

D.H. LAWRENCE AND THE POETICS OF SOLAR PLEXUS

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(ABSTRACT)

Lawrence deserves study not only as a novelist, poet or critic but also as a father of poetics. Derived from *Solar Plexus*, its sensations, pulsations and vibrations, Lawrence's poetics is neither an Introduction to his poetry nor a conclusion of his criticism but an independent effort to theorize and to re-affirm the central creed of his life, i.e. the wholeness of being or the marriage of contraries. Both as a theorizing on poetry and as a reflection on poets, it reveals the dark nocturnal nature of Lawrence's essentially instinctual speculations. As a matter of fact, Lawrence's dark speculations give him a status similar to Aristotle, the author of the famous **Poetics**. Lawrence, however, chooses to create a poetics of his own, *sui generis*, on patterns of Aristotle without following Aristotle's rigorous and logical methods. Being 'a man with a daimon' he in fact develops the dictates of his dark, inner self into the formidable doctrines of a poetics. In the process, however, Lawrence shows signs of doctrinal deficiencies and quite naturally. His 'daimon' never left him completely free to theorize and systematize. Despite doctrinal deficiencies, Lawrence's poetics is interesting and even innovative because it contains enough intuitive insights into the real name and nature of real poetry.

This is the first study of its kind. For Lawrence's poetics, unlike his fiction, poetry, drama or criticism, still remains something of a virgin soil, with scholars (1) either denying its existence or doubting its value. At best they consider it a by-product of his poetry, a conscious intellectual attempt to justify his own performance as a poet, or a companion of his criticism, and hence of minor interest and significance. To me, however, Lawrence's poetics seems quite interesting and significant because it is a product of his

Solar Plexus (not only of cerebral muscles) and also because it re-affirms, like his other works, the central creed of his life i.e. the 'wholeness of being' or the marriage of 'contraries' (to use a Blake's phrase) in the usual manner of renouncing mind and praising body too much. As would be seen below, Lawrence's overall concern with the wholeness of being did not deter him from exaggerating (2) the role of body and blood in his poetics. Above all, and this is the main thesis of the paper, Lawrence's poetics, arising as it does from within the depths of his Solar Plexus, needs no ordinary light of logic to focus on the real name and nature (3) of real poetry ('real' according to Lawrence's standards). The paper, however, has both a focus and a direction - 'a focus of darkness' (4) (to borrow a phrase from Aldous Huxley) and a direction of a 'daimon' who listened to none but his own dark inner self. If at times the writer of the paper finds himself groping for light in dark alley, it is because it was the only place where Lawrence found light and the writer did not intend to spurn such great temptation. The paper is, in short, a modest but honest attempt to see Lawrence's poetics (not his criticism though the dividing line between the two is very thin) (5) in its own rights and in the lights provided by his dark impulses and darker intuitions. Any other approach would have been misleading giving only false lights and wrong conclusions.

Seen in proper lights, Lawrence's poetics is thus bound to appear academically hale and hearty. Both as a theorizing on poetry and as a reflection on poets, it seems sufficiently striking, revealing as it does the dark nocturnal nature of Lawrence's essentially instinctual speculations. And as a doctrine highlighting the dark impulses and darker insights, all welling up within the darkest pit of stomach, it virtually goes without parallel. As a matter of fact, in his poetics Lawrence's dark speculations 'rise up and shine forth' (6) suddenly and brightly, phoenix-like, illuminating his theories and giving him a status similar to Aristotle, the author of the famous **Poetics**. Lawrence, however, carves out a poetics of his own, sui generis, on patterns of Aristotle by eschewing (not observing) Aristotle's rigorism and ratiocination. (7) For it is by following the pulsations, vibrations and sensations of his Solar Plexus that Lawrence arrives at the principles of his poetics. This is nothing short of a sacrilege according to traditional Aristotelian standards. But Lawrence, 'a man with a daimon', was quite determined to develop the dictates of his dark, inner self into the doctrines of a poetics. If these dictates gave Lawrence poor intellectual stuff he did not care because they also gave him by way of compensation rich intuitive perception. Moreover, they gave Lawrence enough publicity material which he exploited to the full in favour of his pet theories of intuition and sensation. Propaganda in fact has never been absent in his works, whether it be novel or poetry or drama or poetics.

