finally capturing it: "The pure sensual body of man, at its deepest remoteness and intensity, this is the White Whale. And this is what Whitman captures" (The Symbolic Meaning 259-260). However, the shadow of the Pequod, with her souls in possession of "their ego and their

will" and "the machine-manipulating body" (Studies 171), busy with its mechanical chores, is hard to shake off, and still pursue Whitman. Lawrence is critical of this Whitman--the Whitman of "Post-Mortem effects," the prophet of "merging," bent upon "shuffling identities" in order to turn one into all and all into one, "all helplessly hurtling together into one snowball" (Studies 171-172).

Gay W. Allen remarks that Lawrence's savage attack on Whitman's "mystical doctrine was wholly new in biography and criticism of him" (52). Roy Harvey Pearce supports Lawrence's interpretation, and says that perhaps Whitman himself felt the same way about his poetry as Lawrence. Pearce gives examples from Whitman's 1960 revision of his poems to show how correct Lawrence was when he said that Whitman mentalized his poems (105-106). Lawrence says that Whitman's desire for merging takes him to woman, "always wanting to merge himself into the womb of something or other," and when woman becomes inadequate, Whitman sings of man merging with man in comradeship.

Whitman's greatness, Lawrence finds, ultimately rests on the "last steps" he took and looked over "into death." It is as a poet of death that Whitman is important:

> Whitman is a very great poet, of the end of life. A very great post-mortem poet, of the transitions of the soul as it loses its integrity. The poet of the soul's last shout and shriek, on the confines of death. Apres moi le deluge. (Studies 176-179).

Leslie A. Fiedler, after examining the views of critics like Van Wyck Brooks and Vernon L. Parrington on Whitman, discovers that it was D. H. Lawrence alone who objectively commented on Whitman's poetry and reached the right conclusion. Lawrence saw in Leaves of Grass, "beneath the official enthusiasm and Fourth-of-July Americanism that wear out too soon, a profound and complete involvement with death." It is this Whitman, Fiedler says, of the "dusky demon," who "Lawrence first clearly perceived, that seems least equivocally attractive to the recent reader" ("American Literature" 179).

The Whitman Lawrence pays tribute to, therefore, is the poet who "was the first to smash the old moral conception that he soul of man is something 'superior' and 'above' the flesh. Even Emerson, Lawrence says, maintained this "tiresome superiority" of the soul, and Melville also could not get over it. Whitman was "the first heroic seer to seize the soul by the scruff of her neck and plant her down among the potsherds." Whitman told the soul to "stay in the flesh, Stay in the limbs and lips and in the belly. Stay in the breast and womb . . . stay where you belong." This is Whitman's message of the "Open Road," the soul travelling in "no known direction even. Only the soul remaining true to herself in her going." On this "Open Road," Whitman forgets love and remembers sympathy, not sympathy for, as he felt earlier, but sympathy with. Whitman's earlier message of merging depends on his "partaking of the passion which was

in the soul of the negro slave." The poet of the Open Road, on the other hand, says:

> I will not take over his wounds and his slavery to myself. But I will help him fight the power that enslaves him when he wants to be free, if he wants my help, since I see in his face that he wants to be free. But even when he is free, his soul has many journeys down the open road, before it is a free soul. (Studies 180-184)

Perhaps Leslie Fiedler fails to see these two different Whitmans of Lawrence's conception in his essay "Images of Walt Whitman" (1955). Fiedler says that Lawrence found in Whitman "a final failure of nerve" (An End to Innocence 159). In fact, Lawrence's essay rises to its final crescendo in its evocation of Whitman's message of a new dream, of a new relationship. In Poe, Crevecouer, Cooper, Hawthorne, Dana, and Melville, the schism between the unconscious dream and conscious art failed to initiate a new cultural paradigm. In Whitman, this dichotomy is finally resolved, giving birth to a new vision for mankind. Like the phoenix (Lawrence's metaphor for true rebirth--life rising out of its own ashes), Whitman, too, reaches the "edge of Death," but once "purified of MERGING, purified of MYSELF," Whitman comes alive with "the exultant message of American Democracy, of souls in the Open Road, full of glad recognition, full of fierce readiness, full of the joy of worship, when one soul sees a greater soul." Whitman's final message remains: "The only riches, the great souls" (Studies 186-187). Lawrence's Studies reach full circle with the Whitman essay. He enters the classic American

literature believing "there is a new voice in the old American classics" (7), and makes his exit not before he discovers this new voice in Whitman.[28]

The above is largely a factual account of the extent to which American critics incorporated the views of D. H. Lawrence in their interpretation of American literature and culture after the appearance of Studies in Classic American Literature. American critics welcomed D. H. Lawrence's assessment of American writers, because he identified new areas of significance for these critics to explore. He transformed the American past from the simple tale of settling a new continent and establishing political and social institutions to a place where an intense drama of the complexity of human relationships was being played. The challenge classic American writers faced was to codify this ongoing quest for a relevant cultural paradigm. Lawrence admires these writers for meeting this challenge. By emphasizing our cultural "ambivalence" in such areas as human relationships, Lydia Blanchard observes, "Lawrence seems to have found, in our classic American writers the grounds for a continued mining of practical truth" (171-172). Milton R. Stern, commenting on Lawrence's questioning of Hawthorne's commitments observes that ever since the appearance of Lawrence's Studies, "modern commentators have found that the questions remain a rich source of critical inquiry" (n. 2, 16). The next chapter seeks to explore the extent to which the Laurentian critical

idiom penetrates some of the significant literary and cultural texts that appeared after the publication of Studies in Classic American Literature.

NOTES

1. The cult of the exile has become a familiar phenomenon in the twentieth-century literary revolution. Graham Hough observes: "Biographically speaking it is a revolution of expatriates and exiles; and this is so before and quite apart from the enforced exile brought about by revolution and by war. It is an age of arbitrary migrants and displacements. Henry James, in this as in other ways, is the father of much in modern Anglo-American letters. Eliot follows him in turning his back on the American scene and ultimately adopting English nationality. Pound's active years were spent in London, Paris and Rapallo, and he was never again in his own country until he re-entered it in tragic and problematical circumstances after the last war. Joyce deliberately elects a career of 'silence, exile and cunning', has no other theme but Dublin, yet writes of it in memory, from Trieste, Zurich and Paris. Lawrence after writing one great novel straight out of his native experience spends the rest of his life in restless wandering over the world, in search of somewhere to settle" (Image and Experience: Studies in a Literary Revolution. (London: Duckworth, 1960: 67-68).

2. Knud Merrild recalls a conversation with D. H. Lawrence in which the latter said: "Who knows, perhaps I am the offspring of some sea-faring Dane who settled in England. Not so far back either. Perhaps that is also the explanation for my great wanderlust." Lawrence added: "We are, most of us who use the English language, water people, sea derived. Like those terrible yellow-bearded Vikings who break out of the waves in beaked ships. The sea-born people, who can meet and mingle no longer; who turn away from life to the abstract, to the elements, the corrosive vast sea." (With D H. Lawrence in New Mexico. London: Routeledge & Kegan Paul, 1964: 94). Here Lawrence comes very close to describing Melville's life and writings.

3. "The Crown," the first essay in Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine, was originally written for the short-lived periodical, The Signature, started by Lawrence and Middleton Murry in 1915. The first three sections of this essay appeared in the only three numbers issued. The entire essay was published ten years later in Reflections. The probable date of its writing can be discovered by Lawrence's note prefixed to the essay in the 1925 volume saying that the "War was already twelve months old and had gone pretty deep," when the essay was written--sometimes around August 1915. This essay is the final expression of the ideas Lawrence had formulated in Twilight in Italy. In "The Crown," he develops the theme of "conflict" as a means to final fulfillment both in the individual and in the society more confidently. The idea that "wholeness" consisted not

in identity or compromise and conformity, but in eternal conflict between opposites--the Lion and the Unicorn (the Tiger and the Lamb of Twilight in Italy), was also repeated in the essay "The Two Principles," published in the English Review (June 1919) as number eight of the Studies in Classic American Literature, but not included in that volume when it appeared in 1923: "We know that in its essence the living plasm is twofold. In the same way the dynamic elements of material existence are dual, the fire and the water. These two cosmic elements are pure mutual opposites, and on their opposition the material universe is established. The attraction of the two, mutually opposites, sets up the revolution of the universe and forms the blazing heart of the sun. The sun is formed by the impinging of the cosmic water upon the cosmic fire, in the stress of opposition. This causes the central blaze of the universe. (The Symbolic Meaning, ed. Armin Arnold. Arundel: Centaur Press Limited, 1962: 180-181).

4. The concept of polarities or opposites which, Lawrence says, are always in opposition with each other are named under these pairs in these writings: Blood-Mind, Darkness-Light, Father-Son, Female-Male, Flesh-Spirit, Isolation-Union, Jehovah-Jesus, Law-Love, Night-Day, Mother-Father, Subjective-Objective Centers, and Unconscious-Conscious. Lawrence was so deeply involved in formulating his ideas at this time that his American essays in their earlier version are steeped in an almost quasi-mystical Laurentian jargon. In the above-mentioned writings of this period the concept of polarity is expressed in these terms. In Twilight in Italy, Lawrence speaks of the true consummation as two-fold: "The infinite is twofold, the Father and the Son, the Dark and the Light, the Senses and the Mind, the Soul and the Spirit, the self and the non-self, the Eagle and the Dove, the Tiger and the Lamb. The consummation of man is twofold, in the Self and in Selflessness. By great retrogression to the source of darkness in me, the Self, deep in the senses, I arrive at the Original, Creative Infinite. By projection forth from myself, by the elimination of my absolute sensual self, I arrive at the Ultimate Infinite, Oneness in the Spirit. They are two Infinites, twofold approach to God. And man must know both" (80-81). In "The Crown," the theme of "conflict" as a means of consummation in the individual is developed more confidently. The Tiger and the Lamb are replaced by the Lion and the Unicorn: "The crown is upon the perfect balance of the fight, it is not the fruit of either victory. The crown is not the prize of either combatant. It is the raison d'etre of both. It is the absolute within the fight. And those alone are evil, who say, 'The lion shall lie down with the lamb, the eagle shall mate with the dove, the lion shall munch in the stable of the unicorn.' For they blaspheme against the raison d'etre of all life,

they try to destroy the essential, intrinsic nature of God. (Phoenix II 373-374)

5. The only two critical essays written by Lawrence earlier were: "Review article on Georgian Poetry: 1911-1912" for Rhythm and another on "German Books: Thomas Mann" for Blue Review, both in 1913.

6. Lawrence has often been accused of his "dark" philosophy and of subverting art to prophesy. He indeed believed that no great art is possible without a new moral vision to uphold it. He wrote in the foreword to Fantasia of the Unconscious: "And finally, it seems to me that even art is utterly dependent on philosophy: or if you prefer it, on a metaphysic. The metaphysic or philosophy may not be anywhere very accurately stated and may be quite unconscious, in the artist, yet it is a metaphysic that governs men at all time, and is by all men more or less comprehended, and lived. Men live and see according to some gradually developing and gradually withering vision. This vision exists also as a dynamic idea or metaphysic--exists first as such. Then it is unfolded into life and art. Our vision, our belief, our metaphysic is wearing absolutely threadbare. We have no future; neither for our hopes nor our aims nor our art. It has all gone gray and opaque." (Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychanalysis and the Unconscious. London: Heinemann, 1961: 9-10)

7. In his discussion on Thomas Hardy's The Return of the Native, Lawrence divides Hardy's characters in three groups. The first group consists of those who achieve "a more or less distinct individuality," such as Sergeant Troy, Wildeve, de Stancy, Fitzpiers, and Jude, "all passionate, aristocratic males, doomed by their very being, to tragedy, or to misfortune in the end." The second set constitutes characters like Manston, Farmer Boldwood, Henchard, and Alec d' Urberville; this group succumbs before the weight of convention, and "in more primitive times, would have formed romantic rather than tragic figures" (Phoenix 434-438). In Lawrence's words, these two groups constitute the aristocratic characters of Hardy. For these, Hardy had a predilection d'artiste, but he always condemns them because of his adherence to a strict social code. As against these characters, Hardy invents his "undistinguished, bourgeois or average being with average or civic virtues" (438), who always succeeds in the end--characters like Gabriel Oak, Clym Yoebright, and Angel Clare. Lawrence, in this essay, is enunciating his definition of true tragedy--in Shakespeare and Sophocles--as against the modern tragedy which relies on a ready-made metaphysic to be blindly applied to the human situation. The terms "conscious" and "unconscious," the idealizing faculty and the creative faculty in Studies in Classic American Literature, are

characterized as Love and Law, Male and Female in the Hardy essay. Lawrence says that despite their genius, artists like Hardy, Flaubert, and Dostoievsky fail to achieve a reconciliation of the two. They, instead, show the two in conflict and arrange one to vanquish the other. Lawrence's rendering of this phenomenon of reconciliation is highly imaginative. He says that great art is born when the two "clasp hands, a moment, male and female, clasp hands and are one, the poppy, the gay poppy flies into flower again; and when the two fling their arms about each other, the moonlight runs and clashes against the shadow; and when the two toss back their hair, all the larks break out singing; and when they kiss on the mouth, a lovely human utterance is heard again--and so it is" (Phoenix 516).

8. See Chapter One pp. 43-44.

9. In his essay on Galsworthy, Lawrence sums up his critical creed in what H. Coombes considers "the finest brief statement on the nature of criticism that we have" (Literature and Criticism. London: Chatto & Windus, 1958: 10-13). According to Lawrence: "Literary criticism can be no more than a reasoned account of the feelings produced upon the critic by the book he is criticizing. Criticism can never be a science: it is, in the first place, much too personal, and in the second, it is concerned with values that science ignores. The touchstone is emotion, not reason. We judge a work of art by its effect on our sincere and vital emotion, and nothing else. All the critical twiddle-twaddle about style and form, all this pseudo-scientific classifying and analysing of books in an imitation-botanical fashion, is mere impertinence and mostly dull jargon . . . . A critic must be able to feel the impact of a work of art in all its complexity and its force. To do so, he must be a man of force and complexity himself, which few critics are. A man with a paltry, impudent nature will never write anything but paltry, impudent criticism. And a man who is emotionally educated is rare as a phoenix. The more scholastically educated a man is generally, the more he is an emotional boor . . . . More than this, even an artistically and emotionally educated man must be a man of good faith. He must have the courage to admit what he feels, as well as the flexibility to know what he feels . . . . A critic must be emotionally alive in every fibre, intellectually capable and skilful in essential logic, and then morally very honest" (Phoenix 539).

10. In his letter to J. B. Pinker on December 16, 1915, Lawrence wrote in reply to Arnold Bennett who had criticized Sons and Lovers for its poor construction: "Tell Arnold Bennett that all rules of construction hold good only for novels which are copies of other novels. A book which is not a copy of other books has its own construction, and what

he calls faults, he being an old imitator, I call characteristics" (Harry T. Moore (ed). The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence. Vol I, New York: The Viking Press, 1962: 399).

11. F. R. Leavis, as early as 1932, observed about Lawrence that "the qualities that made him incapable of self-deception made him the finest literary critic of his time" ("D. H. Lawrence and Professor Irving Babbit," Scrutiny, I. (Dec. 1932): 276). Later, in 1937, Leavis called Lawrence "the finest literary critic of our time--a great literary critic if there was one" ("The Wild, Untutored Phoenix," Scrutiny, VI. (Dec. 1937): 352). Martin Turnell, writing for Dublin Review in 1948, compared Lawrence and T. S. Eliot as critics: "Studies in Classic American Literature and Phoenix are not simply great criticism; they show that Lawrence, with his immense emphasis on life, possessed incomparably the most powerful personality among modern European critics and that from an artistic point of view his criticism is satisfying in a way that Mr. Eliot's is not" (Quoted by Robert Wooster Stallman (ed) in The Critic's Notebook, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1950: 169). Father William Tiverton praises Lawrence's "acutely critical intellect, especially as seen in his literary criticism," and also "the penetration of Lawrence's insight into the quality of others' writing" (D. H. Lawrence and Human Existence, London: Rockliff, 1951: 6, 12). Stephen Spender discovers in Lawrence's condemnation of "cerebral modern writer" an entirely new vision: "Lawrence, besides opening my eyes to a world that was not just potential literature, also seemed to challenge my own existence, my mind and my body. I felt the force of his criticism of his contemporaries and did not feel that I myself was spared" (World Within World, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951: 97).

