

Conclusion

The overall trajectory of Lawrence's experimentation with the initiatory pattern strangely mirrors the structure of *The Rainbow*: just as successive Brangwen generations progressively lose connection with their sources of vitality and integration, so too does Lawrence gradually lose contact with his own most creative—energetic, positive, and inventive—resources. It is as if in portraying the decline of the Brangwen generations, he prophesied his own physical, emotional, and artistic decline. The result is that *The Rainbow* is the most effective embodiment of the transformative pattern, and *The Plumed Serpent* the least effective. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* can be considered a final rallying of resources before the ultimate fall into death.

When writing *The Rainbow*, Lawrence was filled with a sense of discovery, energy, and connection that resembles that of the unnamed Brangwen generation. At that time, he was inspired by his own new marriage, his burgeoning creative powers, and his recently articulated religious vitalism, and so was able to write a transformative novel suffused with energy and imagination and not easily reducible to an ideological or structural formula. The basic elements of the initiatory pattern—a destructive phase and a sacralization phase—are present, but the techniques employed in those phases do not narrowly or rigidly conform to dogmatic assertions about destruction and sacralization. Destruction is linked to a verbal, visual split consciousness, and sacralization is tied to an integrated, body-based awareness, but the techniques for evoking these forms of consciousness in the reader have the quality of being newly minted. Even the conceptual linkages are handled in subtle and complex ways and so tend to operate on the reader in a subliminal manner. In a way, Lawrence's own recent initiation into a passionate, committed relationship with Frieda made it possible for him to construct a novel with a powerful hierophantic design.

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Women in Love fleshes out the destructive phase of *The Rainbow* in a truly inventive and energetic way because it reflects Lawrence's fresh rage over the War, over his worsening physical condition, and over his turbulent relationships with his wife, friends, and fellow countrymen. But the sacralization phase of *Women in Love* lacks the power to revitalize the reader, for Lawrence has already begun to substitute the rhetoric of the sacred for the poetry of the sacred. It is as if his rage and illness cut him off from his pre-War power to invent convincing vivification devices. He does experiment with new sacred discourses—like that of Tantric yoga—but the sacralizing passages are weighed down by the obscurity and abstractness of these terms and by even more abstract attempts to explain them. And the effort to vivify is muted by the pervasive negativity of misanthropy. It is significant that in 1929 Lawrence advised the young novelist Edward Dahlberg to always write with bitterness.¹ From *Women in Love* onward, Lawrence's own work is often marred by extreme acidity.

Just as the third named Brangwen generation (Ursula and Skrebensky) is hindered by excessive self-consciousness and assertiveness, so too is Lawrence hampered by similar difficulties as he writes his later novels. The leadership novels show Lawrence all too insistently applying the initiatory pattern to male-male relationships and to public rites. The sense of narratorial distortion, fabrication, and didacticism in *The Plumed Serpent* simultaneously exposes and undermines Lawrence's effort to initiate the reader. While there is much narrative and poetic experimentation in the sacralizing passages, their effectiveness is undercut by the vagueness, generality, and reflexivity of the language and by the violent, authoritarian politics. Some have argued that the most vivid passages in the novel are the descriptions of the Mexican landscape.

Lady Chatterley's Lover represents a partial rebound from the downward trajectory of Lawrence's experimentation with the initiatory design. It is as if the increasing physical weakness and pain in his last years softened his bitterness and stridency and made it more possible for him to retap the spring that gave rise to *The Rainbow*.² The many echoes of the early novel in the latter indicate that he was trying to get back to positive sources of inspiration that had been muted or distorted since the advent of the War. It is especially significant that the organic discourse used to depict the medieval Brangwens finds its way into the sacralizing passages in *Lady Chatterley*. It is as if Connie and Mellors, despite their modern alienation, have access to the same natural energies that animated Ursula's ancestors. Moreover, the hope that Connie and Mellors feel at the end of the novel is a kind of echo of Ursula's rainbow experience at the end of *The Rainbow*.

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One important difference between *The Rainbow* and *Lady Chatterley* is that the destructive phase of the earlier novel is associated with an intense annihilating force, while the destructive phase of the later novel is linked to a depleted disintegrative force. This difference is due in part to the fact that the characters in *The Rainbow* are pre-War and those in *Lady Chatterley* are post-War: the War has in effect enervated the most modern generation. But the shift may also reflect Lawrence's realization that the energetic, inventive language used in the earlier novel may have been subliminally attractive to readers; in the later novel, it would be better to repulse readers by associating destruction and death with depletion, rather than with vigorous violence, for vigor, of whatever kind, is inherently alluring. Another important difference between the novels is that *Lady Chatterley* is more rigidly coded. We have seen that after *Women in Love* Lawrence tends to recycle words that he associates with either the destructive or the vivification phase. Thus, "mind," "metal," and "machine" are regularly used in the destructive phases of the later novels, and "body" and "blood" are deployed in the vivification phases.³ Connected with the issue of codification is that of abstractness. The didactic imperative in the later novels tends to overload the sacralizing episodes with abstractions. In *The Rainbow*, in contrast, abstract terms are more sparingly and effectively woven into concretely textured passages.

In examining how literary technique shapes the flow of consciousness in the reader, I have tried to demonstrate the value of linking a poetics of technique to a phenomenology of the reading experience. We have seen that for Lawrence the critical dimension of consciousness is the degree of integration, which is largely determined by the degree of embodiment. His devices work to splinter the reader's logocentric, ocularcentric consciousness and then to reintegrate "the whole corpus of the consciousness."⁴ Because the split consciousness is a major subject of inquiry today, I believe it is worthwhile exploring the various literary techniques that have been used to both accentuate and heal these splits. Like the Romantics, Lawrence believed that language could shatter and fuse, limit and liberate, consciousness. His paradoxical view of language is paralleled by a paradoxical view of the image: the overvaluation of vision contributes to the splitting of consciousness, and yet powerful organic and elemental symbols have the affective capacity to reintegrate and reinvigorate awareness. Paradox—the coincidence of contraries—was always at the heart of Lawrence's understanding of the sacred and is the central principle structuring his transformational pattern. This centrality of paradox is consistent with his view that the "great systole diastole of the universe" involves an oscillation, a dynamic balance, between destructive and creative forces.⁵