As a series of bold, audacious statements on the real name and nature of 'real' poetry, (8) Lawrence's poetics (9) seems innovative and even provocative. Its innovation lies in declaring body and blood the sole basis of poetry. Its provocation lies in overly stressing the natural rights of body in the face of traditional hostilities of mind. To me, however, this does not amount to a serious demerit of Lawrence's poetics since it enables him so well to highlight the essential features of his poetics. An early and apt example of this is to be found in Lawrence's review of Georgian Poetry (1911-12):

".... The time to be impersonal has gone. We start from the joy we have in being ourselves, and everything must take colour from that joy.... Now the warmth of blood is in everything, quick, healthy, passionate blood.... Everything that ever was thought and ever will be thought, lives in this body of mine. This flesh and blood.... is the quick of all growth, the seed of all harvest... I am so full of wonder at my own miracle of flesh and blood... that is a joy greater than any dream of immortality in the spirit, to me." (Beal, 1969: 74-75)

Unlike Hulme (10) and Eliot (11) who believed that the time to be impersonal in poetry has come, Lawrence believes that the time to be impersonal has gone. This leaves us in little doubt about the romantic propensities of Lawrence's poetics. The term 'romanticism', however, needs no elaborate mention here because to me it does not fully describe the essence of Lawrence's poetics and also because it will come up for discussion at a later stage. In the passage quoted above, Lawrence is at his old theme again, of course in a new context: the living body, the red blood, its return in poetics, its radiance in poetry, and, above all, its resonance in music. One might feel tempted here to touch upon Lawrence's Fascist leanings which I, for fear that it may obscure the subject under discussion, have tried to avoid. But the way Lawrence glorifies the 'flesh and blood' as against the 'spirit', one cannot help accusing him of tribalism and primitivism. The burden of the passage, however, lies in naming Solar Plexus as 'living body' and defining it as 'the quick of all growth' and 'the seed of all harvest'. One may add here, certainly with Lawrence's approval, 'the root of all reflection' (whether sensual or spiritual), and that will exactly hit the mark. Since Solar Plexus provides grounds of common germination for both 'flesh and blood' and 'spirit' theories, Lawrence sees little use for intellect in his poetics. In fact, he considers intellect as a devil distorting and even destroying the springs of creativity and criticism. The safest way to create poetics or poetry is thus just to harness the marvel of the body and hear the music of the blood rising continually from within Solar Plexus. This will ensure maximum utilization of poetic faculties and produce a surplus of critical theories (as in the case of D.H. Lawrence himself). Lawrence thus goes to the extent of discovering direct links between the vitality of poetry and the vibrations of Solar Plexus, suggesting even their inter-relatedness

and interdependence. And if in the process Aristotle and Eliot (both of whom extolled intellect as a necessary element of poetics) stand mutilated and humiliated, Lawrence does not care. One should not much blame him for this especially when he had his own 'daimon' to direct him and his own darkness to illuminate him.

In truth, exposing Aristotle and Eliot and castigating their cohorts, has been quite a driving force of Lawrence's poetics, animating most of his theories and postures. As a creator of dark, intuitive poetics highlighting the drawbacks of intellect, Lawrence found their theories repellent and was forced to draw upon his own resources, mostly intuitive, lying hidden in his Solar Plexus. The result is, as seen above, a poetics of Solar Plexus dealing exclusively with the name and nature of real poetry.

Lawrence's fascination for the 'flesh and blood' which to him appeared "wiser than the intellect (and) always true", (12) plays a crucial role in his poetics and poetry. Lawrence saw 'the marvel of flesh and blood' or 'the miracle of living body' as the stuff of all poesy, particularly mystical or quasi-mystical, and also as a strain on the intuitive resources of a poet. He found mystical poetry quite within the bounds of possibility provided of course the intuitive grasps (or perceptions) of living body (or mystery) were not spoilt by the "fribbling intervention of mind". (Moore, 1977 : 180) The living body is a perpetual source of mystery and the intuition an unfailing unraveller of mystery. Such conviction (or courage of a daredevil 'daimon', if I am not mistaken) gives Lawrence strength and guidance to form a poetics, markedly different from the conventional ones, in the lights provided by dark intuitions and darker instincts. Interestingly enough, the darkness of Lawrence's essentially intuitive doctrines which make the bulk of his poetics, contains more light than the ordinarily orthodox theories of intellect.