12. David J. Gordon, in his remarks on Lawrence's comments on Poe, is the first to mention Lawrence's understanding of this concept: "The aesthetic critic will as a rule try to show how the style and form of a work support, or fail to support, the author's apparent intention. Lawrence seems to ignore this procedure (seems not to ask himself, for instance, whether Poe's inorganic imagery and mechanical rhythms or Verga's abrupt transitions have artistic relevance), because he is hostile to the apparent intention. But he understands it perfectly well, and when and insofar as he can discover an intention of which he does approve, he will relate form and style to it" (37).

13. Frederick Hoffman in "Lawrence's Quarrel with Freud," (Freudianism and the Literary Mind. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana University Press, 1957: 151-176.) gives a detailed analysis of Lawrence's relationship with Freudianism.

However, Evelyn J. Hinz in "The Beginning and the End: D. H. Lawrence's Psychoanalysis and Fantasia." (Dalhousie Review, Vol. 52, No. 2, Summer 1972: 251-265) convincingly proves. that Hoffman is mistaken in discussing these works as if there were no significant difference between the two. In fact, while Psychoanalysis is an example of Lawrence's "poetic methodology" or "archetypal approach" to the unconscious, Fantasia represents his "empirical" or "analytic" approach (252). This difference is significant, because nowhere else does Lawrence try to give his concept of the unconscious a scientific foundation; it always remains an archetypal term representing that part of man which our industrial and scientific culture has either rejected as our animal nature or ignored completely by overemphasizing the mind or "will" as the mainspring of human action. It is true that Lawrence himself seems to be overemphasizing "blood" in one of his early letters to Ernest Collins in January 1913: "My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle . . . . All I want is to answer to my blood, direct, without fribbling intervention of mind, or moral, or what-not" (Moore, The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence, Vol I: 179). However, by the time he wrote his American essays, Lawrence, through his Hardy essay and other writings of the period, had developed a more balanced view of "blood consciousness," and had learnt to use the unconscious as that part in us without which we are incomplete and can be overwhelmed by the tyranny of the self.

14. Lawrence, therefore, is indifferent to Jung's archetypal "collective unconscious." Here, he is, in fact, closer to Freud who allows the personal unconscious an independent existence. Lawrence, however, takes strong exception to Freud's finding "the serpent of sex coiled round the root of all our actions" (Lawrence, Psychoanalysis 197). Lawrence, contrary to Freud's sole emphasis on sexual impulses, subordinates it to the greater impulse of creation: "It is the pure disinterested craving of the human to make something wonderful, out of his own head and his own self, and his own soul's faith and delight, which starts everything going. This is the prime motivity, and the motivity of sex is subsidiary to this: often directly antagonistic" (Fantasia 12).

15. Lawrence's attraction for America has a strange ambivalent angle to it. His attraction rests on the isolation of America from the European context--a new landscape infused with a spirit of place. Lawrence, on the other hand, is repelled by its materialism. In his American essays, Lawrence is attempting through American literature

to show that a reconciliation of these two opposite poles of existence can be attempted, only sometimes with limited success. This was the time when Lawrence was preoccupied with reconciling and absorbing decay in an acceptable view of life. It is in this context that Lawrence's seemingly self-contradictory attitude toward America can be better comprehended. In the same letter (November 7, 1916) which describes Americans "as a rule rather dreadful," Lawrence expresses his wish to go to a country in which he could " feel the new unknown," and this place he thought was America, "where the skies are not so old, the air is newer, the earth is not tired" (Moore, Letters: 481). A few months later, on February 12, 1917, Lawrence wrote again to Lady Cynthia Asquith: "I feel the War won't be so very much longer. The skies have really fallen. There is no need of any more pulling at the pillars, New earth, new heaven, that is what one must find. I don't think America is a new world. But there is a living sky above. America I know is shocking. But there is a living sky above it. I must go to America as . . . soon as ever I can" (501). Writing to Waldo Frank on September 15, 1917, Lawrence gave the best expression to the love-hate relationship he harbored toward America, the "last word of obscene rottenness contained within an entity of mechanized egoistical will" (524-525). But America's spirit of place, Lawrence believed, will still create a new world.

16. In "The Crown," in the essay, "The Two Principles" (meant to be part of Lawrence's American essays but excluded from the final version of the Studies), in the original draft of the essay, "The Spirit of Place (The Symbolic Meaning: 15-31), in "The Education of the People" (1918), and in his works on the unconscious, Lawrence understands the universe as a living organism with its own system of vital circuits perennially drawing the individual psyche within its matrix. Lawrence conceives the discovery of America in the following terms, almost completely controlled by the "spirit of place" rather than by our conscious will: After the removal of the Empire [the Roman Empire] to the east a new circuit began, a circuit of Rome and Treves, or, better, of Italy and Germany. There is, and has been, since the break of the old Roman-African circuit, a natural and inevitable balance between Rome and Germany . . . . England, France, and even Spain lay within the great German-Italian circuit of vital magnetism, which subsisted all through the Middle Ages. We can see Spain caught in another influence, from Africa again, and Germany influenced from the great Slavonic field . . . . But the main polarity of Europe, from the time of Diocletian to Renaissance, lay between Italy and Germany. About the time of the Renaissance, however, this circuit exhausted itself, as the Italian-African circuit had been exhausted a thousand year

before. Italy suddenly scintillated, and was finished in her polar potentiality. The old stability of Europe was gone, and the old circle of vital flow was broken. It was then that Europe fell directly in polar unison with America. Europe and America became the great poles of negative and positive vitalism . . . . And it was on the wings of this new attraction that Europe discovered America. When the great magnetic sway of the medieval polarity broke, then those units which were liberated fell under the sway of new vital currents in the air, and they were born helplessly as birds migrate, without knowing or willing, down the great magnetic wind towards America, towards the centrality of the New World. So the first individuals were caught up and swept overseas in the setting of the great current. They had no choice because the influence which was upon them was prior to all knowledge and all option" (The Symbolic Meaning 20-21). What Lawrence says about this unconscious urge to move is very close to Thoreau's explanation for his unconscious westward "sauntering," in the essay "Walking": "I know not how significant it is, or how far it is an evidence of singularity, that an individual should thus consent in his pettiest walk with the general movement of the race; but I know that something akin to the migratory instinct in birds and quadrupeds,--which, in some instances, is known to have affected the squirrel tribe, impelling them to a general and mysterious movement, in which they were seen, say some, crossing the broadest rivers, . . . that something like the furor which affects the domestic cattle in the spring . . . affects both nations and individuals, either perennially or from time to time" (Thoreau Writings. Vol V. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968: 218-219); Italics mine.

17. "Education of the People," an essay Lawrence wrote for Times Educational Supplement and "Democracy," both written, according to Armin Arnold, about the same time Lawrence was writing his American essays (D. H. Lawrence and America 122), but published for the first time by Edward D. McDonald in Phoenix in 1936, contain what Lawrence believed was the kind of democracy he hoped America to inaugurate. The new democracy he visualized was not based on the "Law of Average," but on the essential spontaneity of the individual, "when men become their own decent selves again" ("Democracy," Phoenix 699-718). This essay is the basis of his criticism of Whitman's idea of democracy in Studies. Raymond Williams observes that in Lawrence's description of modern society the "continuing key words" are "mechanical, disintegrated, amorphous." These, in fact, describe the "effect of the industrial priorities on individuals and on the whole society. It is this condition of mind, rather than industry as such, which is seen as having led to the ugliness of an industrial society" (Culture and Society 201). It is this condition of mind which render the

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democratic ideals of equality and fraternity to imply "consanguinity." Lawrence says: "Let every man be himself, purely himself. And then, in the evil hour when you do start to compare, you will see the endless inequality between men . . . . Men are not equal, neither are they brothers. They are themselves. Each one is himself, and each one is essentially, starrily responsible for himself . . . . No person is responsible for the being of any other person. Each one is starrily single, starrily self-responsible, not to be blurred or confused" ("Education of the People" 603). Raymond Williams, commenting on Lawrence's concept of democracy as expressed in these essays, remarks that "Lawrence wrote nothing more important" than his essay on democracy, and adds that although, "at first sight, this looks like, not democracy, but a kind of romantic anarchism," Lawrence asks and requires answers to question we often ignore (Culture and Society 208-209).

18. Along with Dana, Crevecouer owes the resurrection of his American reputation to a large extent to D. H. Lawrence. Originally published in England in 1782, Letters from an American Farmer was received enthusiastically in England primarily as a source of information on America. It was translated in French, German and Dutch as early as 1784. However, in America the volume received little attention, except for some of its sections appearing occasionally in periodicals until the nineteenth century. F. B. Sanborn remarks that "so little was this once famous Frenchman known" that when Professor Wendell of Harvard wrote his History of American Literature, "he did not know the date of his birth, the particulars of his career, or the titles of his French books, and could only quote from a poor English edition of less than a quarter part of his writings" ("The 'American Farmer': St. John de Crevecouer and His Famous Letters (1735-1813)" (The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XXX, 3, 1906: 258).

19. In the final version of the essay, published in Studies, Lawrence prefers a mocking tone as opposed to the balanced arguments of the first version: "The American Farmer watched this contest with delight, and no doubt loudly applauded those little rascals of wrens. For in the Land of the Free, the greatest delight of every man is in getting the better of the other man" (Studies 32-33). Armin Arnold, in his introduction to Symbolic Meaning, explains the reason for many of the essays in the final version using a "hysterical tone," as opposed to the "more objective and more impersonal style" of the original versions: "Lawrence was living at Lobo Ranch near Taos. His violent hate against Mabel Dodge and Tony Luhan was at its peak; he was in a state of extreme nervous tension resulting in almost insane outbursts against his wife, his friends, his animals,

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on America as a whole. This is reflected in version 3 of the essays" (6).

20. It is obvious from Lawrence's poem ""Hummingbird," written in 1920 and first published in New Republic 1921, that he was directly inspired by Crevecouer's word-painting of the bird. Crevecouer describes the quickness of speed and the bright plumage of the bird: "their flight is so rapid, that you cannot distinguish the motion of their wings. On this little bird nature has so profusely lavished her most dazzling colours; the most perfect azure, the most perfect gold, the most dazzling red, are for ever in contrast, and help to embellish the plumes of his majestic head. The richest palette of the most luxuriant painter could never invent anything to be compared to the variegated tints, with which this insect bird is arrayed . . . when it feeds, it appears as if immovable though continually on the wing; and sometimes, from what motives I know not, it will tear and lacerate flowers into a hundred pieces: for strange to tell, they are the most irascible of the feathered tribe" (Letters 178-179). This mystery and unexplained irascibility of the bird tempts Lawrence to associate it with the primordial landscape of America, back into "some other world/ Primeval-dumb, far back/ In that most awful stillness, that only gasped and hummed,/ Hummingbirds raced down the avenues." The spirit of America is contained in the bird: "Before anything had soul,/ While life was a heave of matter, half inanimate,/ This little bit chipped off in brilliance/ And went whizzing through the slow, vast, succulent stems" (Collected Poems Vol II. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, 1929: 245). Crevecouer is mystified by this enigma of nature, and wonders: "Where do passions find room in so diminutive a body? They often fight with the fury of lions, until one of the combatants falls a sacrifice and dies" (Letters 179). Lawrence's poetical speculations attempt an answer to Crevecouer: "I believe there were no flowers then,/ In the world where the humming-bird flashed ahead of creation./ I believe he pierced the slow vegetable veins with his long beak./ Probably he was big/ As mosses, and little lizards, they say, were once big./ Probably he was a jabbing, terrifying monster" (Collected Poems 245).

21. Paul Delany describes Lawrence's state of mind during the war years in Cornwall: "In Cornwall, Lawrence was still under the spell of his boyhood fantasies about life on the frontier and his urgent desire to remove himself from war-torn England. A faith in the coming 'mystic transubstantiation' of America helped him endure his present plight; critical as he was of America, he believed that even its excesses were making a contribution to a fundamentally positive development" (308-309).

22. Eric J. Sundquist, quoting from D. H. Lawrence's essay comments that Lawrence's, sometimes "overblown," observations do point to the basic fact that the work, apart from being a "fierce social satire," is also "an absorbing exhibition and defence of Cooper's own psychologies and social tastes, tastes which inform the most pressing questions posed by the settlement of America" (Home as Found: Authority and Genealogy in Nineteenth Century American Literature. Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979: 2). Robert E. Spiller, once a severe critic of Lawrence's, agrees with Lawrence's comments in his essay on Homeward Bound and says that Lawrence "does a wonderful job of interpreting the book that Cooper intended to write" (Fenimore Cooper: Critic of His Time. New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1931: 173).

23. A. N. Kaul, in The American Vision: Actual and Ideal Society in Nineteenth-Century Fiction (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1963), is deeply indebted to Lawrence in his interpretation of 19th-Century American literature, and finds that the Leatherstocking Tales "attempt to recreate the myth which history was supposed to validate but which in reality it had violated from the outset" (120).

24. The only disagreement is about Lawrence's interpretation of some details such as the order of the Leatherstocking Tales. Commenting on Natty's starting from old age and moving toward youth in the Leatherstocking series, Lawrence writes: "The Leatherstocking novels create the myth of this new relation. And they go backward, from old age to golden youth. That is the true myth of America. She starts old, old, wrinkled and writhing in an old skin. And there is a gradual sloughing of the old skin, towards a new youth. It is a myth of America" (Studies 60). This reading of Leatherstocking Tales had been ignored before Lawrence pointed out that it was significant in the reading of Cooper (See Allen M. Axelrad, "The Order of the Leatherstocking Tales: D. H. Lawrence, David Noble, and the Iron Trap of History." American Literature. Vol 54, No 2, May 1982: 189-211). Axelrad, though he disagrees with Lawrence's opinion, concedes that most of the "scholars follow the Lawrence chronology" (189). Warren S. Walker characterizes Lawrence's essay as "provokingly wrongheaded, and at time in error about factual data," but acknowledges that it has been "highly influential in setting a new trend in Cooper studies" (James Fenimore Cooper. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1962: 124). Henry Seidel Canby does not agree with D. H. Lawrence's view that Cooper displays a struggle between a disintegrating white civilization and some dark spirit of land symbolized by Cooper's red men. Canby believes the struggle is inside Cooper himself, and is a symbol of escape (Classic Americans. New York: Russell & Russell, 1959: 141). Canby, however, forgets that Lawrence

also asserted that through his myth Cooper attempted "an evasion of actuality" (Studies 55).

25. Daniel Hoffman in Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe Poe (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972) quotes T. S. Eliot's comments on Poe made in 1948. Eliot confined the appeal of Poe's stories only to those who were "just emerging from childhood," and said: "That Poe had a powerful intellect is undeniable: But it seems to me the intellect of a highly gifted young person before puberty. The forms that this lively curiosity takes are those in which a pre-adolescent mentality delights: wonders of nature and of mechanics and of the supernatural, cryptograms and ciphers, puzzles and labyrinths, mechanical chess-players and wild flights of speculation. The variety and ardor of his curiosity delight and dazzle, yet in the end, the eccentricity and lack of coherence of his interests tire" (x-xi).

26. Mark van Doren agrees with Lawrence's view of Hester as not being "deficient in the mysterious powers belonging to her sex. D. H. Lawrence found these powers terrible in Hester, and supposed them so destructive of Dimmesdale that he died hating her." However, Doren does not agree with Lawrence that Hawthorne was unconscious of this: "Hawthorne, a profounder psychologist, did not so protest against the might he recognized. He recorded it as true, and let it work" (Nathaniel Hawthorne. New York: William Sloane Associates, 1949: 155).