In view of Lawrence's intense preoccupations with the 'flesh and blood' or the body, it is not difficult to understand the mystical or quasi-mystical name and nature of poetry (which is to me the real name and nature of real poetry) that emerges fairly clearly from his poetics. Nor is it easy to dismiss as a fad his insistence upon Solar Plexus as the sole store-house of all sensations. As said above, Lawrence's poetics was conceived and composed in his Solar Plexus; it drew its vitality from the sensations cooking therein. It is indeed a measure of Lawrence's obsession with the 'flesh and blood' that he does not allow anything else other than blood or body to decide the rhythm and sound of poetry including its theme. In truth, Lawrence considered the 'flesh and blood' the only deciding and relevant factor in poetry and poetics alike. For the blood has a sound of its own and the body has a rhythm of its own and a poet who fails to discern and discover such musical charms does so only at his own peril. One such poet, naturally inviting Lawrence's wrath, was Ernest Collings whose "rhythm and sound....

don't penetrate the blood." (Beal, 1969:76) I am sure Lawrence would also have remarked, "Collings's rhythm and sound don't derive from the blood either." Since to derive from the blood and to penetrate the blood, or to draw from the body and to affect the body, were among the most cardinal principles of Lawrence's poetics. And Lawrence rightly stresses them as the only worthwhile ingredients of 'real' poetry and its 'blood effects', suggesting perhaps a parallel to Aristotle's catharsis. But by indiscriminately rejecting all 'cerebral poetry' and its 'intellectual excitements' as rubbish Lawrence leaves us in no doubt about his die-hard opposition to Aristotle, one who introduced "the value of the traditional logic" in poetics through "subtlety in analysis" (Allan, 1970 : 1)

Such is short is the name and nature of 'real' poetry with its immediate blood effects that lies at the heart of Lawrence's poetics. Marking as it does the triumph of the flesh and blood over the spirit, the poetics gives Lawrence enough sticks with which to beat rival theories, apart from furthering the interests of his philosophy and religion. One is bound to endorse C.K. Stead's (1980:87) praise for Lawrence who in his review of Georgian Poetry (already mentioned) welcomed Georgian Poetry as 'a big breath taken when we (i.e. the poets) are waking up after a night of oppressive dreams." (Beal, 1969). Lawrence also showers upon Georgian Poetry epithets like 'new atmosphere', 'new air' and 'fresh morning', celebrating thereby the arrival of 'new' (i.e. 'real') poetry and confirming his whole-hearted approval of it.

The detractors (13) of Lawrence who swear by intellect and logic might feel inclined to dismiss Georgian Poetry as a futile exercise in redundancies and superfluities throwing little light on the name and nature of 'real' poetry. Lawrence, however, looks at Georgian Poetry from the point of view of his own poetics and finds it sufficiently revealing. It reveals, among other things, the essentially dark nocturnal nature of real poetry arising out of dark sensations. Since the sum and substance of Lawrence's poetics hinges upon what Solar Plexus is able to provide, i.e. dark intuitive perceptions and darker sensations all cooking up without even marginal intellectual heat within the darkest pit of stomach, rhyme and metre fail to become an integral part of it. In truth Lawrence declares them adventitious and even superfluous since they tend to interfere with the direct and spontaneous flow of poetry. Lawrence's letter of January 11, 1916 to Catherine Carswell regarding non-encumbrance of verse by rhyme and metre is thus understandable enough. The essence of poetry being stark, bare and rocky directness of expression "without a shadow of a lie or a shadow of deflection", rhyme or metre should be used, if at all necessary, only casually and sparingly ("accidentally" is the word that Lawrence uses for it). For intellectual interruptions or structural impositions caused by rhyme and

metre put unnecessary strain on the free flow of poetry. The best poetic form according to Lawrence is that which grows from within, underlying its 'hidden emotional pattern'. (14) And the most satisfying poetic structure ('satisfying', again, according to Laurentian standards) is that which develops under stress of 'blood-circulations' or 'body-movements'. So Lawrence wants the poets to be 'a bird... flying and lapsing through the air' rather than "a policeman in poetry" (Beal, 1969:80) rigidly enforcing rules and regulations of mechanical poetic creations. Freedom is in fact the soul of poetry as Lawrence sees it. Since metre is more often than not a violation of the principle of freedom, Lawrence has little hesitation in recommending its abolition from poetry altogether. One has only to quote Lawrence's two letters to Edward Marsh to confirm this: "skilled verse is dead in fifty years" (Beal, 1969:77) and ".... about metres, I shall have to pray for grace from God.... I think Shelley a million thousand times more beautiful than Milton" (Beal, 1969:81)

Lawrence's rejection of all that was 'deflection' or 'flourish' about poetry including its rhyme and metre in case they threatened the flow of poetry, and his praise of Shelley (15) as against Milton, are of one piece forming the core of his poetics. Poetry being 'free flow' and rhyme or metre being 'fixed form', it is but natural for Lawrence to advocate what looks like 'laissez-faire' in poetry. Rules and regulations, no matter how necessary, have to be sacrificed for the sake of spontaneity in poetry. Anything and everything that stands in the way of arresting and affirming the pulsating moments or vibrating sensations of body, has to be banished from poetry. And a new poetic device, highly compatible with the 'free enterprise' concept of poetry, has to be increasingly cultivated and used. This is the rationale behind Lawrence's reflections on free verse, recorded in a usually lengthy passage from his Introduction (16) to 'New Poems' (1920):

"... free verse is.... direct utterance from the instant, whole man. It is the soul and the mind and body surging at once, nothing left out.... Free verse toes no melodic line, no matter what drill-segeant... free verse does not have the same nature as restricted verse..... It is the instant; the quick; For such utterance any externally applied law would be mere shackles and death. The law must come new each time from within... one realm we have never conquered: the pure present. One great mystery of time is terra incognita to us: the instant. The most superb mystery we have hardly recognized: the immediate, instant self. The quick of all times is the instant. The quick of all the universe, of all creation, is the incarnate, carnal self. Poetry gave us the clue: free verse: Whitman..." (Beal, 1969:89)

The passage is not, as Auden believes, simply an attempt on Lawrence's part "to explain the difference between traditional verse and the free verse

which Whitman was the first to write". (Auden, 19:27) Nor is it simply a plea to prune away clichés which might smack of 'conventional response' or 'phoniness of emotion'. Its significance goes much deeper. For Lawrence here is once again reaffirming the central creed of his life i.e. the 'wholeness of being' or, in the words of Jung, the 'integration of personality' which true to its "incompletely fulfilled" (Hough, 1968:230) nature almost always eluded Lawrence. Lawrence's poetics is, as seen above, an offshoot of his over-all view of life which with all its bias towards body never completely renounced mind. The 'whole man', 'nothing left out' and 'the soul and the mind and body surging at once' are quite suggestive terms pointing out the basic sanity of Lawrence's poetics and the integrity of his philosophy in spite of his occasional eccentricities. The passage in fact contains a clue not only of Lawrence's poetics but also of his philosophy.

The most significant part of the passage, however, occurs towards the end where Lawrence comes very close to identifying the name and nature of 'real' poetry with that of mystical. Lawrence whose appetite for 'unknown modes of being' (Moore, 1977:1249) was as great as that of Wordsworth, found mystical poetry really good food. For it offered him, as it did Blake, a fresh perception of reality through "immediate intuition" (Hough, 1968:218) (or mystic embrace of matter and spirit). In his poetics, however, Lawrence mentions (rather than elaborates) mystical poetry mainly as a mother of invention necessitating, much to the chagrin of conservatives, (17) a new poetic form called free verse. No other form, much less the old traditional one, can adequately handle the material of 'pure present' or 'instant self' which alone mattered to Lawrence the "mystical materialist". As a mystical materialist (if not as a mystic) (18) Lawrence felt, and he believed that his kinsmen like Blake, Wordsworth and Whitman felt too, that only the perceptions of 'the incarnate, carnal self' i.e. 'the quick of all the universe', and the sensations of Solar Plexus i.e., 'the quick of all growth' or 'the seed of all harvest', make 'real' poetry. Being in a perpetual state of flux, (19) these perceptions and sensations naturally prove formidable to, and even futility of, the fixities of forms. Hence Lawrence's stress on free verse in his poetics and his switch to it in his poetry.

Both as a confirmation (20) of, as well as a complement (21) to, his poetics, Lawrence's poetry needs examination here. As indicated earlier, in his poetics Lawrence advocates the "poetry of this immediate present, instant poetry... the unrestful, ungraspable poetry of the sheer present, poetry whose very permanency lies in its windlike transit". (Beal, 1969) And he discovers, not to his surprise, this kind of poetry actually written in Blake's **SONGS OF EXPERIENCE** and Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence". Lawrence himself attempts this kind of poetry and with quite a success. To quote from one of his early poems called "Love on the

Farm" where a man kills a rabbit caught in a snare and then embraces with his hands, still wet with blood, a woman:

"God, I am caught in a snare!
I know not what fine wire is round my throat;
I only know I let him finger there
My pulse of life, and let him nose like a stoat
Who sniffs with joy before he drinks the blood."

To treat this as a mere nature poem in the conventional romantic sense would be misleading. For it is a poem of 'the pure present', instantly and quickly recreating terror (of rabbit-killing) and mystery (of woman-embrace) in a Laurentian rather than romantic way. One also hears here, if one has fine sensitive ears, the music of blood and the vibrations of body which echo and re-echo through the poem. Lawrence certainly lives up to the principles of his poetics of Solar Plexus while composing this poem. (22) As a theorizer Lawrence believed that body has a marvel of its own and 'flesh and blood' has a music of its own, and as a practitioner of verse he acts upon it. The result is obvious. We have here a poem which with all its romantic appurtenances turns out to be distinctly and supremely Laurentian, confirming my impression that romanticism in Lawrence undergoes a change often beyond recognition.