27. James C. Cox, unlike many writers on Dana who have treated Two Years Before the Mast purely as a sea yarn, follows Lawrence closely in declaring the work "in a profound way an autobiography." Cox praises Lawrence for his insight in analysing the flogging scene: "It is just here that Lawrence is very helpful--because he goes against the grain of so much that has been and still may be written about the book. For Lawrence, it is not the flogging, but the idealism of Dana and John the Swede that is offensive . . . . The great strength of Lawrence's vision is that it arrests us at the verge of our usual academic mistake of subjecting ourselves to the anti-slavery conscience. For Dana, that ideal is primarily rooted in experience; for us, it is primarily imposed by history . . . . To see just how good Lawrence is on Dana, one has merely to see how the very people who would most deeply disagree with his easy approval of flogging nonetheless wind up complaining of Dana's idealism on other counts" (Recovering Literature's Lost Ground: Essays in American Autobiography. Baton Rouge & London: Louisiana State University Press, 1989: 61-62).

28. Perhaps no other American artist was so constantly in Lawrence's mind as Walt Whitman. In many of his writings he

gave Whitman more than a passing reference: in "Democracy" (Phoenix 699-718), Lawrence criticizes Whitman for defining democracy as the "Law of the Average," with an emphasis on the principle of identity. In his Preface to the American edition of New Poems (Phoenix 218-222), Lawrence praises Whitman for creating a poetry which is a "reservoir" of "the quick of the universe," of "the pulsating, carnal self, mysterious and palpable" (220). In the review of Stuart P. Sherman's Americans (Phoenix 314-321), Lawrence criticizes Sherman for misrepresenting Whitman's true ideal of democracy (319). Much has been written about Lawrence's own proximity to Whitman as an artist. One of the earliest critics to do so was Frederick Schyberg. In his work on Whitman originally published in 1933, Schyberg draws a parallel between the two artists (Walt Whitman (New York, 1951: 321-326). Homer K. Nicholson, Jr., in his unpublished dissertation, "O Altitudo: A Comparison of the Writings of Walt Whitman, D. H. Lawrence, and Henry Miller" (Vanderbilt University, 1957), discusses the relationship between these three writers: "All three are discontented with the established literary forms and regard them as outworn and now merely conventional, incapable of communicating any new or real experience . . . . They are similarly distrustful of standard logic and rationalization . . . . They are most concerned with the interpersonal relations of man to woman and man to man . . . . Charges of obscenity have been levelled at all three of these" (Dissertation Abstracts. XVII (1957): 2614). A more detailed treatment of the affinity between Lawrence and Whitman is contained in James E. Miller, Jr., Karl Shapiro, and Bernice Slote, Start With the Sun: Studies in Whitman Tradition (University of Nebraska Press, 1960).

CHAPTER THREE

THE LAURENTIAN IDIOM IN AMERICAN LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES

The last chapter traced the widespread approval American writers gave to D. H. Lawrence's assessment of American literature and culture by incorporating many of his ideas in their own examination of classic American writers. This happened because the period after World War I was a period marked by the intermingling of the traditional and the modern in all walks of life. In literary criticism, too, there was an urge to establish new ways to investigate issues traditionally confronted by developing a critical rhetoric capable of initiating a dialogue between the nation's past and its present, and capable of rephrasing the cultural concerns of a rapidly transforming national landscape.

D. H. Lawrence gave American literature the dignity of a world literature by comparing it favorably with French and Russian literatures. This recognition did not only impart a higher status to our national literature, but also posed a new challenge for American critics. D. H. Lawrence suggests that now American criticism was in need of new standards of judgement for assessing the nature and purport of a

literature which can no more be dismissed as a mere extension of European literature. Like Alexis de Tocqueville, who gave a new language to students of American history and political institutions in the nineteenth-century, D. H. Lawrence's essays were highly influential in creating a new critical method for an emerging generation of critics.

Vincent B. Leitch characterizes these critics as "New York Intellectuals." These critics were all born around World War I and in the late 1930s. They formed a close association through the Partisan Review, and "maintained a distinctive critical project into the early 1970s" (80). They include Richard Chase, Irving Howe, Alfred Kazin, Philip Rahv, Leslie Fiedler, Richard Poirier and others. Although many of these, one way or another, share the same concerns about American literature as D. H. Lawrence, some, like Richard Chase, Leslie Fiedler, and Richard Poirier, have a closer affinity with him in their critical methods and ultimate critical concerns.

Significantly, Edmund Wilson, "older by more than a decade," than these critics served as their "model" (81). It is more than likely that it was because of Wilson's critical stature, leadership, and appreciation of D. H. Lawrence's work that Lawrence gained the kind of significance he ultimately did for this generation. In the twenties, Lawrence's stature as a significant voice in American criticism was still a matter of serious

controversy, and most of the academic critics were reluctant to accept him as belonging to the mainstream of American criticism. It was Edmund Wilson who included the full text of Studies in Classic American Literature in his anthology, The Shock of Recognition. The praise Wilson reserves for Lawrence's work as "one of the few first rate books that have ever been written on the subject," clearly charters a course for this younger generation of critics to follow. Wilson recognizes a new voice and a new language in these essays, and comments that Lawrence's essays encourage an American, "for whom American literature is a part of his native landscape, and so veiled with associations that he cannot always see what the author is really saying," to read American literature in a way "it would be difficult for an American to do." D. H. Lawrence, Wilson says, "read our books for their meaning in the life of the western world as a whole" (906). Although Wilson does not subscribe to the Laurentian belief in the unconscious, and his criticism leans heavily toward the social and the political, for both Wilson and Lawrence literature's true significance lies in its cultural context.

F. O. Matthiessen in American Renaissance (1941) also emphasizes the value of literature as a cultural phenomenon. Both Edmund Wilson and Matthiessen are closer to Marxist criticism and New criticism, but they both are aware of and admire D. H. Lawrence's contribution to creating a new critical method for the interpretation of American

literature. William E. Cain traces the importance of critics like Van Wyck Brooks, John Macy, Irving Babbit, Paul Elmer More, and Stuart Sherman who were at the forefront of establishing the significance of American Renaissance literature in the mainstream of the country's literary tradition, and who significantly influenced Matthiessen as a critic. However, Cain observes that even more than these critics, "the key text in the modernist recasting of American literary history is D. H. Lawrence's Studies in Classic American Literature" (1923)." Cain underlines Lawrence's "exotic eloquence," in emphasizing the 'double meaning," "symbolism," and "subterfuge" in American writing. This new critical language "freighted with dark mythical overtones and symbolic majesty," according to Cain, "dramatically assisted in the collaborative modernist effort to reinvent American literature." This language, combined with New Criticism, emerging in the late twenties, and gaining momentum in the thirties, Cain believes, "gave the exacting analytical techniques," American criticism was looking for (135-136). Frederick C. Stern is another Matthiessen scholar who confirms Lawrence's influence on Matthiessen; he notes that it was D. H. Lawrence who was instrumental in pointing out characteristics that established American literature as distinct from English literature (23). Matthiessen quotes Lawrence in support of what he himself thought about Hawthorne, Melville, and Emerson. Matthiessen, although he does not admire Whitman's

poetry to the same extent as D. H. Lawrence, is reminded of Lawrence's distinction between the poetry of the present and poetry of the future in his assessment of the poet:

> The dichotomy that we observed in both his diction and his content expresses again in the contrast between Whitman's actual and ideal selves. Tocqueville foresaw his problem when he observed that the poet of democracy, having given up the past, thus ran the risk of losing part of the present in his excessive preoccupation with the future destinies of mankind. Lawrence's distinction between the poetry of the future and the poetry of the present is likewise partly relevant. Lawrence held that the first may possess the crystalized perfection of things to come, whereas the second, lacking this, seeks to catch the present in all its confusion, and is 'plasmic.' (651)

Matthiessen joins D. H. Lawrence in criticizing Whitman for his failure to save "his poems of ideal democracy and perfection" from the "barrenness of abstraction." It is only when "he remained the instinctual being who found no sweeter fat than stuck to his own bones," Matthiesen observes, that Whitman created "the lasting image of the common man" (651).

As a creative writer himself, Lawrence understood the plight of the writer caught in the grip of what Tony Pinkney calls, "transcendental classicism." In a study of the novels of D. H. Lawrence, Pinkney considers him "a modernist, counter modernist, and meta-modernist," and categorizes his novels as "classic examples of modernism because of polemical challenges to [classicism's] orthodoxies." Outside his novels, Lawrence waged war against these "orthodoxies" through his emphasis on

"blood-consciousness," but he also knew that despite constant attacks from cultural forces, such as Romanticism, Realism, and Modernism, classicism has an "uncanny ability to metamorphose even its enemies into its own mirror image, conceding certain surface mutations as the necessary price for its deep-structured survival in changed social conditions." D. H. Lawrence was consistently engaged in examining to what extent "transcendentalist culture" could "insidiously" always "draw back into its own orbit" even textual forces like modernism and realism which "appear to confront it head on" (3-4).

Himself a novelist, Lawrence was personally engaged in facing this ever-present challenge to creative imagination. His attempt in Studies in Classic American Literature is to explore this very struggle in American writers--a challenge they encounter with varying degrees of success and failure. In the words of Aidan Burns, the artist in Lawrence was trying to reconcile two contradictory situations: the self "seen on the one hand as dependent upon its social relations, and on the other as a natural entity more often than not frustrated and destroyed by the social milieu into which it is thrown" (7).

We see, therefore, that D. H. Lawrence's criticism of classic American literature has an element of contemporaneousness about it. He discusses the writers of the American Renaissance as examples of "modernism," as if they were his contemporaries. Lawrence presents the best

answer to the American self-consciousness of the last century about the absence of the kind of literary, cultural, and social conditions conducive to the production of great art. By analysing the genius of these artists through the medium of conscious and unconscious intentions, D. H. Lawrence buries this myth of poverty of materials for ever. In addition, he also helps in the establishment of those other premises of American literary tradition which render it as one of the most creative and complex the world has seen. This quality also accounts for the gradual seeping in of the Laurentian critical idiom into much of what was written about the nineteenth-century American literature subsequent to the appearance of his essays. It is this quality of his criticism which is responsible for the attempts of many later critics to imbibe the spirit of Laurentian critical idiom in their writings.

The artist in D. H. Lawrence is continually "engaged in the Modernist struggle to resurrect the word through transcoding, subverting, and extending the bounds of possibility" (Hyde 117). This is as much true of his critical method in Studies in Classic American Literature as it is of his art as a novelist. Lawrence's literary career begins at a time when there was intense speculation about the nature of language as a mode of discourse. Although many critics of Lawrence's essays have accused Lawrence of criticizing American writers for running away, or for escapism, his essays are, in fact, a recognition of the

almost impossible task these writers faced in articulating their experience through the finite medium of language. In these writers Lawrence discovers the typical modernist exasperation of an artist's struggle with the inadequacy of language in expressing real consciousness. Lawrence himself wrote about this predicament faced by an artist in his Foreword to Women in Love (1913):

> Man struggles with his unborn needs and fulfilment. New unfoldings struggle up in torment in him, as buds struggle forth from the midst of a plant. Any man of real individuality tries to know and to understand what is happening, even in himself, as he goes along. This struggle for verbal consciousness should not be left out in art. It is a very great part of life. It is not superimposition of a theory. It is a passionate struggle into conscious being. (Phoenix II 276)

D. H. Lawrence's own experience, therefore, of the challenge language poses in the projection of the artist's innate self helps him develop his critical medium. It also helps him explain the reason why the nineteenth-century American writers, despite reaching "the pitch of extreme consciousness," still "refuse everything explicit and always put up a sort of double meaning," and "revel in subterfuge" (Studies 4). Commenting on Lawrence's attitude toward the nature of artistic discourse, Dianne S. Bond says that in his belief in the "unequivocal domination" of the "tale" over the "artist," there are "revealing parallels between Lawrence's pronouncements and our contemporaries writing about deconstruction"[1] (1-2).

Closely allied to Lawrence's pronouncements on language are his statements on the nature of symbolism and its distance from allegory. Lawrence's introduction to Frederick Carter's unpublished work The Dragon of the Apocalypse was later expanded as Apocalypse, his last non-fiction prose work published posthumously. Apocalypse contains Lawrence's most exhaustive statement on the nature of the symbol. In a symbol "we don't have to look for a meaning, as we can look for a meaning in an allegory, because allegory is narrative and descriptive in nature using images to express certain definite qualities." These images almost always serve "a moral or didactic purpose." Lawrence uses this distinction to elucidate the nature of myth. Like allegory, myth also is a "descriptive narrative using images," but never an argument. It precludes all didactic and moral intentions: "Myth is an attempt to narrate a whole human experience, of which the purpose is too deep, going too deep in the blood and soul" (Phoenix 295-296).[2] Lawrence discovers the highest expression of the mythopoeic nature of American literature in James Fenimore Cooper and Herman Melville, because both were unconscious of the myth they created. Cooper, in Leatherstocking Tales, suspends his conscious pursuit of the idea of democracy that haunted him in his White Novels. Instead, the unconscious artist in him creates in the figures of Natty and Chingachgook the myth of a new relationship, "the inception of a new humanity" (Studies 65). Likewise, when Melville

created the "old, hoary, monstrous" White Whale, Lawrence doubts "if even Melville knew exactly" what it symbolized: "He is warm-blooded, he is lovable, he is lonely Leviathan, not a Hobbes sort." This fabulous mythical creature is created by the Melville who, for once, "ceases to be an American." Forgetting his audience, Melville "gives us his sheer comprehension of the world," and his work "commands a stillness in the soul, an awe" (Studies 153-154).

Lawrence's critical method in his assessment of American literature, therefore, emphasizes the mythopoeic dimensions of American literature, because of its innate propensity for symbolism as a perceptual mode. Lawrence's influence on the development of myth and symbol criticism in American studies has been widely recognized. Lewis Mumford, like Lawrence an avid student of American culture, is one of the earliest to acknowledge Lawrence's influence. As early as 1926, Mumford recognized the significance of the emphasis Lawrence places on the symbolic nature of American literature. Mumford endorses Lawrence's recognition of the dual nature of American art-activity, and writes that he believes, "as Mr. D. H. Lawrence has well said," that the nineteenth-century American writers "reached a verge. They stood between two worlds." Their experience, on the one side, "enabled them to bring the protestant movement to an end," and on the other, it was their "organic break with Europe's past that made the American to go on" (The Golden Day 44).

The first major assessment of nineteenth-century American literature as predominantly an expression of symbolism comes with Charles Feidelson's Symbolism and American Literature (1953). Unlike later critics, Feidelson makes no mention of D. H. Lawrence within the body of his epoch-making study of American letters. In his bibliographical note, he does list D. H. Lawrence's Studies as one of the works on American literature that "directly influenced" his work, and serve as its "context" (Symbolism 220). As already mentioned in the last chapter, Lawrence locates the preponderance of the symbolic mode in American literature even before the writers of the American Renaissance--in the Letters of Hector St. John de Crevecouer. Edmund Wilson is credited by Feidelson as the first critic to note "the affinity between mid-nineteenth-century American writing and the symbolist aesthetic that produced modern literature" (Symbolism 4). However, both Edmund Wilson and Feidelson associate symbolism merely with a literary device--"aesthetic"--associated with Puritanism. Opposed to this limited significance of the symbol, is D. H. Lawrence's view that treats the symbol essentially as a powerful medium of compressed thought that cuts through the prison house of language, and allows art to express a true relatedness unhampered by the primacy of "ideal" over the "instinctual--the wellspring of a living culture. When D. H. Lawrence declared in 1923, that American writers "refuse everything

explicit" and "revel in subterfuge" (Studies 4), and should, therefore, be considered even more modern than a modern writer like Sherwood Anderson, he was thinking of symbolism less as an artistic device and more as a fervent expression of the true essential self. Sherman Paul, in his review article on Feidelson's work, criticizes this very narrowness of Feidelson's interpretation of symbolism. The way Sherman Paul defines American symbolism is closer to D. H. Lawrence's belief. According to Paul, American romanticism was not romantic in "the rather limited sense of personal expression that Feidelson gives to the term." It was a more comprehensive quest for the "symbolic, seeking a solution to the duality of the Cartesian tradition" (189).