Another poem (23) which conveys the same impression emboldening me to reject as irrelevant the question of 'influence' or 'debt' in the case of Lawrence, is "A Doe at Evening". Here again Lawrence draws the material of his poetry (that is basically mythical and primitive) from the marvel of the body and the miracle of flesh and blood. On seeing her Lawrence longs to become a stag (this dream or myth of transformation provides the kernel of the poem) and starts musing as a male lover:

"I looked at her / and felt her watching;
I became a strange being,
Still I had my right to be there with her.
Her nimble shadow trotting / along the sky-line, she
put back her fine, level-balanced head.
And I knew her.

Ah yes, being male, is not my head hard-balanced, antlered?
Are not my haunches light?
Has she not fled on the same wind with me?
Does not my fear cover her fear?"

Embodying as it does "a living vibration" that Jessie Chambers (1965:223) said always existed between Lawrence and "wild things", the poem in fact contains a trance - like vision born out of immediate sensuous

apprehension of the numinous quality of non-human beings. One marvels at Lawrence's capacity to recapture and recreate the living mystery of the doe's body and its supple movements through free and flexible rhythms. Whitman, the "awful... post-mortem poet", might have taught Lawrence the technique of free verse. But Whitman could not teach Lawrence how to perform a feat as he actually does in this poem by merging perceptions of experience, pulsations of body and patterns of rhythm into one organic whole. I am sure Lawrence must have depended upon himself in performing this feat, giving a lie to the charge that the excellence of his performance derived from his debts.

"Snake" is yet another poem written in the middle phase of Lawrence's career that shows the marvel of the flesh and blood as well as the strengths of myth, primitivism and symbolism all rolled into one. Lawrence starts here as a poet of sheer observation much in the tradition of Wordsworth and Hardy but surpasses them by transforming his object of observation i.e. snake into a mythical figure of the underworld symbolizing the dark, primitive forces of nature:

"..... I felt so honoured.
..... That he should seek my hospitality from out the
dark door of the secret earth. He drank enough
And lifted his head, dreamily, as one who has drunken,
And flickered his tongue.... seeming to lick his lips,
And looked around like a god,..."

Lawrence is certainly at his best here, perceiving the mystery of life symbolized by the snake "the lord of life", and communicating it through the fluctuations of his rhythms. The poem is a triumph of Lawrence's native genius since influences do not bother him or he does not bother for them; it is also a vindication of his pet assumption that no poetry, much less 'real', can do without the darkness of body and the illumination of intuition.

Lawrence's perception and communication of 'unknown modes of being' and 'dark mysteries of life' that marks the above-mentioned poems also marks one of his late 'masterpieces', (25) "Bavarian Gentians", a poem making use of myth, primitivism and symbolism in a splendid way. To quote the poem in full:

"Reach me a gentian, give me a torch/let me guide myself with the
blue, forked torch of this flower/down the darker and darker stairs,
where blue is darkened on blueness/even where Persephone goes,
just now; from the frosted September/to the sightless realm where
darkness is awake upon the dark/and Persephone herself is but a
voice/

Or a darkness invisible enfolded in the deeper dark/of the arms
Plutonic, and pierced with the passion of dense gloom,/among the
splendour of torches of darkness, shedding darkness on the lost bride
and her groom."

To me this seems to be a poem of 'dazzling darkness' (rather than light) which sheds excessive light upon both Lawrence's poetics and poetry. The myth of Persephone, the spring goddess, going to the embrace of Hades, the "arms Plutonic", dominates here but only as a reinforcement of the 'theme of absolute darkness' which pervades the poem as a whole. The gentian flowers in the poem, though dark, symbolically provide excessive lights for Lawrence's journey 'down the darker and darker stairs' leading to the underworld 'where darkness is awake upon the dark'. This doubly reinforces Lawrence's fascination for darkness in poetry and poetics alike, and trebly confirms my own temptation to grope for light in a dark alley as in this paper.