Feidelson's remarks on Nathaniel Hawthorne emphasize the same "dichotomy" D. H. Lawrence discovers in Hawthorne. Lawrence's essay on Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter significantly starts with Lawrence's wondering why Hawthorne called his novels "romances." He concludes that "blue-eyed darling Nathaniel knew disagreeable things in his inner soul. He was careful to send them out in disguise" (Studies 89). Feidelson also begins his discussion of Hawthorne on a kindred note, and reaches nearly the same conclusion: "Unable to feel any confidence in the reality of the subjective, and unable, despite the long effort of his notebooks, to come to grips with the solid earth, Hawthorne evolved his conception of the 'romance'" (Symbolism 7). If we replace the subjective of Feidelson with the Laurentian

unconscious, both critics imply that Hawthorne's art is what, Feidelson considers, "the natural outcome of this theoretical indecisiveness." This "indecisiveness," in Feidelson's words, is what accounts for Hawthorne's "allegorical method." Because Hawthorne "never fully faced the problem of knowledge which his own situation raised." He took recourse to the allegorical method, instead of the symbolical, because it is "in the nature of allegory, as opposed to symbolism, to beg the question of absolute reality" (8). In the words of Lawrence, Hawthorne suppressed "the inner diabolism of the symbolic meaning" (Studies 89). As a result, instead of creating a myth of America, as Cooper helped create, Hawthorne created a "marvelous" allegory, one of the "greatest allegories in all literature," with its "marvelous undermeaning! And its perfect duplicity" (106).

Feidelson is close to Lawrence in attributing Hawthorne's allegorical method to the split in Hawthorne's personality induced by "eighteenth-century reason at work on an antirational sensibility" (Symbolism 16). In Studies, Lawrence explains this duplicity as "the insanity of mental-spiritual consciousness" (101). This state is responsible for "subverting the blood-conscious spontaneity" (92). Because D. H. Lawrence does not discuss Emerson, it is not easy to examine to what extent Lawrence would have agreed with Feidelson in the latter's discussion of Emerson who is bracketed with Melville as the "two who ran the gamut

of possibilities created by the symbolistic point of view" (120). However, Feidelson's statement that "Melville assumed the ambient idea that Emerson made explicit" does explain Emerson's view of symbol "as a problem of knowledge" (120), a view Lawrence does not share. Lawrence sees the symbol as a unit of feeling, essentially a cultural construct transcending the finite boundaries of what is termed knowledge in the ordinary sense.

Eugene Goodheart, in "Lawrence and American Fiction," discusses the relation between D. H. Lawrence and such American writers as Edward Dahlberg, Sherwood Anderson, Henry Miller, Norman Mailer and Bernard Malamud. In Goodheart's opinion, between Lawrence and these writers, "it is not so much a question of influence as it is of affinity" (154). This statement is equally applicable to Lawrence's and Feidelson's relationship.

However, when we come to another study of American literature from the standpoint of language and style, written more than a decade after Feidelson published his work on symbolism, we discover that Lawrence grows into a definite influence. Richard Poirier, in A World Elsewhere: The Place of Style in American Literature (1966), acknowledges the main theme to be its struggle to discover a satisfactory form through which to relate the self to the environment. This struggle is what Lawrence also emphasizes in his own work. Poirier has been criticized for allying himself too openly with Lawrence's theories of American

literature. Michael J. Colacurcio is surprised that Poirier is not aware that "anything dangerous or subversive is happening" when he is "reactivating Lawrence's vision and giving his reputation a lift" (488). The basic assumption underlying Colacurcio's fear that Lawrence's influence can be "dangerous" and "subversive" is because of Colacurcio's aversion to what he characterizes as the "symbolic and symptomatic" criticism. In such kind of criticism, he believes, "both by implication and omission, all officially codified constructs of national belief, definition, or destiny are excluded from serious consideration" (500). Colacurcio is voicing the oft-repeated attack that Lawrence's interpretation reduces American literature to a literature of "escapism." Colacurcio's view of style is very narrow when he says that the use of the Laurentian idiom in a work on style "seems strange for, though Lawrence's book is 'stylish' enough, we do not remember it as being about style itself in any significant way" (489). Carolyn Porter is another critic, who, in Seeing and Being (1981), follows Colacurcio by criticizing Lawrence for attributing to American writers the desire to "get away" as their basic inspiration (xiii). Although she includes R. W. B. Lewis, Richard Chase, and Irving Howe also as perpetuating this "ahistoricism," Richard Poirier gets special mention because of his more emphatic reference to the desire of American writers trying through their style to free themselves "from the pressures of time, biology,

economics, and the social forces which are ultimately the undoing of American heroes and quite often of their creators" (5).

Poirier's work is the first to relate D. H. Lawrence's interpretation to Lawrence's own struggle as an artist, trying to break through the constraints of language to attain selfhood so crucial to artistic integrity. Poirier's very perceptive 1966 remarks about Lawrence are today a commonplace in Laurentian criticism, but the first ever attempted by an American critic in the context of Lawrence's criticism of American literature. Before quoting Lawrence's preface to Women in Love, Poirier succinctly summarizes the inspiration behind the Laurentian critical idiom:

> The critic who offers the most help is D. H. Lawrence in Studies in Classic American Literature, probably the crucial study of American literature. Such a claim can be justified even though the book manages to ignore Emerson, Mark Twain, and Henry James. It illustrates how a work of critical genius can cover a subject even while neglecting large areas of it. The explanation, in this instance, is that Lawrence was himself by temperament an "American" writer working within the conventions of English literature. He was not only responsive to the main lines of force in American literature; he himself accelerated them. In Lawrence, with a degree of consciousness never attained by any American writer, are the struggles, difficulties, and tensions that went into the writing of the best American books. So much did he feel these tensions that perhaps his clearest expression of them comes when he is talking not about American writing at all, but about his own. Thus in describing what he is trying to do in Women in Love, he speaks of that novel as an effort to find a mode of expression for ideas that are struggling into a life which language, and only a language, can give them.[3] (37)

Poirier extends the application of the Laurentian idiom to those nineteenth-century literary figures Lawrence had not included in his study--Emerson, Thoreau, and Twain. In his treatment even of the twentieth-century American writers, such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, Henry James, Edith Wharton, and Dreiser, he follows the lead Lawrence provides by applying the Laurentian critical idiom to their work. In the heroes of Dreiser, Wharton, and Fitzgerald, Poirier discovers an anxiety about surrendering themselves to powers that ultimately destroy them. Similarly, D. H. Lawrence attributes this anxiety to characters in writers like Thomas Hardy, John Galsworthy, Arnold Bennett, and Thomas Mann. Poirier believes that the heroes created by these American writers, instead of welcoming the vision of the self joining the formative process of nature, try to define it and are destroyed in the process.

Both Charles Feidelson and Richard Poirier apply Lawrence's views on language as an expression of the challenge artistic medium poses to the act of creation in their own assessment of American classics. The other significant element in Lawrence's critical credo is the use he makes of his beliefs on the unconscious in his criticism.

D. H. Lawrence, as already mentioned, disagrees with both Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung in his interpretation of the unconscious. He believes that the unconscious if applied to literature in the shape it is presented by Freud

can only result in a body of criticism establishing literary texts as expressions of nothing more than repressed sexual desires. Lawrence's view of the unconscious attempts to restore to literature the quality he considers the most significant--cultural expression embodying the aspirations of a people in quest of new experience. The Laurentian unconscious, as Leo Bersani points out, is the artists's struggle to give meaning to a culture's unformed "needs and fulfillment," a struggle that is not meant to reduce "art as a vehicle of truth," but as a perennial source of continuing the cultural dialogue art must produce if a new vision is to be explored (113). This emphasis on the unconscious, and his romantic emphasis on feeling against reason, is the chief source of Lawrence's being attacked for his "irrationalism." Critics find him, as a novelist, suffering from irrational fears, and say that his novels read as allegories of this state.[4]

The early attacks on Studies in Classic American Literature also were mainly inspired by Lawrence's controversial position in the world of ideas, especially his emphasis on "blood" as opposed to "mind." Frederick Hoffman's comment on Lawrence as a "fresh, original, and in many ways a naive reader, not especially concerned with--and not very well informed about--prevailing academic or scholarly form of ordering the subject," was followed by Hoffman's dismissing Lawrence's essays as merely a "Study in Laurentian Responses to the Reading of Classic American

Literature" (The Twenties 160). Leslie A. Fiedler, who was later to employ much of Lawrence's critical method in Love and Death in the American Novel, criticizes Hoffman's view in No! In Thunder: Essays in Myth and Literature (1960): "To me Lawrence's book is by all odds the most committed, wickedly apt appraisal of our past I know, the nearest thing I have ever encountered to what our classics must come to be in use if they are to remain alive" (159).

The early manifestations of the use of Freudian unconscious in American criticism justify Lawrence's antagonism to the Freudian interpretation of the unconscious as a repository of repressed desires. The application of the Freudian unconscious to American writers resulted in such works as Van Wyck Brooks' The Ordeal of Mark Twain (1920) and Joseph Wood Krutch's Edgar Allan Poe: A Study in Genius (1926). Both these Freudian biographies focused primarily on the lives of the authors under review, and both chose to employ the Freudian concept of repressed childhood experience as the guiding principle of their critical method. Their judgment could not have been different. They pronounce both these writers as victims of alienation, struggling against repressed instincts. Expression in America (1932) by Ludwig Lewisohn is another example of the early use of Freudianism. Lewisohn presented both Emerson and Thoreau unsympathetically as undersexed, and considered Melville as suffering from intense mother fixation. Walter Sutton's remark about Lewisohn that "his eccentricity of

judgment" and "simplified Freudian ideas are often relevant to the lives of American writers, but he fails to use them as tools of literary criticism" (25), best summarizes the weaknesses of this kind of narrow psychoanalytical approach toward literary texts. Freud was to continue exerting a powerful influence on American critics for many more years, as illustrated by the use of his ideas in such prominent critical texts as Love and Death in the American Novel by Leslie A. Fiedler.

As opposed to these early American critics, D. H. Lawrence employs psychology in Studies in Classic American Literature, not to pry into repressed childhood instincts of American writers, but to explain their alienation by their failure to use the unconscious creatively in their efforts to explore human experience toward relatedness leading to "wholeness" of body and spirit. Lawrence's understanding of the human psyche was not as private as most critics tend to believe. Daniel J. Schneider, in D. H. Lawrence: The Artist as Psychologist, has pointed out Lawrence's impressive familiarity with thinkers like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Charles Darwin, T. H. Huxley, Ernst Haeckel, Herbert Spenser, Edward Carpenter, William James, and theosophists such as James M. Pryse and Helen Blavatsky. Gestalt Psychology, however, was the most important immediate single source in giving the final shape to his ideas on human personality. Mary Freeman observes that Lawrence's emphasis on relatedness is, "not only suggestive of, but in many

cases illustrative of the Gestalt psychologist's viewpoint. Particularly is this true in his emphasis on emergent individuality" (129).[5]

It is this positive and unifying perspective on human psyche, rather than the divisive emphasis on the human unconscious as a disease to be rationally analyzed and controlled, which we find expressed, not only in his novels, but also in his American essays and other non-fictional writings. Despite his emphasis on the personal unconscious, D. H. Lawrence enunciates, what Elizabeth Brody Tenenbaum calls, his proposal for a "communal rather than individual achievement as man's primary goal" (195). Lawrence identifies the literature and culture of the New World with a novel experiment toward the attainment of true "relatedness." This accounts for the application of his concept of the human personality in his examination of its literature. His revolt against Europe's alienated culture led him to seek reprieve in America where he hoped there was still a possibility of an impassioned and community-oriented culture. Philip Rieff believes that Lawrence's psychology was an attempt to release man from his "inwardness." Lawrence saw in modern psychoanalytical theories "yet another turning of man in upon himself, worse than religiosity, precisely because it aspired to a scientific discipline of inwardness" (31).

D. H. Lawrence's use of psychology and his emphasis on the symbol as a vehicle of creating a meaningful cultural

experience is akin to such works as Ernst Cassirer's, The Philosophy of Symbolic Form (1923) and Language and Myth (1925),[6] C. G. Jung's On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry, first delivered as a lecture to the Society for German Language and Literature in Zurich in May 1922, and Maud Bodkin's Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (1934). These critics usually get credit for the emergence of myth criticism in America. However, it was the "turn to primitive or mythic consciousness--to "blood consciousness" as opposed to abstract "mental consciousness" in D. H. Lawrence's terms," according to Vincent B. Leitch, that "formed an essential background for the rise of myth criticism" (116). Arnold L. Goldsmith believes that myth criticism in America is marked not by "an attempt to evaluate literature but to explain its inner significance," and is perhaps "the most interesting development in modern American criticism." He includes not only D. H. Lawrence's Studies in Classic American Literature but also his Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious as important influences on the critics attempting mythic interpretation of American culture (146-147). Lawrence himself was influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy (1872) and Sir James Frazer's The Golden Bough (1890) in his attraction for myth as the principal source of our living relationship with the universe.

Studies in Classic American Literature is the first work of literary criticism which employs myth as the primary

tool in evoking the complex reality of American literature and culture. Howard Mumford Jones also believes that the use of unconscious to interpret history comes with D. H. Lawrence and Waldo Frank (The Theory 148). Morris Dickstein comments that it was D. H. Lawrence who "was quick to grasp mythic and psychological patterns in Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne and Melville," and showed that "the quasi-mythic patterns of American romance are closer to popular fiction than to the European novel of social realism" (49). Dickstein's comment clearly signifies, on the one hand, the relation between Lawrence's interpretation and American cultural reality and, on the other, the independence of American literary tradition from Europe as visualized by Lawrence. It is interesting to note that, as recently as 1990, Susan Manning of Newnham College, Cambridge, England finds D. H. Lawrence's critical approach in Studies in Classic American Literature "as one of the most suggestive approaches" to establish that "nineteenth-century Scottish and American literatures embody certain styles, subjects and preoccupations which characteristically distinguish them from English literature of the same period" (vii-viii).

The number of critics who deserve the most attention in their application of the Laurentian critical idiom in their interpretation of American literature roughly extends from R. W. B. Lewis in The American Adam (1955) to Richard Slotkin in Regeneration Through Violence (1973). It includes such names as Richard Chase in The American Novel

and Its Tradition (1957), Henry Nash Smith in Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (1950), Marius Bewley in The Eccentric Design: Form in the Classic American Novel (1959), Leslie Fiedler in Love and Death in the American Novel (1960), and Leo Marx in The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Idea in America (1964). James L. Machor singles out these works as "important texts whose publication dates bracket a time period which includes most of the work done since American literary studies first emerged as a designated area of inquiry." All, in their "emphasis on the new, the unique, or the renewed, imply an effort to identify both a literature and culture which is characteristically American." Machor continues that each of these writers, therefore, produces "a criticism which unifies cultural history and literary analysis," and they all, like William Carlos Williams In the American Grain (1925), are conscious of the "sense of place," a phrase D. H. Lawrence used in Studies in Classic American Literature, "which appeared two years before [Williams' book] becomes the controlling aspect of American consciousness." Finally, Machor adds, all discover "an initial disparity between idea and reality in the confrontation between the American landscape and the artists/historical figures studied" (99-107).

Vincent B. Leitch rightly associates most of these critics with the development of "sociological mode of myth criticism which proved a great boon to the developing field

of American studies," because these texts added to the knowledge of American literature and culture "by unearthing distinctly American archetypes." However, what Leitch does not mention is that all these critics, to a great extent, by their own admission, were indebted to Lawrence's emphasis on the symbolic significance and mythic dimensions of the classic American literature. It is against the background of D. H. Lawrence's essays on American literature that these critics succeeded in, what Leitch characterizes as, "elevating the history of native literature in a grand manner that no other school or movement following the Great Depression ever approached" (131). Lawrence's strong aversion to read American literature merely as an expression of "a conscious motive," a search for the negative ideal of democracy" (Studies 14), leads him to delve deeper with his critical method, and helps him explore "the forming of a new consciousness underneath" (70).

D. H. Lawrence admires James Fenimore Cooper's art because it produces "the very intrinsic--most American" (69) in the Leatherstocking series--"a myth, not a realistic tale" (66). On the other hand, he admonishes Nathaniel Hawthorne for relapsing into allegory. Hawthorne, despite being the great artist he is, freezes supreme moments of mythic consciousness into the rigidity of an allegory. Although the "greatest allegories in all literature" (106), The Scarlet Letter, succeeds only in creating characters like "pure-pure young parson Dimmesdale" and "the beautiful

Puritan Hester," who hug their sin in secret, and gloat over it, and try to understand." Hawthorne's story, therefore, remains simply "the myth of New England" (93-94). The Leatherstocking tales, on the other hand, create "the myth of [a] new relation," the "new nucleus of a new society, the clue to a new world epoch," and "a great release in a new world, a new moral, a new landscape" (60). Vincent Leitch observes that the tendency of early myth criticism, because of its desire of "retrieving buried archetypes" was toward allegorical interpretation "as practiced by platonic exegetes and scriptural hermeneutics." He commends the "special interpretative enterprise" of critics like Leslie Fiedler and Richard Chase which "tempered somewhat the tendency of myth criticism to spiritualize or allegorize literary texts." Leitch gives the example of William Troy, who, in "A Note on Myth," written in the late thirties, "prefigured an American project of myth criticism dependent on allegorical interpretation" (131). It is in this context that Lawrence's emphasis on the mythopoeic element in American literature is extremely valuable because it opens an entirely unexplored area of significance for American criticism.

Before proceeding to an examination of the presence of Laurentian critical idiom in American critical texts, it is worthwhile to examine to what extent his method, which Colacurcio characterizes as "passionate impressionism," stands the test of "somewhat rationalistic but absolutely

crucial hermeneutic distinction between 'intentional' and 'symptomatic' meaning." Colacurcio, following E. D. Hirsch, remarks that "before we can know what a work 'reveals,' even in relation to the psyche of an individual writer," we must necessarily "develop some adequately historical sense of what it could possibly have been intended to 'mean'," because all literature is "a complex of intention designed rationally to communicate between an individual writer in history and an audience, also in history." Colacurcio gives Cooper's example, and remarks that we can understand "what Cooper's psyche ultimately expressed in the relation between Natty Bumppo and the Great Serpent," only if we are aware of what Cooper thought about "Natty's Moravian Christianity." Likewise, our understanding of what "American literature tells us about the American soul" can only follow "some very detailed analyses of a very long list of literary works, each with a very specific (i.e. historical) intention-life of its own." No "symptomatic" meaning, Colacurcio believes, is possible by applying an "easy 'symbolic' formula" (494-496).

Lydia Blanchard, on the other hand, believes that the "power of Lawrence's insights" gives his criticism of American literature "a strong methodological base." Blanchard, too, accepts Hirsch's philosophy of textual interpretation as significant, but, unlike Colacurcio, Blanchard does not consider Hirsch's views invalidating Lawrence's critical method. On the contrary, she finds

D. H. Lawrence and E. D. Hirsch treading common ground in their views on the nature of literary texts and their interpretation. Both D. H. Lawrence and E. D. Hirsch agree that it is genre that controls the writer's purpose, that the "valid goal of interpretation is consensus," and that criticism aims to "illuminate meaning and to apply that meaning to life" (159). Lawrence's views on the nature of literary criticism and the responsibility of a critic have already been mentioned. "Literary criticism," Lawrence says,"can be no more than a reasoned account of the feelings produced upon the critic by the book he is criticizing." Although a man of sharp intuitions, Lawrence as a critic insists on a "reasoned account" of a reader's reactions to a text. Also, a critic has to be "an artistically and emotionally educated man," although with "the flexibility to know what he feels." A critic "must be emotionally alive in every fibre, intellectually capable and skilful in essential logic, and then morally very honest" ("John Galsworthy" 372).

In "The Spirit of Place," first essay in Studies, Lawrence "identifies the mistake in genre that has kept many readers of American literature from valid interpretation" (Blanchard 163). Lawrence writes:

> We like to think of the old-fashioned American classics as children's books. Just childishness on our part. The old American art-speech contains an alien quality, which belongs to the American continent and to nowhere else. But, of course, so long as we insist on reading the books as children's tales, we miss all that. (Studies 7)

Lawrence's essays discuss authors employing such diverse art forms as essay, autobiography, fiction and poetry. He traces a commonality of interest in these writers because, "like Hirsch, he understands genre in terms of common elements in a limited group of historically related texts" (Blanchard 163). We might add the example of Lawrence's foreword to his essays to further strengthen Lydia Blanchard's argument. Here Lawrence explains the basis of his examining American literature as a historically potent voice in world literature reaching "the pitch of extreme consciousness," which even the "furthest frenzies of French modernism or futurism have not yet reached"(4).[7]

D. H. Lawrence, therefore, establishes what may be best characterized as thematic criticism, a kind of criticism which informs the criticism of many critics who come after him. These critics are primarily concerned with representative plots, themes and characters as they relate to the spirit of the American continent. The earliest among these is R. W. B. Lewis in The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (1955). D. H. Lawrence builds his essays around the dialogue that takes place between "two blankly opposing morals, the artist's and the tale's." This dialogue is a reflection, not only of the cultural moment within which the artist operates, but also of the kind of historical moment the artist aspires for. It is this continuing dialogue and the ability of the artist to reconcile the two opposing forces

that determine the course a culture ultimately charts for itself. R. W. B. Lewis's Adamic figure provides one string of this dialogue:

> Every culture seems, as it advances toward maturity, to produce its own determining debate over the ideas that preoccupy it: salvation, the order of nature money, power, sex, the machine, and the like. The debate, indeed, may be said to be the culture, at least on its loftiest levels; for a culture achieves identity not so much through the ascendancy of one particular set of convictions as through the emergence of its peculiar and distinctive dialogue. (Similarly a culture is on the decline when it submits to intellectual martial law, and fresh understanding is denied in a denial of further controversy.) Intellectual history, properly conducted, exposes not only the dominant ideas of a period, or of a nation, but more important, the dominant clashes over ideas. Or to put it more austerely: the historian looks not only for the major terms of discourse, but also for major pairs of opposed terms which, by their very opposition, carry discourse forward. The historian looks, too, for the coloration or discoloration of ideas received from the sometimes bruising contact of opposites.[8] (1-2).

Lewis' comments on the critical philosophy he follows in writing The American Adam are quite revealing. His work, Lewis believes, shows the "relation between idea and story." This is because "the narrative art inevitably and by nature invests its inherited intellectual content with a quickening duplicity," and in the process it shapes "ideas with restless ambiguity," an "ambiguity" which proves that the "experience of the aims and the values of an epoch is apt to be more complex and even more painful than the simple statement of them; and narrative deals with experience, and not with propositions" (3). As mentioned earlier, although

D. H. Lawrence is not the first critic to emphasize the "two blankly opposing morals, the artist's and the tale's" in a work of art, he is, nevertheless, the foremost critic to apply this method of "saving the American tale from the American artist" (Studies 8-9) to the literature of the New world, inaugurating a new critical trend in American literary and cultural studies.

D. H. Lawrence does not emphasize the Adamic figure in American literature on the same lines as Lewis does. However, in his essay on Cooper, Lawrence articulates the image of "the very intrinsic-most American" in the person of Deerslayer. He is "a man who turns his back on white society," and who "keeps his moral integrity hard and intact. An isolate, almost selfless, stoic enduring man, who lives by death, by killing, but who is pure white" (Studies 69). Lewis later quotes these words of Lawrence's in his Chapter, "The Hero in Space: Brown Cooper, Bird" (The American Adam 104). Lewis' Adam, the epitome of the new American personality, is also "an individual emancipated from history," one who is "happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by usual inheritances of family and race." This individual stands "alone, self-reliant and self propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources" (5).

What we discover in Lewis, therefore, is his use of the Adamic hero to explore the main tendencies in American literature on the lines suggested by Lawrence's Studies. The

essentials of his method have already been examined. His discussion of Fenimore Cooper's work is another example of his affinity with the Laurentian method. Lewis comments on Cooper's "more wishful generation," and moves on to remark on Cooper's shifting "consciously away from a semi-historical authenticity." Cooper's early novels represent his "romantic posturing at midstage," Lewis writes, but soon he moves "toward a sort of sustained fantasy, in many respects much more authentic: a recreation in story of the dream-legends of his contemporaries." Lewis is discussing the Leatherstocking Tales which reach "the peak of that development" in Deerslayer. He does not conceal his debt to Lawrence for his own typically Laurentian estimate of Leatherstocking Tales, especially that of Deerslayer: "My own high relative estimate coincides with the one expressed by D. H. Lawrence," because "I agree with Lawrence in seeing the novel as the culmination of a process which exemplifies the American myth. Lawrence's words seem to me at once exact, poetic, and inimitable" (The American Adam 102-103).[9]

The critical manifesto of Richard Chase in The American Novel and Its Tradition (1957) is different from that of R. W. B. Lewis. Chase shares with Lawrence the awareness that before criticism can gainfully address the challenges posed by a meaningful confrontation with American literature, it has to locate American literature within an acceptable generic scheme. As already pointed out, Lawrence, in his essay, "The Spirit of Place," deplores the

tendency to treat American books as children's books, and immediately proceeds to establish them as serious literature in the symbolist mode. Chase attempts the same within the critical stance adopted by Lawrence. Chase places the American fiction in the tradition of "Romance," while the English fiction, Chase believes, falls in the category of "Novel." Chase, like D. H. Lawrence, comments that literature is essentially the language of culture. Consequently, American fiction is an expression of "the contradictions," and not "the unities and harmonies of our culture." It articulates the "polarities, opposites, and irreconcilables," which are the essence of the American cultural experience. The American novel, therefore, is different from the British, which "gives the impression of absorbing all extremes, all maladjustments and contradictions into a normative view of life." Chase observes:

> The English novel, one might say, has been a kind of imperial enterprise, an appropriation of reality with the high purpose of bringing order to disorder. In contrast, as Lawrence observed in his Studies in Classic American Literature, the American novel has usually seemed content to explore, rather than to appropriate and civilize, the remarkable and in some ways unexampled territories of life in the New World and to reflect its anomalies and dilemmas. It has not wanted to build an imperium but merely to discover a new place and a new state of mind. Explorers see more deeply, darkly, privately and disinterestedly than imperialists, who must perforce be circumspect and prudential. The American novel is more profound and clairvoyant than the English novel, but by the same token it is narrower and more arbitrary, and it tends to carve out of experience brilliant, highly wrought

> fragments rather than massive unities. (The American Novel 4-5)

Words such as "explore," "deeply," "darkly," "privately," and "disinterestedly," clearly suggest D. H. Lawrence's belief in the aboriginal spirit of the New continent, just as "appropriate and civilize," "order," "imperium," and "massive unities" represent Lawrence's Europe, slumbering in "idealistic halfness" (Studies 13).

Chase discovers in D. H. Lawrence's essays the explanation for the contradictions Alexis de Tocqueville diagnosed in American culture. The "Americanness" of American literature, according to Chase, is the "version of the contrariety" or, "as [Lawrence] said, 'duplicity' of the American literary mind." Chase summarizes Lawrence's central position in his assessment of American literature: "Lawrence was thinking of an inherent conflict between 'genteel' spirituality and a pragmatic experientialism which in its lower depths was sheer Dionysian or 'Indian' energy and violence" (The American Novel 9). He goes on to acknowledge the relevance of the Laurentian method, "in the reassessment of the American past and a consolidation of knowledge and opinion about it." This method, Chase believes, "may be described variously as historical, cultural, or mythic." Chase praises Lawrence's work as having the "advantage of being written by a sympathetic but critical foreigner," and rightly believes that "history has fully justified the critics involved in this first period of

reassessment and consolidation [Van Wyck Brooks and his contemporaries]" (n. 44-45). Chase's discussion of James Fenimore Cooper's novels is based, as most studies of Cooper were by this time, on Lawrence's mythic interpretation of Leatherstocking Novels.[10]

Richard Chase does not completely endorse Lawrence's view of Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter, and says that Lawrence only "states a partial truth" when he characterizes Hawthorne's novel as an allegory. However, Chase ultimately finds it difficult to sustain the view that Hawthorne was creating a myth, and concludes that neither "in The Scarlet Letter nor elsewhere did Hawthorne ever make up his mind whether he approved of [the] loss and submergence" of the "emotion involved in the abandonment of the Old World cultural heritage which had given human emotions a sanction and a manifold significance." On the one side, "Hawthorne had enough passion to make us feel the sadness and chill of the New World," and, on the other, Hawthorne, the Puritan conventionalist, permits himself a sigh of relief and rationalizes it." (76-77). In Lawrence, we encounter this very Hawthorne, rendered colorful by Lawrence's language: "That blue-eyed darling, Nathaniel knew disagreeable things in his inner soul. He was careful to send them out in disguise" (Studies 89). Lawrence comments: "Just listen to the darling. Isn't he a master of apology? Of symbols too. His pious blame is a chuckle of praise all the time" (95).

Lawrence's emphasis on American literature relying primarily on allegory and symbol to reconcile the contradictions inherent in the American mind is again the yardstick Chase applies to his discussion on Melville. With such close affinity to Lawrence, it is not unexpected that in comparing Hawthorne and Melville, Chase revises his earlier estimate of The Scarlet Letter as displaying "several mythic archetypes" (The American Novel 79). Although Chase had renounced his association with myth criticism when he wrote his study of American novel, he can not help but return to the Laurentian premise of treating Melville's Moby Dick as a myth and Hawthorne's novel an allegory. Chase observes that, despite Hawthorne's admiration for "English and German romantic literature, his mind was formed pre-eminently by allegorists like Bunyan and Spenser and by the rationalistic mentality of the eighteenth century." This was the reason "Hawthorne felt no impulse to transmute his inherited Calvinism into a new view of life." Melville, on the other hand, "felt strongly the impulse to participate in the romantic, Promethean attempt to recreate knowledge and discover undiscovered truths" (81). In his introduction to Melville, a selection of essays on the novelist, Chase agrees with Lawrence's belief that Melville fails to achieve in Typee the maturity he displays in Moby Dick and even in Omoo (8). This, in Lawrence's words, is because, in Typee Melville was looking for "a paradisal ideal," a life "of continuous bliss," a "fixed ideal. Fata

Morgana," and forgets "there is no paradise. Fight and laugh and feel bitter and feel bliss: and fight again. Fight, fight. That is life" (Studies 140-141).