All these poems, though written not according to "a set of preordained principles", (26) illustrate, nevertheless, the principles of Lawrence's poetics. By now, I am sure, the main principles of Lawrence's dazzlingly dark poetics have emerged fairly clearly: spontaneity (of experience), freedom (of form) and intuitionism (of perception) often masquerading as mysticism. Alvarez rightly describes Lawrence's mysticism as "his first-handness, his distance from convention," forcing him to beget fresh language and fresher rhythms. Stephen Spender seems to concur while saying that in Lawrence "the need to invent a language as direct as religious utterance" becomes a religious obsession similar to Hopkins'. Spender, however, is less than fair when he, true to his Marxist leanings, criticizes Lawrence, 'the instinctive poet concerned with truth', for having failed to understand the real problems of poetic form. So is W.H. Auden while insinuating that "Lawrence's difficulties with formal verse had their origin in his linguistic experiences as a child". By deciding to dig up the past of Lawrence's mis-mated parent-hood, mis-mated because of his miner father and teacher mother, Auden was, I am sure, betraying his Freudian bias towards the problems of poetics. Though a product of Solar Plexus, Lawrence's poetics had all the merits of a poetics: creed, clarity, coherence, insight and, above all, illumination. But it needed a man of right approach to appreciate this kind of poetics and neither Spender nor Auden could fill the bill because of their wrong approaches.

As hinted above, the right approach to Lawrence's poetics is neither Freudian nor Marxian but Laurentian. And as regards this approach no passage is more revealing than the following by Lawrence himself:

"Literary criticism can be no more than a reasoned account of the

feeling 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 which science ignores. The touch stone is emotion, not reason. We judge a work 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 imitation - botanical fashion, is mere impertinence and usually dull jargon." (Beal, 1969:11)

Though specifically dealing with Lawrence's criticism, the passage applies to his poetics as well, throwing as it does enough hints about his theorizings. All the critical twiddle-twaddle about style and form is futile because Lawrence has his own supra-critical intuition to guide him. All the intellectual hue and cry raised by Freudians, Marxians and pseudo-scientists is sterile because Lawrence has his own supra-intellectual sources to fall back on. In short, all the rules and regulations prescribed by rationalists and enforced by 'policemen' and 'drillsergeants' of poetry are non-functional in Lawrence's poetics because it exists entirely as a free enterprise of sensations, feelings and emotions continually cooking up in his Solar Plexus. This explains Lawrence's whole and sole dependence upon Solar Plexus whether for the physical sensations of his poetry or for the intuitive perceptions of his poetics. This also explains, though 'explanation' is not as respectable a term as 'revelation' in the underworld of Lawrence's poetics, why Lawrence wished to grope again and again in 'the dark of the womb' while searching for the doctrines of his poetics. Lawrence's groping, however, never ended in a blind alley because it always led him to the dark underworld of knowledge, wisdom and light. W.B. Yeats too had a similar experience when he said openly: "If man ever had knowledge, or wisdom, it was in the dark of the womb. (Wellesley, 1964:26) To many this might seem a curious resemblance since Lawrence always remained "caught in the sensual music" and always neglected "monuments of unageing intellect," much against the wishes of Yeats. To me, however, this seems nothing curious because the two writers with all their apparent differences remained united in their common passion for intuition, vision and imagination, as well as in their common fascination for 'daimon'. Moreover, the two were equally concerned to tell the truth about poetic creation: the springs of creativity and criticism are all located in 'the dark of the womb' and in 'the pit of the stomach', and it is futile to look for it elsewhere. Lawrence however, deserves cudos for telling this truth (through his poetics of Solar Plexus) so heroically and so confidently in an age apparently 'wormeaten' with scepticism. If there is little 'precision' and less 'evidence' about this truth, it is because Lawrence least cared about them. The only evidence that Lawrence cared about was the one that he felt in his Solar Plexus (27) and this his poetics definitely possessed. If his

poetics is not completely free from doctrinal deficiencies, it is because his 'daimon' did not completely leave him free to theorize and systematize. From first to last it is a poetics of its own type, sui-generis, which only the standards of a special type, i.e. Laurentian, can successfully scrutinize.

NOTES

1. Such scholars are, among others, F.R. Leavis, Graham Hough, Mark Spilka, Richard Aldington, Harry T. Moore, Frederick J. Hoffman, Anthony Beal, M. Murry and Aldous Huxley. None of them have taken any notice of Lawrence's poetics; all of them have highlighted the traditional concepts of Lawrence's greatness and achievement; most of them have fallen a prey to the common notion that Lawrence's real genius manifested itself only through his novels. Such a notion is most fatal to a real appreciation of this paper which explores a totally unexplored area so far.
2. Exaggerating the role of body and blood as against mind and intellect and yet aspiring for the unity or wholeness of being consisting of body and mind, blood and intellect, was part of Lawrence's strategy and the writer of this paper keeps this in mind while making exaggerated and repeated claims on behalf of body in Lawrence's poetics
3. This reminds me of yet another exercise in poetics: **The Name and Nature of Poetry** by A.E. Housman, the famous Leslie Stephen lecture delivered in Cambridge in 1933. Housman, like Lawrence, believed that real or genuine poetry should be physical rather than intellectual and its words should touch like a spear the pit of stomach.
4. This is how Aldous Huxley in his "Introduction to the letters of D.H. Lawrence" (1932) henceforth called only 'Introduction', published as Appendix to **The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence**, Volume II, (ed). Harry T. Moore (London: Heinemann, 1977), describes Lawrence's whole gamut of religious-cum-sexual experience. I think this applies also to his poetic experience. See 'Introduction', p. 1250.
5. Poetics and criticism, though very much similar, are two distinct genres and two separate entities. In poetics one generalizes and theorizes about poets and poetry; in criticism one passes judgments on all genres of literature in the light of certain principles. This paper brings into focus Lawrence's theorizings on the art of poetry, leaving aside his critical endeavours as far as possible.
6. An echo of Lawrence's style formed by his close and continuous reading of the Bible.