Richard Chase disavows myth criticism in The American Novel and Its Tradition, because its "rigidity and formal abstractness" renders "a very biased view of American literature." Myth critics, according to Chase, know only "late" works of the author in question--Marble Faun and not The Scarlet Letter, Billy Budd, and not Moby Dick. Because of this selective emphasis they tend to ignore works which "are radically involved with the dilemmas of their time, and which draw too directly on the reality and the moral contradictions of human experience." These critics have an "exaggerated opinion" of works that ignore this "involvement and promise the immanence of grace, of final harmony and reconciliation, in a world whose contradictions it seems no longer possible to bear." Indirectly, Chase is endorsing the opinion D. H. Lawrence expresses in his discussion on The Scarlet Letter and Moby Dick; for D. H. Lawrence, real myth involves the onward march of the integral soul and does not aim at the resolution of contradictions. Chase almost echoes the Laurentian belief in the nature of American literature, when he says that "it pictures human life in a context of unresolved contradictions--contradictions which, for better or for worse, are not absorbed, reconciled or transcended" (245).[11]

David Lodge finds a striking similarity between D. H. Lawrence and Mikhail Bakhtin in their views on the nature of the novel. Bakhtin considers Dostoevsky as a writer who best illustrates the "dialogic, or, in an alternative formation 'polyphonic'" nature of prose literature (17). Bakhtin says that the greatest quality of the novel form is the "possibility of employing on the plane of a single work discourse of various types, with all their expressive capacities intact, without reducing them to a common denominator" (200). It is this quality which distinguishes the novel from epic, lyric, and, tragedy, which, Lodge observes, "seek to establish a single style, a single voice, with which to express a single world view" (17). Wayne Booth, in his introduction to Bakhtin's work, says that the "one grand literary form that is for Bakhtin capable of a kind of justice to the inherent polyphonies of life is 'the novel'" (Problems xxii). D. H. Lawrence conceives the role of the novel in similar terms--as an expression of the shimmer of life in Lady Chatterley's Lover:

> It is the way our sympathy flows and recoils that really determines our lives. And here lies the vast importance of the novel, properly handled. It can inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness, and can lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead. Therefore, the novel, properly handled, can reveal the most secret places of life: for it is in the passional secret places of life, above all, that the tide of sensitive awareness needs to ebb and flow, cleansing and refreshing. (118)

Lawrence's practice as a novelist conforms so closely to what Bakhtin considers the "dialogical" nature of the

fictional discourse that Avrom Fleishman brackets both together in his essay, "Lawrence and Bakhtin: Where Pluralism Ends and Dialogism Begins." Fleishman observes that both "the complaints of yesterday's New Critical formalists against Lawrence's fiction," as well as "the humanistic defence mounted by F. R. Leavis and his followers," seem to be outmoded today. What can best serve Lawrence criticism is to explore "untapped resources in the novelist by means of Bakhtin's genuinely new insights" (109).

The emphasis on "contrariness" as the essence of American experience, as expressed in its literature and culture, placed by D. H. Lawrence, R. W. B. Lewis and Richard Chase leads our discussion directly to Marius Bewley's The Eccentric Design (1959). Bewley is close to D. H. Lawrence's views on symbolism in American literature. He continues the Laurentian trend by exploring the difference between the English and American novel, and the latter's struggle "to find a new experience and discover how to put that experience into art." This experience for the American writer involved confronting the "deepest tensions" to unravel the mystery of the American soul. As a result, "establishing the American identity" turns put to be "extremely elusive" (17). Bewley, however, credits Parrington's Main Currents in American Thought for introducing this concept in American criticism. His own concept of tension, he thinks is closer to Lionel Trilling's

essay, "Reality in America." However, the way Trilling words his idea of tension reminds us of Lawrence:

> A culture is not a flow, nor even confluence; the form of its existence is struggle, or at least a debate--it is nothing if not a dialectic . . . . It is a significant circumstance of American culture, and one that is susceptible of explanation, than an unusually large proportion of its notable writers of the nineteenth century were such repositories of the dialectic of their time--they contained both the yes and no of their culture, and by that token they were prophetic of the future. (qtd. Bewley 22)

D. H. Lawrence's essay on Whitman best articulates the need for tension in the creation of a viable cultural moment. Whitman, according to Lawrence, does attempt to provide a "doctrine of life" when he sings of "sacrifice," "sympathy," "allness," "one identity," "love," and "merging." But these songs offer simply a "morality of salvation," not a "morality of real living." Whitman, the "Savior," is not the great American poet, because, like the Europeans, he fails to move "beyond the morality of salvation." However, in his later poetry, unlike the European artists, Whitman, the great poet, conveys "the American heroic message," not to "cry for some God beyond for salvation," but to travel along "the open road, as the road opens, into the unknown, keeping company with those whose soul draws them near to her, accomplishing nothing but the journey . . . the soul in her subtle sympathies accomplishing herself by the way" (Studies 181-182).

Richard Chase and Marius Bewley both share Lawrence's belief in tension as a source of cultural regeneration, but

for Bewley the tension was consequent to a struggle to close the split in the American experience. American art attempts to discover a unity that, "for the artist especially, almost sensibly was not there." Bewley ascribes this condition, unlike Lawrence, to the "deprivations of American society" (18). However, he also believes that at a "vital point within the given work of art," these "divergent energies reverse themselves towards a moment of creative balance or harmony, at least for the duration of our response" (23). Richard Chase, on the other hand, fully endorses Lawrence's concept when he comments that the best in American novels "achieves their very being, their energy and their form, from the perception and acceptance not of unities but of radical disunities" (The American Novel 6-7).

The presence of D. H. Lawrence in the works of above American critics disproves Michael Colacurcio's conclusion that until the appearance of Leslie. A. Fiedler's Love and Death in the American Novel in 1960, D. H. Lawrence "was around, of course, but his views did not seem to be taken with complete seriousness." It is evident that American criticism started paying attention to the Laurentian voice from the very time it announced that the American experience in literature and culture was a novel venture unparalleled in the history of art and ideas. Colacurcio, however, is right when he observes that since the appearance of Leslie Fiedler's work, "a school of Lawrence" has finally emerged, and "Lawrence's well known, often maddening, and verifiable

series of literary and cultural apercus are now part of the received critical wisdom." Colacurcio comments that although no "consensus" on the views of Lawrence has been reached, it is evident that not only "Lawrence's insights can be translated into very respectable scholarly prose but also that they can motivate and guide the most impressively detailed sorts of historical research." This helps Lawrence develop into "a fact to be dealt with" (488). Colacurcio treats the following works as directly inspired by Lawrence's essay, A World Elsewhere The Place of Style in American literature (1966) by Richard Poirier, Sins of Fathers Hawthorne's Psychological Themes (1966) by Frederick C. Crews, The Return of the Vanishing American (1968) by Leslie A. Fiedler, The Romance in America: Studies in Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, and James (1969) by Joel Porte, The Imperial Self: An Essay in American Literary and Cultural History (1971) by Quentin Anderson, and Regeneration Through Violence (1973) by Richard Slotkin (487).

In Leslie Fiedler, American criticism for the first time confronts an "American" D. H. Lawrence. Richard Chase, in "Leslie Fiedler and American Culture," comments on Fiedler's striking affinity with D. H. Lawrence both in style and temperament. Fiedler's literary criticism, according to Richard Chase, is couched in an idiom very close to Lawrence's Studies. Fiedler's style is "rapid and witty; it is richly made, if occasionally pedantic." His

"cultural and literary judgements are sometimes profound and sometimes merely scintillating." His conception of literature is also very Laurentian as evidenced by his belief in the 'contextual' value of literature, "its relation to cultural, historical and psychological realities" (8). This definition of literature brings him very close to Lawrence's concept of valid and meaningful criticism. Fiedler's distaste for "mere textual analysis," a criticism he characterizes as "higher remedial reading which an age of lapsing literacy perhaps demands," results in the birth of Love and Death in the American Novel. Fiedler describes his work in his preface to the first edition as "a literary rather than a scientific work, a labor of love rather than of patience," and a work which seeks "the kind of validity which depends not on faithfulness to 'fact' but on insight and sensitivity to nuance" (n.p.). Fiedler's words bring to mind D. H. Lawrence's criticism of textual criticism as "the critical twiddle-twaddle about style and form . . . pseudo-scientific classifying and analysing of books in an imitation-botanical fashion" ("John Galsworthy" 539). However, Chase comments that Fiedler himself "is pretty duplicitous," and beneath his "public pose" of the "shocking and notorious" Fiedler, he remains a "run-of-the-mill Ph. D. candidate." Despite these idiosyncracies in Fiedler, Chase does admit that Fiedler's work "is the latest and, with all its faults, one of the best of the books that have devoted themselves, since

the appearance of Lawrence's Studies in Classic American Literature," to unmask the American authors" (9-10).

In his preface to the first edition of Love and Death in the American Novel, Fiedler describes his criticism as "thematic rather than strictly historical, selective rather than exhaustive," aimed at examining "the duplicity" with which the themes of love and death are treated by American writers. Fiedler considers D. H. Lawrence "closest to the truth" about American books, writing about them with "an appropriate passion and style." Fiedler frankly confesses his debt to "the pages of that little book," where he found "confirmation" of his own "suspicions that it is duplicity and outrageousness which determine the quality of those American books ordinarily consigned to the children's shelf in the library (n.p.). D. H. Lawrence's two critical concerns--"saving the American tale from the American artist," (Studies 9) and placing American literature in the proper genre rather than insisting on "reading the books as children's tales" (7)--are Fiedler's primary motivations also. These concerns are related to the Laurentian belief in literature as an expression of culture. In exploring the cultural context of American literature based on the Laurentian premise of discovering the split in the American mind, Fiedler's work receives general approbation. Richard Chase says that it is "a powerful indictment of our culture and of modern culture in general," and reveals "the diminution in modern culture of the possibilities and

resources of human life in its fullness." This results from "the subversion and denial of character, temperament, and the passional self" ("Leslie Fiedler and American Culture" 16). The other area of main concern to Fiedler is the "depth-psychological and anthropological." Here Fiedler is indebted to Freud and Carl Jung in using concepts of "the conscious and the unconscious, the Oedipus complex, the archetypes, etc." (Love and Death n.p). It is in this area Fiedler has encountered the severest criticism. Chase believes that his use of psychoanalysis "has to make its theme stick and it has adequately to define the nature of the American novel," which Fiedler reduces to "merely a chronicle of nihilistic despair titillated up with a misplaced eroticism." Fiedler's preoccupation with this "reductive" approach results in "a constant tailoring of the facts to fit the thesis," which he pushes so "insistently into the foreground." This results in Fiedler's often "hiding from both us and from himself," his main concern--the criticism of a culture losing sight of its true self ("Leslie Fiedler and American Culture" 13-16).

Irving Kristol refers to the "most agitated polemics, the most shrill repudiation and denunciation" Fiedler's work received, but does not agree with those critics who accuse the Freudian premises of the book for its weaknesses. Kristol, however, does concede that "it could not have been written, and certainly would not be as good as it is, if Lawrence had not previously produced his book." Kristol,

however, avoids characterizing Fiedler's exploration of "the unhappy conscience and unhappy consciousness of modern man" in American literature as a Laurentian concern. Instead, he calls it "Hegelian" (505-509).

Although R. W. B. Lewis, in "Gothic Criticism and American Fiction," accepts Fiedler's work as "ground-breaking," he criticizes "several contradictions" in Fiedler's argument. One of them is the suggestion that American fiction grows out "of a series of failures which turned it toward the aberrant, the preposterous, and the vindictive." But Fiedler, surpringly, "goes on to deplore, resent, or neglect later American fiction in which the elements of perversity, absurdity, and revenge are lacking" (614). This weakness in Fiedler's work results from his dependence on the Freudian psychology as a critical tool to encompass the discussion of the whole range of American culture. In contrast, Richard Poirier who relies mainly on the Laurentian thesis comments meaningfully on later American writers also.

Robert Gorman Davis also finds Fiedler's psychological perspective "as quite limited and his judgements as negative and restrictive." His method, according to Davis, in the early section of Love and Death in the American Novel, helps him make "freshly inventive references" to European literature, but when Fiedler shifts to the New World and has "exchanged castles for forests, papal inquisitors for red Indians, the development seems at once more monotonous and

less coherent." Davis's objection to Fiedler's Freudian psychoanalytical method is the same as D. H. Lawrence's, when he says that we can not ignore what "depth psychology has taught us about the unconscious mechanisms which are partly responsible for imaginative creativity" (11-13).[12]

We see, therefore, that the two strains in Love and Death in the American Novel--the Laurentian and the psychoanalytical--do not merge as successfully as one would wish in creating a convincing portrait of American writers. Fiedler writes a brilliant book, but, in the words of Richard Chase, although an "eloquent book," it remains "long, richly allusive, shamelessly cribbed, genuinely original, narrowly conceived," leaving the impression that Fiedler's chief concern merely "is an impish desire to joggle middle-class complacencies" ("Leslie Fiedler and . . ." 9). Willard Thorp objects to Fiedler's "slam-bang style" with which he discusses the people in his novels and carries out the "Jungian analyses of their lives and their characters" in a manner that he does not appear to be talking "about persons in novels who, their creators thought, resemble people." This, Thorp rightly comments, is owing to the fact that "characters and situations are discussed in terms of anima and animus, projection and shadow, archetype and myth, Oedipal situations and Geschwisterinzest" (5). Similarly, John Raleigh objects to Fiedler's use of "a kind of amateur brand of sociology cum sex, or, rather, sex cum sociology" (549). In his comment

on Fiedler's book, Benjamin DeMott characterizes the author as "The Negative American" for his Freudian belief "that all American writers are so afraid of sex that they dash off to a wilderness of homoeroticism and self-slaughter." On the other hand, DeMott appreciates Fiedler's concern in Love and Death in the American Novel with "the loss of humanity, the self, wholeness" (203-204), concerns characteristically Laurentian.[13]

Leslie A. Fiedler's The Return of the Vanishing American (1968), is the culmination of the evaluation of American culture with the American geography as the controlling feature in its development. Works such as Henry Nash Smith's Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (1950) and Leo Marx's The Machine in the Garden: Technology and Pastoral Ideal in America (1964) more directly discuss this theme. Richard Slotkin in Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier 1600-1860 (1973) follows later, and is closest to Lawrence in assessing the importance of American frontier as the chief element in the emergence of American literature and culture.

D. H. Lawrence's emphasis on the Spirit of Place as "a great Reality" (Studies 12), recreates American geography as the catalyst of American culture in a manner not attempted before. Although the importance of American frontier in American studies was pointed out by Frederick Jackson Turner's "The Significance of the Frontier in American

History," read before the American Historical Association at Chicago as early as 1893, the frontier was always discussed as a place of confrontation and ultimately assimilation by the ever-expanding American culture. D. H. Lawrence's work, as John Seelye observes, gave the study of American frontier a "new impetus." Turner's frontier is the ever-expanding extension of American institutions at the cost of the annihilation of the "savage" in what he called the war between "savagery and civilization" (187). In this war between the "Garden and the Desert" (Virgin Land 174-183), as characterized by Henry Nash Smith, the whole emphasis again is on the assimilation of the "savage" into civilization. Smith accepts, in his Preface to the 1970 reissue of Virgin Land, that in 1950 he had failed to "realize that there is a continuous dialectic interplay between the mind and its environment" (VIII).

It is this dialectic pattern that D. H. Lawrence explores in his essay on Cooper when he observes that the artist in Cooper realized that "there can be no blood-mixing of the two races, white and red," and if he attempted this assimilation, "he kills 'em off" (Studies 64). The same is this dialectic Fiedler emphasizes in The Return of the Vanishing American. Mark Royden Winchell observes that Fiedler believes that the west "refers neither to a region nor to a direction, but our encounter with the savage other." Fiedler also, like Lawrence, says that "once the Indian has disappeared as a mythic presence in the American

imagination," American culture will lose one its vital components (36). Michael J. Colacurcio is very emphatic in characterizing this period as purely Laurentian in Fiedler's development as a critic:

> In The Return Fiedler seems to have gone all way with Lawrence. Here it is not only a question of similarity of spirit or program, or of close dependence in the case of an individual writer, such as Cooper; here there is a rewording and an elaboration of what is probably the fundamental Lawrentian judgement about the unique and inevitable meaning of American mythology based on a unique and inevitable condition of American experience. (496)

Colacurcio goes to the extent of interpreting the entire meaning of Fiedler's work in the "Lawrentian epigraph" (496) from Lawrence's essay on Cooper prefacing Fiedler's work: "The moment the last nuclei of Red Life break up in America, then the white man will have to reckon with the full force of the demon of the continent" (Studies 55) . Another characteristically Laurentian pronouncement in the Cooper essay, perhaps borne out by Lawrence's own American experience, best sums up Fiedler's own position:[14]

> When you are actually in America, America hurts, because it has a powerful disintegrative influence upon the white psyche. It is full of grinning unappeased aboriginal demons, too, ghosts, and it persecutes the white men, like some Eumenides, until the white men give up their absolute whiteness. America is tense with latent violence and resistance . . . . Yet, one day the demons of America must be placated, the ghosts must be appeased, the Spirit of Place atoned for. Then the true passionate love for American soil will appear. As yet, there is too much menace in the landscape. (Studies 56)

While discussing the Laurentian idiom in connection with the development of frontier theories in American culture, one cannot escape being struck by the increasing use made of Hector St. John de Crevecouer's Letters from an American Farmer as a point of departure in analysing the dialectic between the two poles of American cultural experience. As pointed earlier, this long-neglected eighteenth-century writer, after being forgotten for more than a century, was finally resurrected from obscurity and raised to the dignity of a classic in American literary canon by D. H. Lawrence. Unfortunately, Henry Nash Smith, in The Virgin Land, attributes to Crevecouer only one side of the American cultural experience--that of the "garden," the "agrarian philosophy"--later represented by Thomas Jefferson. Later, Leo Marx in The Machine in the Garden credits Lawrence with pointing out through Crevecouer that "only the 'spirit of place' really can account for the singular voice we hear in American books." Leo Marx, however, distorts Lawrence's observations as "derisive," because Marx mistakenly concludes that in Lawrence's mind Crevecouer was merely a "Child-of-Nature-sweet-and-pure." Marx attempts to raise Crevecouer's Letters to "mythic magnitude," by discussing their "moral geography" which "forms a neat spatial pattern." Crevecouer creates a "compelling triptych that figures an implied judgment upon all the conditions of man which may be thought to exist between the savagery of the frontier on one side and the

court of Versailles on the other" (Machine 111-112). Marx, in fact, only reiterates the opinion already expressed by Lawrence.

Lawrence comments on the "mythic" quality of Crevecouer's vision succinctly in the earlier version of his essay on Crevecouer. Commenting on the farmer's stories about hornets, wrens, and swallows, Lawrence observes that they have "a mythical or legendary quality which attracts us." Lawrence parallels these episodes with those narrated by Herodotus who "sees with the dark sensual eyes, in the division of otherness." Lawrence believes that "Crevecouer sees birds, not in their 'little singing angel' aspect of modern sentiment. He has the more ancient vision. He sees their dark, primitive, weapon like souls" (The Symbolic Meaning 59-60).

In Slotkin's Regeneration Through Violence, the affinity between American criticism and D. H. Lawrence reaches its high water mark. Colacurcio describes Slotkin's work as "a slowed-down. well-documented, and altogether less fanciful version of Lawrence's argument about the 'demon of the continent and about the discovery and failure of the religion of nature" (497). Slotkin's dichotomy between "Moira" and "Themis," between "the unconscious and the conscious," the "dream or impulse and the rational idea," the "inchoate desire and the knowledge of responsibility," and the "gratification-world presided over by the mother, and the world of laws or reasons ruled by the father"

(Regeneration 11), though derived from Jung, nearly approximates the Laurentian polarity between the Dark and the Light, the Senses and the Mind, Love and Law, Spirit and Flesh, Female and Male. Slotkin's affinity with D. H. Lawrence is indisputably clear when he applies his archetypes to the American situation.

D. H. Lawrence attributes to European culture its unflagging devotion to throttling the mythopoeic and nurturing the mind in the name of progress. This is the inherited cultural matrix, Slotkin believes, as Lawrence does, the settlers brought to America. They possessed "a mythology derived from the cultural history of their home countries," which could only be "responsive to the psychological and social needs of their old culture" (Regeneration 15). In the Laurentian dialectic, American culture attempts "to slough the old American consciousness completely," and "to grow a new skin underneath," and this creates the "true American, who writhes and writhes like a snake that is long in sloughing" (Studies 58). This attempt at "sloughing" in Slotkin's terms is "regeneration," the "attempt to destroy or cut through the conventionalized mythology to get back to the primary source of blood-knowledge of the wilderness, the 'Indian' mind, the basic" (Regeneration 17).

While Lawrence's essays unravel this confrontational paradigm chiefly in American Renaissance literature, Slotkin extends the Laurentian idiom to the very origins of American

literature and culture. Slotkin traces this process in the colonial War Narratives (1625-1685). The dual nature of American art activity that Lawrence discovers in later literature, finds a more tangible representation in Slotkin--between the Puritan and the Indian. In the Indian, the Puritans saw "a darkened and inverted mirror image of their own culture, their own mind," but in their attempt to impose their will on the Indian, they saw the Indian cultures as "the devil's city on a hill," and proceeded to "capture the devil's city and turn his demons to good men (if not angels)" (Regeneration 57).

Slotkin analyses the Puritan experience on the same terms as Lawrence analyzed later American literature and culture. Lawrence observes that the story of American literature shows the extent to which the "world fears a new experience more than it fears anything. Because a new experience displaces so many old experiences." The "shifting over from the old psyche to something new" is a "displacement," and "displacements hurt. This hurts. So we try to tie it up, like a cut finger. Put a rag around it" (Studies 7-8). Slotkin discusses Thomas Morton's The New English Canaan (1637) as an example of the extent to which the Puritan-Indian dichotomy haunted the colonial mind. Morton's attempts to regard his own colony of Merrymount "as the fountainhead of that erotic energy, to which all the new and old worlds might have recourse," led Bradford in Of Plymouth Plantation to characterize Morton as "a demonic

emissary of atheism, lechery, paganism, and democracy." Bradford's characterization of Morton as the "Lord of Misrule is no figure from a comic masque but a proto-Satan ruling a tribe of resurrected satyrs and primitive demons" (Regeneration 61-64). In the Captivity Narratives, although the "Indians become the instruments of God for the chastisement of his guilty people," the American mind gets further polarized. The "garden" in Captivity Narratives, "a small, cultivated plot, protected from the encroaching wilderness by a stiff 'hedge' of religious dogma and rigorous government" (99), symbolizes the polarizing principle. Like the myth of the Leatherstocking in the post-colonial America, the search for a hero in eighteenth-century produced a frontier hero in Daniel Boone. Largely because by now the settlers felt less threatened by the wilderness, they did treat the landscape with "more realism, denying neither its harshness nor its beauty" (181), but their confrontation with tbe environment is still marked by ambiguity rather than by open-hearted desire for communication.

Slotkin's chapter on the Leatherstocking myth is prefaced by a Lawrence quote from Studies on "the myth of essential white America" (466). Later, commenting on Cooper's divided allegiance, as D. H. Lawrence does, Slotkin finds that in The Pioneers there is a "formal ambivalence," not only owing to Cooper's "hasty writing and defective worksmanship," but mainly because of "different mythological

antecedents, Indian and European," which "prove to be the sources of the central conflict" (486). Slotkin discovers in Cooper's portrayal of the American character in Deerslayer "embodiments of ambivalences or problems, rather than of clear and simple truths" (506), rendering, as Lawrence put it, all relationships for Deerslayer "silent, reserved, across an unpassable distance" (Studies 68).

Unlike D. H. Lawrence, Slotkin does not discuss The Scarlet Letter as the central text in his analysis of Hawthorne. Instead, he concentrates on Nawthorne's shorter fiction, such as "Young Goodman Brown" and "Roger Malvin's Burial." Slotkin's preference is mainly because in his shorter fiction Hawthorne builds the theme of wilderness directly by bringing his heroes in contact with the "dark denizens of the woods and the dark thoughts of the hidden mind." Hawthorne's stories, in Slotkin's analysis, definitely reveal the same ambivalence D. H. Lawrence finds in The Scarlet Letter. Hawthorne's tales, according to Slotkin, are "both critiques of and participation in the Puritan myth of the wilderness" (Regeneration 476-477); Lawrence chartacterizes Hawthorne as "a master of apology," whose "pious blame is a chuckle of praise all the while" (Studies 95).

Slotkin, in his discussion of Melville's Moby Dick, recognizes Lawrence's contribution in characterizing the White Whale as the "doom of 'white civilization,'" resulting from "the western theology of idealism, by our devotion to

material progress, and by our exploitation or repression of natural and human (particularly sexual) forces and impulses." In describing Melville's work as a "cosummatory," rather than "the romantic, or conventionalized myth," Slotkin emphasizes the inscrutability of the true myth which does not "evoke a response of recognition or identification" (Regeneration 550). D. H. Lawrence goes a step further in his comment that he doubted "if even Melville knew exactly" what the White Whale symbolized (Studies 153). Slotkin too singles out "The Grand Armada" chapter in Moby Dick for special mention in analysing the nature of man-whale relationship; D. H. Lawrence describes this as "the most stupendous chapter" in the novel (Studies 163).

Slotkin's work is significant in as much as it draws its chief inspiration from D. H. Lawrence's emphasis on the confrontation of American culture with the spirit of the American continent. Despite writers like Crevecouer, Cooper, Melville, and Whitman, we fail, because of our inability to obey "some deep, inward, voice of religious belief" in our search for "a living, organic, believing community, active in fulfiling some unfulfilled, perhaps unrealized purpose" (Studies 12). However, when Slotkin writes of Whitman's poetry, he adopts a rather limited view of the American cultural aspirations. Lawrence disagrees with Slotkin that Whitman's greatness lies in his attempt to create "both a race of unquestioned superiority and a race

closely resembling the idealized primitive man of Rousseau" (Regeneration 277). For Lawrence, Whitman's greatness lies in his breaking through all fixed ideals and giving us the image of "souls in the Open Road" (Studies 187).

What attracted American critics the most in D. H. Lawrence's essays is his emphasis on the inability of American literature and culture to establish a proper rapport with the spirit of the New World. James L. Machor traces the development of American literary and cultural studies in "Tradition, Holism, and the Dilemmas of American Studies." In his opinion, William Carlos Williams' In the American Grain (1925), a work that closely resembles D. H. Lawrence's Studies, is responsible for the renewed interest in the appraisal of American literature and culture. Lawrence himself wrote a highly favorable review of Williams' work as a record of "truly American heroes," because it highlights "not the ideal achievement of great men of the New World, but the men themselves, in all the dynamic explosiveness of their energy" (Phoenix 334-335). Williams, like D. H. Lawrence, saw the Old World consciousness producing characters like Frydis, Columbus, Cortez, and Ponce de Leon, who confront the new landscape with their customary rapaciousness. Even Cotton Mather, George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, portrayed as heroic in history, fail, in the eyes of Williams, because each refuses to encounter the spirit of the new place as a whole man alive and labors under a ready-made ideology (143-203).

We see, therefore, that Machor, in crediting Williams for the birth of American literary studies, makes clear the role D. H. Lawrence plays in their growth and development. Machor characterizes this new development as emphasizing "the new, the unique, or the renewed," implying "an effort to identify both a literature and culture which is characteristically American." The new movement produces "a criticism which unites cultural history and literary analysis," and is motivated by "the desire to find the nexus of literature and culture in America, both past and present" (100). These elements describe not only the nature of the period that followed the appearance of D. H. Lawrence's essays, but also the main inspiration behind them.

Huck Gutman believes that Americans betray an extreme "possessiveness" toward their national literature and culture, and voices from abroad "might well remedy this situation, and remind--or teach--American scholars what is most lively, most idiosyncratic, most important, in the culture they claim as their own" (8). In the nineteenth century, America heard the voice of Alexis de Tocqueville's in Democracy in America (1835-1840); in the twentieth, it was D. H. Lawrence's in Studies in Classic American Literature (1923). They both performed the task that, according to Leslie Berlowitz, is the "most important in American culture." It has to be "captured again and again" to "avoid the simplification of ideology and extremism"

(xvi). D. H. Lawrence sucessfully builds a bridge between the American, not the European, past and American present. He thereby helps American criticism grasp the essential pattern and intrinsic meaning of American culture and civilization.

NOTES

1. Dianne S. Bonds in Language and the Self in D. H. Lawrence. (Ann Arbor/ London: U. M. I. Research Press, 1987) says that, although Lawrence makes "relatively few explicit remarks about language," his novels and his critical works, especially Studies in Classic American Literature, do present Lawrence's "theory" of language, and much of what he writes appears so close to modern theories of language and communication. Bonds offers the following excerpts for comparison: i. "The curious thing about art-speech is that it prevaricates so terribly, I mean it tells such lies . . . . And out of a pattern of lies art weaves the truth . . . . The artist usualy sets out--or used to--to point a moral and adorn a tale. The tale, however, points the other way, as a rule. Two blankly opposing morals, the artist's and the tale's. Trust the tale. The proper function of a critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it" (D. H. Lawrence). ii. "The deconstruction of a text does not proceed by random doubt or arbitrary subversion, but by the careful teasing out of warring forces within the text itself. If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading, it is not the text, but the claim to unequivocal dominion of one mode of signifying over another" (Barbara Johnson). iii. "To do this [to deconstruct a Freudian text, or to see how it deconstructs itself] is not to trust Freud the man but to give oneself maximum opportunity to learn from Freud's writing by supposing that if this powerful and heterogeneous discourse is at one point operating with unjustified assumptions, these assumptions will be exposed and undermined by forces within the text that a reading can bring out" (Jonathan Culler). iv. "Every work of art adheres to some system of morality. But if it be really a work of art, it must contain the essential criticism on the morality to which it adheres . . . . The degree to which the system of morality, or the metaphysic, of any work of art is submitted to criticism within the work of art makes the lasting value and satisfaction of that work" (D. H. Lawrence). v. "Great works of literature are likely to be ahead of their critics. They are there already. They have anticipated explicitly any deconstruction the critic can achieve" (Miller, "Deconstructing the Deconstructors"). vi. "The value and force of a text may depend to a considerable extent on the way it deconstructs the philosophy that subtends it" (Jonathan Culler). Significantly, Charles Feidelson, Jr., whose Symbolism and American Literature (1953) is the first major work to discuss nineteenth-century American literature as symbolistic, has also been shown as having close affinity with post-structuralism by Barbara Foley in "From New Criticism to Deconstruction: "The Example of Charles Feidelson's Symbolism and American Literature." American Quarterly. Spring 1984: 44-64. Feidelson's study, acording to Foley, "enacts a thoroughgoing application of

New Critical linguistics and epistemological principles to the examination of literary history." Foley observes that "implicit in the New Critical stress upon formal autonomy is a valorization of linguistic self-reflectivity"(45). In view of this remark, D. H. Lawrence's statement that "the curious thing about art-speech is that it prevaricates so terribly" (Studies 8) links him with post-structuralism through his belief on "the self-reflectivity" of language.

2. In Apocalypse, Lawrence's interpretation of Revelation is influenced by James Pryse's The Apocalypse Unsealed (New York, 1910). Pryse writes that the Revelation was so heavily veiled with symbols because the church would never have accepted such an esoteric document that the writer conceled the real message under the most extraordinary symbols (4). D. H. Lawrence expresses similar views in Apocalypse (New York: The Viking Press, 1932) about the writer of Revelation: "To them a thought was a completed state of feeling awareness . . . . This should help us appreciate that the oracles were not supposed to say seomething that fitted plainly in the whole chain of circumstances. They were supposed to deliver a set of images or symbols of real dynamic value, which should set the emotional consciousness of the enquirer, as he pondered them, revolving more and more rapidly, till out of a state of intense emotional absorption the resolve at last formed; or, as we say, the decision was arrived at" (81).