7. Eliot calls it the rigours and ratiocinations of a 'scientific mind' which Aristotle possessed in abundance. Aristotle also had, according to him, 'the general intelligence' which I believe Lawrence could not, despite his strong anti-intellectualism, repudiate. See T.S. Eliot's essay 'The Perfect Critic' in **Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot** (ed.) Frank Kermode (London: Faber, 1975) pp. 56-57.
8. This is how I see Lawrence's poetics. 'Real' poetry here means 'genuine' poetry. But I have avoided the term 'genuine' lest it might give an impression of close proximity between Arnold's and Lawrence's poetics. It was Matthew Arnold who talked of 'genuine' poetry being conceived and composed in the soul unlike the Augustan poetry. See Arnold's essay "Thomas Gray" in his **Essays in Criticism**, second series, 1888.
9. Lawrence's poetics lies scattered, in bits and pieces, throughout his reviews, sketches, prefaces, letters and even poems. The standard reference in this regard, and perhaps the only one, is **Phoenix** (Heinemann Edition; 1936) which "abounds in misprints" (see Keith Sagar, **The Art of D.H. Lawrence** (Cambridge, 1966), Bibliography, pp. 246-47). Most of its articles, and also majority of **Assorted Articles** (Secker, 1930), another useful reference, have been included in **Selected Literary Criticism**, (ed.) Anthony Beal (Heinemann, 1956) which is good as a source reference and better than many first-rate references on Lawrence. Scholars like Sagar and Spilka have repeatedly recognized the authenticity and utility of Beal's book and I see no reason why I should not fall in line. I, in fact, consider it the Magna Carta of Lawrence's poetics and have depended upon it heavily for my source-material. I would also like to see the third chapter of the book separately printed under the title **D.H. Lawrence on the Art of Poetry** on the pattern of Aristotle's **Poetics**. Additions may be made but I think the third chapter is sufficient as far as Lawrence's poetics is concerned.
10. See T.E. Hulme's essay 'Romanticism and classicism' in **Speculations**, (ed.) H. Read (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), pp. 113-40.
11. See T.S. Eliot's essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' in **Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot** (London: Faber & Faber, 1975) p. 43. Eliot is very forthright in his comments: "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality".
12. Quoted from Lawrence's letter (explaining his 'blood-knowledge' philosophy) to Ernest Collings, dated 17 January 1913. See **The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence** (ed.) H.T. Moore, Vol. I, (London: Heinemann 1977), P. 180.
13. They are many including T.S. Eliot, R.P. Blackmur and W.H. Auden etc.

In a review of Georgian Poetry appearing in **The Egoist** of September 1917 under the title 'Reflections on Contemporary Poetry' Eliot remarks: in Georgian Poetry "it is not unworthy to notice how often the word 'little' occurs; and how this word is used, not merely as a piece of information, but with a caress, a conscious delight". It is interesting to compare the contrasting attitudes of 'greatness' and 'littleness' shown by Lawrence and Eliot towards Georgian Poetry. For other detractors of Lawrence see R.P. Blackmur, **Language as Gesture** (London: Allen and Unwin, 1954); and W.H. Auden, **The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays** (London: Faber & Faber, 1962).