3. Eugene Goodheart goes a step further in his comments on Lawrence's affinity with the American spirit as evidenced in American fiction: "The American novel does not need to know Lawrence to want the freedom of fluid identity. Nor does it need to learn from Lawrence the risks of vertigo and of self-dissolution that a fluid identity incurs. Rather, in knowing Lawrence, it knows itself. Lawrence is an incarnation of American consciousness, a re-enactment of the greatest of American dramas: the European becoming American. Studies in Classic American Literature is itself a fable of American Literature" ("Lawrence and American Fiction" 137). Goodheart quotes Edward Dahlberg who believes that Lawrence influenced American writers, not only through his creative work, but also through Studies which marked the first serious criticism of American literature: "Before Lawrence American books on the poetasters in the American wilderness, Anne Bradstreet, the pamphleteer-versifier Freneau and the gothic dunciad Brockden Brown, came from the dreariest academic scriveners. There was not a critical volume from which one could quarry a truth until Lawrence's Studies which seeded the work of Sherwood Anderson, Allen Tate, Hart Crane, William Carlos Williams's In the American Grain and Josephine Herbst's The Hunter of Doves" (qtd. Goodheart 137).

4. Some of these works are: The Art of the Self in D. H. Lawrence by Marguerite Beede Howe (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1977), The Moon's Dominion: Narrative Dichotomy and Female Dominance in Lawrence's Earlier Novels by Gavriel Ben-Ephraim (London: Associated University Presses, 1981), River of Dissolution: D. H. Lawrence and English Romanticism by Colin Clarke (London: Routeledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), D. H. Lawrence, the Man and his Work: The Formative Years: 1885-1919 by Emile Delavenay (Calbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), and Conflict in the Novels of D. H. Lawrence by Yudhishtar (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1969).

5. Mary Freeman comments on Lawrence's deep insight in describing "life's consummate moments in his novels, stories, and poems," and says that, in his essays and criticism, he undertook "the far more ambitious task of accounting for them." In his "impatience," however, he tried to accomplish within a short period "explorations of experience" not possible to be worked out "under scientific discipline even in decades." Therefore, these "speculative ventures beyond the frontiers of knowledge are intuitions." These deserve serious consideration, because they "anticipate, as do the insights of particularyly sensitive men of any age, the emerging concepts of his time." His concept of the unconscious "parallels quite independently, the recent conclusions of psychology" (127-128). Walter Sutton credits I. A. Richards for combining psychology and literary criticism for the first time in Principles of Literary Criticism (1924). He also believes I. A. Richards was the first critic to emphasize "the unified nature of literary experience . . . in keeping with Gestalt psychology" (4). However, as already discussed, D. H. Lawrence was already using psychology in criticism when he started writing his American essays in 1918. The only difference is that, unlike others who used psychology as "a concern for scientific method and discipline" (Sutton 4), Lawrence used it to explore intuitively the mainsprings of human creativity, and thereby to emphasize the value of literature as a communicable experience. Like Lawrence, I. A. Richards, in the chapter "Psychological Theory of Value" in Principles of Literary Criticism, emphasizes the purpose of art as the reconciliation of opposites or discordant qualities.

6. Ernst Cassirer, according to David Bidney, considers "the mythical symbol, not as a representation concealing some mystery or hidden truth, but a self-contained form of interpretation of reality. In myth there is no distinction between the real and the ideal; the image is the thing and hence mythical thinking lacks the category of the ideal" ("Myth, Symbolism, and Truth." Myth and Literature:

Contemporary Theory and Practice. John B. Vickery (ed). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966: 7).

7. By locating American literature within a generic scheme, Lawrence was establishing the American canon which had been subject to gross misconceptions for a long time. As late as 1945, Robert Lawson-Peebles writes in "Dean Acheson and the Potato Head Blues or, British Academic Attitudes to America and Its Literature, "when the English poet Charles Tomlinson went to Cambridge, "he noticed that his tutors seemed to be unaware of the existence of American literature." When Marcus Cuniffe started teaching the subject at Manchester University in the 1950's, "his request for books was refused by the university librarian on the grounds that 'we don't want book-of-the-month club stuff here'" (26).

8. Lawrence's essay, "The Two Principles," intended to be number eight in Studies, but not included in the final version, was meant to be an introduction to his essays on Dana and Melville. Although concerned mainly with his philosophy of creation in general, this essay does spell out his concept of all life as a dialectic between two opposing principles epitomizing living as an eternal conflict. This, according to Lawrence, is the story of culture too. Lawrence explains culture as a process of two "life elements" coming together "within the living plasm," but then there is the "seething and struggling of inscrutable life-disintegration," and what remains behind is the being "within the intangible life-plasm" (The Symbolic Meaning 167-168).

9. R. W. B. Lewis points out the following words D. H. Lawrence wrote expressing his high opinion of Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales as exemplifying this "new relationship": The Leatherstocking tales create the "myth of a new relation," because "they go backwards, from old age to golden youth." This, Lawrence presents as the myth of America, which "starts old, old, wrinkled and writhing in an old skin." But there is a "gradual sloughing of the old skin, towards a new youth" (Studies 60).

10. Richard Chase is himself conscious of his close affinity with the critical method employed by Lawrence in his essay on Cooper and the great value of Lawrence's essay in Cooper criticism: "Opinion about Cooper during the last twenty years, when it has been interesting at all, has had to be in one way or another an elaboration or revision of Lawrence" (American Novel n. 44). Chase's comments on Cooper are basically "an elaboration or revision of Lawrence," but what is more important is Chase's complete agreement with Lawrence's critical method.

11. According to Richard Chase, the novel reflects "the whole illuminating cultural context" by not attemping a reconciliation but by pointing out its contradictions. D. H. Lawrence's high estimate of the novel is also, because, by its very nature, the novel is "incapable of the absolute ("The Novel" 104), and, therefore, "if you try to nail anything down, in the novel, either it kills the novel, or the novel gets up and walks away with the nail" ("Morality and the Novel" 528). Later, in 1960, Richard Chase is again reminded of the debt American criticism owes to D. H. Lawrence. Commenting on Leslie A. Fiedler's Love and Death in the American Novel Chase observes that Fiedler's "laboriously" arrived "conclusion, presented as his own," that the great American authors, especially Mark Twain, Hawthorne, and Melville, were "duplicitious," was repeated by Fiedler without admitting his debt to American Novel and Its Tradition. Acknowledging his own debt to D. H. Lawrence, Chase writes that even he in American Novel and Its Tradition was aware that he was "merely echoing what had been made clear many years before by such critics as Newton Arvin, D. H. Lawrence, Philip Rahv, and Malcolm Cowley" ("Leslie Fiedler and American Culture" 9-10). Incidentally, Lawrence was the first among these critics to advance the idea of "duplicity" in 1923. Philip Rahv published his work after 1932, Newton Arvin's work on Hawthorne did not appear till 1929, and Malcolm Cowley's first significant work, Exile's Return: A Narrative of Ideas, was not published until 1934.

12. Here we are reminded of D. H. Lawrence's belief in the unconscious as "the spontaneous life motive in every organism," and not the negatively conceived unconscious of Freud which, according to Lawrence, was nothing more than "gagged, bound, maniacal repressions, sexual complexes, faecal inhibitions, dream monsters," which, despite our attempts to "repudiate" them, "ate our souls and caused our helpless neurosis" (Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious 200-208). Marcus Cunliffe, in "Love, Death, and Mr. Fiedler," points out that by simply following a "broad Richardsonian-Walpolian division," Fiedler delineates man-woman relationships in American novels. He finds the female characters "either angels (the common 19th-century model) or bitches (the dominant 20th-century model), either santimonious or depraved" (75). D. H. Lawrence also had characterized women in American literature as "dark and light." For example, in his essay on Cooper, Lawrence finds "Judith, dark, fearless, passionate, a little lurid with sin," while Hetty is "blond, frail and innocent." However, Lawrence's distintion, here, as well as in his essay on Hawthorne, is not based on the sexual repressions of their creators as on the division within the artists between their unconscious impulse to create a living character and

their conscious manipulation of their characters in creating an ideal person (Studies 67-68).

13. D. H. Lawrence dissociates himself from both the Freudian and the Jungian unconscious in his myth criticism, Feidler, however, like Maud Bodkin before him, tries to add the personal dimension--"signature"--or that element in a work which represented the writer's personal unconscious through which the collective archetype expresses itself in his essay, "Archetype and Signature" in 1952. According to Eugene Goodheart, this distinction did not help Fiedler much in overcoming the problem he wanted to. Goodheart says that there "is a split in Fiedler's attitude towards myth," dividing "the literary critic and the social critic." All literature, Goodheart says, is a product of "the dialectic between the mythic pattern (the archetype) and the personal idiosyncratic imagination of the artist (the signature)." Despite Fiedler's recognition of this distinction, in actual practice, he "is apparently not interested in the signature of the artist" ("Leslie Fiedler" 42-43).

14. When we compare the Fiedler of Love and Death with the Fiedler of The Return, we cannot but observe his greater appreciation for D. H. Lawrence's method, especially Lawrence's employment of the Red Indian as a metaphor for the aboriginal spirit of America. Fiedler, commenting on D. H. Lawrence's failure to discuss such works as Edgar Allan Poe's The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym and Melville's "Benito Cereno," wrote in 1960 that Lawrence "prefers his savages, Noble and Ignoble alike, Red rather than Black, and has written a history of our fiction with No Negroes Allowed" (Love and Death 400n). The view of Lawrence as fascist and anti-feminist is not new to Lawrence critcism, and it's not within the scope of our present study to enter in this controversy. However, Fiedler's appreciation, in The Return, of Lawrence's use of the Red Indian as a metaphor for the Spirit of Place, an element the white man refused to encounter as a "whole man alive," clearly indicates Fiedler's better appreciation of Lawrence's point of view. It is in the ability of the White Spirit to react creatively to the complex and diverse environment the New World presents that the success or failure of the American experiment depends.

CONCLUSION:

D. H. LAWRENCE: TEXT, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

As an epilogue to the preceding chapters, it is worthwhile to examine the extent to which D. H. Lawrence's beliefs on the nature of text, culture, and history have stood the test of time. Although Lawrence was widely read in anthropology and was a keen student of history, he was neither a trained anthropologist nor historiographer in the modern scientific sense. Like his literary criticism, his views on history and culture are informed mainly by the intuitions of an artist. His essays on American literature and other critical writings focus primarily on the relation of narrative to the historical and cultural moment that produces it, and raise two significant questions: first, whether there is a rigid boundary separating literary criticism and criticism of culture and history, and, again, whether history is only an economic, social, and political reality to be reconstructed only out of texts which address themselves specifically to these issues, or should literary texts be considered equally valid communicants of historical and cultural truths.

These concerns have become more and more important in recent years. The way these questions are being answered

explains the confidence American criticism placed in D. H. Lawrence's unique but highly unconventional critical approach. It is not likely that we can agree today with the kind of response Martin Green had for Studies in Classic American Literature even two decades after the publication of Lawrence's work. Green remarked in 1965 that, despite its "brilliance," Lawrence's work fails as literary criticism, because of his preoccupation with "American society, American psychology, American morality, American spirituality," and also because, in doing so, Lawrence offers "evidence for all this from the literature." Green, however, remarked that "this is a genuinely literary but not a critical way of treating literature" (15). For Green, therefore, there is a definite schism between literary criticism and historical and cultural matrixes.

The increasing interest in novel as an art form in recent years coincides with renewed interest in Lawrence's views on the novel--its nature and scope. Lawrence's essay, "Why the Novel Matters," provides the title to Why the Novel Matters: A Postmodern Perplex, papers collected from Novel: A Forum on Fiction, founded in 1960, and proceedings of its conference held under the presidency of David Lodge. In his presidential address, Lodge comments that D. H. Lawrence's views on the novel, the title of whose essay "flies like a banner over our conference," can help us "resolve the humanistic and post-modern debates on the novel's role and significance." Lodge, referring to Lawrence's essay the

"Novel," says that "this apologia for the novel was hardly likely to have been known to Bakhtin, but it anticipates his theory in a remarkable way," particularly in the "polemical opposition it sets up between the novel and the canonized genres of tragedy and lyric poetry" (152-155).

The years following Lawrence's essays have also witnessed an increasing preoccupation with the role language plays in narrative. As the foregoing chapters attempt to explain, D. H. Lawrence, by emphasizing the text's silences as more relevant than its explicit import, points toward the complex role language plays in discourse. Lawrence's recognition of this phenomenon anticipates in a more general way the growing interest in the interpretation of discourse as a mode of articulating historical and cultural paradigms. Pierre Macherey comments on this process:

> What is important in a work is what it does not say. This is not the same as the careless notation 'what it refuses to say,' although that would in itself be interesting: a method might be built on it, with the task of measuring silences, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged. But rather this, what the work cannot say is important, because there the elaboration of the utterance is carried out, in a sort of journey to silence. (87)

Similarities between Lawrence's critical pronouncements and of contemporary critics on deconstruction have been mentioned earlier. A new sensitivity to language and its complexities, as emphasized by D. H. Lawrence, is also evidenced today in the efforts to redefine the nature of historiography in the context of language. In The Discourse

on Language, Michel Foucault warns us not to overplay "the positive multiplicatory role" of historical discourse without accounting for its "restrictive, constraining role" (224). Foucault interprets history of culture as a study of power conflict, not in the realm of economy or politics, but in the operation of feelings and instincts permeating all social relations. Like Lawrence, Foucault is also influenced by Nietzsche, in his belief that historical events do not represent finality. Foucault describes his cultural paradigm as "genealogical," and believes that such a system relies on searching for "beginnings" rather than "origins." "Origins" encompass causes, while "beginnings" imply differences. True history is concerned, according to Foucault, with differences and not with positivistic rationalization of causes ("Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" 144).

In D. H. Lawrence's conception, literary narratives speak for the history of a culture. Modern historiography, Hayden White observes, opens up new visions by abolishing the distinction between fact and fiction, because history "is made sense of in the same way that the poet or novelist tries to make sense of it" (Tropics 98). White writes: "To raise the question of the nature of narrative is to invite reflections on the very nature of culture and, possibly, on the very nature of humanity itself" ("The Value" 1). However, despite his belief in the relevance of literary theory in historiography, White differs from Lawrence in his

faith in the basic coherence of historical phenomenon as expressed in discourse. Dominick LaCapra is closer to Lawrence's belief in the dichotomy inherent in discourse. For LaCapra, the search for coherence in narrative results in an impasse. Narratives, LaCapra believes, express internal tensions that challenge the supremacy of the given: "One such process is precisely the interaction between the desire for unity, identity, or purity, and the forces that contest it" (60). The basic principle underlying the Laurentian method is similar: "Never trust the artist. Trust the tale. The proper function of a critic is to save the tale from the artist who created it" (Studies 8).

These modern theories are a result of painstaking research and scientific speculation, and are distinguished by their intellectual rigor and highly polemical nature. It is a great tribute to D. H. Lawrence that even this highly specialized body of knowledge, exploring the relation between literary criticism, culture, and history substantiates the validity of Lawrence's intuitions and insights. When American criticism so eagerly appropriated the Laurentian idiom in its survey of American literature and culture, it was only responding to the need of discovering new areas of emphasis Lawrence's insights offered it. Contemporary developments in criticism have shown that this confidence was well-founded.

The attitude of today's critic toward American literature is best summed up in Cathy H. Davidson's work on

the American novel. Davidson, writing on the rise of American novel, comments that texts are histories. However, the history she means is not "Universal History," but, perhaps, history in Laurentian terms, "great, surging movements which rose in the hearts of men" (Movements xi-xii). These texts, according to Davidson, are "not only susceptible to varying interpretation, but require them." They not only struggle against "rational reduction to an ostensible message but are inimical to the whole prioritizing of the rational over the 'wisdom of the human heart'" (260). The extent to which D. H. Lawrence's voice can be heard in today's discourse on American culture is best exemplified by a text book for Junior classes, A Preface to Politics: The Spirit of Place, by David Schuman and Bob Waterman. The writers employ Lawrence's essay, "The Spirit of Place," as the basis of their argument to warn young Americans not to pigeon-hole any idea and to welcome new experience. This belief, although reiterated in the past, was seldom presented in the form D. H. Lawrence presents it--an American experience flavored by the American soil.

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