14. This brings to the fore the question of Lawrence's affinity ('debt' is a wrong word because Lawrence always remained supremely Laurentian, 'a man with a daimon') with Romantics, particularly Coleridge. See Graham Hough, **The Dark Sun** (London, 1968), pp. 191-216. And also V. de S. Pinto, "Poet Without a Mask", **The Critical Quarterly**, III, (Spring 1961, pp. 5-18. To me, however, this question does not seem much relevant in the context of the evolution of Lawrence's poetics. There might have been some similarities between Lawrence's and the Romantics's poetics. But Lawrence did not aim at conscious imitation. His poetics grew out of his Solar Plexus not out of his so-called debts to Blake or Romantics. Moreover, Lawrence's romanticism was heretical (see F.R. Leavis, 'Romantic and Heretic', **Spectator**, 6 February 1959), giving me the impression that in any study of Lawrence the emphasis should fall on what was truly Laurentian in Lawrence, not on what influences' or 'debts' went into the actual making of his poetics or philosophy.
15. Shelley was, among the Romantics, Lawrence's hot favourite, Wordsworth and Keats being other favourites. See **D.H. Lawrence: A Personal Record by E.T.** (Jessie Chambers), 2nd Edition (London, 1965), p. 99 and 101. Lawrence's praise of Shelley here is because Shelley, unlike Milton, was not very much particular about old metre and old rhyme.
16. V. de S. Pinto rightly considers this Introduction as the crux of Lawrence's poetics (better even than his letters to Edward Marsh). See Pinto, op. cit. The Introduction figures in **Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence** (London, 1967), pp. 218-222; and also in **Selected Literary Criticism** (ed.) Anthony Beal, pp. 84-89. Since **Phoenix** is full of misprints, I have preferred to quote from Beal's edition.
17. Eliot is certainly one of these conservatives who frowns upon the advent of free verse ('vers libre') in modern times. To him free verse is neither 'free' nor 'verse' nor 'revolutionary' nor a 'positive' development. See his essay "Reflections on 'vers Libre'" in **Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot** (ed.) Frank Kermode (London: Faber and Faber,

- 1975), pp. 31-26. This brings into further focus the essentially differing nature of Lawrence's and Eliot's poetics.
18. Critics like A. Alvarez and Vide Sola Pinto doubt that Lawrence was a mystic at all. I am at one with Huxley in considering Lawrence a 'mystical materialist' in view of his abilities to apprehend the living mystery of things. See, in particular, A. Alvarez, **The Shaping Spirit** (London, 1972), p. 155.
 19. It is here that Lawrence's similarity with H. Bergson becomes obvious. For Bergson, as for Lawrence, reality was "a flux of interpenetrated elements unseizable by the intellect" (and seizable by the intuition). See T.E. Hulme, **Speculations**, p. 246. Also see Bergson's **Time and Free Will, Matter and Memory** and **Creative Evolution**.
 20. By practising the theme of 'the instant moment' and the technique of free verse Lawrence's poetry confirms his poetics.
 21. By throwing additional lights on myth, primitivism and symbolism (which figure very poorly in his theorizings) Lawrence's poetry complements his poetics.
 22. I, for one, would not stress this point too much. Lawrence who saw all his writings as of one piece dovetailed to the needs of his philosophy and the dictates of his daimon, was, in fact in no need to use one kind of his writing for the sake of another. All his writings independently and uniformly hammer out the same theme.
 23. I have deliberately left out of consideration Lawrence's poems such as "New Heaven and New Earth", "Elysium" and "Manifesto" belonging to the series **Look! We Have Come Through!** from which "A Doe at Evening" is taken. All these poems are examples of bad influence exerted by Whitman on Lawrence. Lawrence wrote worst when he was under influence whether of the Romantics or of Whitman. (See V. de S. Pinto 'Poet Without a Mask') Lawrence wrote best only when he was untrammelled by influences. The fact that Lawrence hailed Whitman as something of a liberator and innovator of free verse should not be stressed lest it should overshadow the centrality of this paper and the individuality of Lawrence's poetics. Moreover Whitman the "poet-prophet of Democracy" as M. Murry calls him in his **Unprofessional Essays** (Connecticut: 1975), p. 21 was least qualified to teach Lawrence, the hater of Democracy.
 24. This is how Lawrence called Whitman in his *Studies in Classic American Literature*. See **Selected Literary Criticism** (ed.) Anthony Beal, p. 395.
 25. A. Alvarez considers this poem as one of Lawrence's masterpieces. See his **The Shaping Spirit** (London: Chatto & Windus, 1972), p. 154.
 26. A. Alvarez, **The Shaping Spirit**, p. 156. In fact, Lawrence wrote nothing according to pre-conceived notions, All his writings came spontaneously, in flashes, and according to the dictates of his daimon.

In him there was no dichotomy between theory and practice, no schism between one kind of writing and another, everything being in over all control of the daimon.

27. This is how Lawrence reacted in one of his long and violent arguments with Huxley on questions of evolution and evidence: "All scientists are liars I don't care about evidence. Evidence does not mean anything to me. I don't feel it here. And he pressed his two hands on his solar plexus". See A. Huxley, 'Introduction', p. 1252.

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