

IMAGES OF MAN:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECTED NOVELS
BY NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS AND D.H. LAWRENCE

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by

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ABSTRACT

Ever since the shattering impact of Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God, twentieth-century authors have been concerned in their fiction with examining the attempt made by man to cope with the condition implied by Nietzsche's words. The condition and its characteristics have been given many names but most commentators agree that the primary philosophical concerns of modern man are to deal *positively* with the condition of freedom which the death of God has created, to avoid the despair which the "experience of nothingness" implies and, more importantly, to create a new image of the self once the traditional God-centred image has been destroyed.

Nikos Kazantzakis and D.H. Lawrence were two seemingly different authors who, in their fiction, examined in strikingly similar terms the attempt by modern man to create a new self-image. Both authors saw that man reconstructs this new self-image first by redefining his connection with the *living* world around one. For both authors this living world included one's fellow men and women *and* the natural living environment. Second, one's self-image is recreated by redefining one's connection with the political milieu. Third, both authors saw the figure of the historical Jesus as prototypic of that individual who was on such a journey of self-redefinition and who had reached a level of transcendence in that journey.

This discussion examines the strikingly similar fashion in which both authors saw and portrayed in their fiction modern man's

journey toward self-redefinition. This is done by a comparison of three Kazantzakis novels with three Lawrence novels in terms of their similar approaches to the problem of coping creatively with the "experience of nothingness."

The Lawrence novels examined are *Women in Love*, *The Man Who Died* and *Kangaroo* and these are compared respectively with Kazantzakis's *Zorba the Greek*, *The Last Temptation of Christ* and *Freedom or Death*.

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INTRODUCTION

Once one has undertaken the task of comparing two authors on whatever basis one expects to be presented with certain fundamental questions on the validity of the intended comparison. Regardless of how similar any two authors may appear in their approaches, their techniques, their methods or their philosophies, they must perforce be taken as ultimately and fundamentally unique. Imitative authors are not read nor do they attain the critical reputations even approaching those of these authors in question. In most cases the questions of the validity of comparison are easily answered but when one is dealing with two authors who are seemingly so totally unconnected; most especially in space and language, as are D.H. Lawrence and Nikos Kazantzakis, it seems necessary to explain more fully than would normally be necessary the bases from which the intended comparison stems and the particular direction and limitations this comparison will take and have.

Literary comparisons which cut across cultural and language lines are, of course, beset with difficulties from the very beginning. Experts in the steadily widening field of comparative literature still attempt to define and narrow down the parameters of that field in order to substantiate the intrinsic worth which cross-cultural literary comparisons do have. Perhaps the most thorny question with which comparatists concern themselves (and which is of particular concern to this analysis) is that involving the appropriateness of using

translations in making comparisons, especially those of a textual nature. The English translations of Kazantzakis's work have been used in this discussion for a number of reasons, not the least of which is this author's "little Latin and less Greek." However, it is the author's contention that the validity of comparison still stands since the analysis is a thematic and a philosophic one rather than a strictly textual or stylistic one.

The reader is reminded that modern comparative literature studies are relying more and more on the integrity and scholarship of translators to make non-native literature available to the common readership of a particular nation. The necessity of placing this reliance and trust in the translator is well expressed by S.S. Praver in his introductory text to the study of Comparative Literature:

The trouble with translations, it has often been said, is that they can be properly judged only by those who have no need of them. "To test the closeness of any translation to its original," David Lodge has recently told us, "one would have to be not only bi-lingual but--to coin an ugly phrase--bicultural, i.e. possessed of the whole complex of emotions, associations, and ideas which intricately relate a nation's language to its life and tradition, but possessed not only of one such complex--as we all are to some extent--but of two." This describes, accurately, the all-but-impossible ideal comparatists set themselves to accomplish; and it suggests a reason why the scrutiny of translation has come to loom large in comparative literature courses offered by universities.¹

Likewise, speaking of this "all-but-impossible" task, René Etiemble in his *The Crisis in Comparative Literature*, insists that "comparative literature should grant the art of translation its due." Noting several reputable and renowned examples such as Valery

¹S.S. Praver, *Comparative Literature Studies: An Introduction* (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1973), p. 82.

Larbaud's translation of Samuel Butler, Babits's translation of *The Divine Comedy*, and T.S. Eliot's translation of Saint John Perse's *Anabase*, Etiemble concludes, "... how can one fail to admire the harmony between knowledge and art, between precision and delicacy in their work."² With this perspective, then, this author makes no apology for having used reputable translations in the thematic and philosophic comparison that this discussion will pursue.

A second problem which presents itself with the task of comparing these two particular authors--Lawrence and Kazantzakis--is the known fact that these writers had no physical or literary contact with each other. It cannot be claimed, therefore, that any influence, one on the other, occurred between them. However, this discussion rests on no such claim. Rather, the analysis is undertaken with a view towards what Praver calls "placing" or "the mutual illumination of several texts, or series of texts, considered side by side";³ Praver goes on to illustrate that this can be undertaken in order to establish any number of similarities between or qualities of the particular works. However, our analysis here goes further and attempts to illustrate that a comparison of the particular texts can also be used to deduce central characteristics of the philosophic purpose behind the authors' work and lives.

The particular appropriateness of comparing Lawrence and Kazantzakis along these lines will become increasingly clear in the

² René Etiemble, *The Crisis in Comparative Literature*, trans. Herbert Weisinger and Georges Joyaux (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1966), p. 22.

³ Praver, p. 144.

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following pages but a few more words of a cautionary and explanatory nature need be said so that our purpose may not be misunderstood.

In choosing these two particular authors for comparison this writer makes no claim that they are singular or unique in their approach to the question which is the subject of this thesis. Indeed, it is obvious that any of a growing group of writers of the modern period could be compared along similar lines. What makes the comparison between *these* two writers especially intriguing is that an examination of their work indicates that even though they had no physical or literary contact with each other, their purpose in life as well as in art was the same--to create a viable, authentic image of man once the traditional image has been lost.

This is not to say that other modern European writers have not attempted in their lives and work to do very much the same thing in response to very much the same conditions. However, it is to say that D.H. Lawrence attempted to do so by resorting to a set of concerns and alternatives very similar to Kazantzakis's. It would be difficult to find another modern European writer so closely aligned with Kazantzakis in the specifics of his thematic and philosophical approach to the problem.

But what makes the comparison even more appropriate is that where one author succeeded the other (Lawrence) failed. This "failure" will be further explained in the course of the discussion, but from the outset it must be seen that the use of the term "failure" here to apply to D.H. Lawrence is not meant in any way as an attempt to contradict or radically disagree with the well-deserved reputation that

the author has gained in the world of letters. (Indeed, only in cases where there is fairly unanimous critical consent are there *any* harsh critical judgements made in this discussion regarding the literary "quality" of either writer's work). Rather, when Lawrence is said to have failed this is to be taken to refer to the author's ultimate failure to construct a viable, satisfactory, authentic self-image. Furthermore, this is not to say that Lawrence did not construct a new image of the self *at all* (even a cursory glance at *Phoenix* or the *Collected Letters* will indicate why this cannot be claimed) but that the image he did construct was not ultimately satisfactory enough to save him from the final anguish and despair with which he ended his life.

But this thesis is not a biographical study of either author. Therefore, an explanation for this failure will be *primarily* sought in an examination of novels with supporting material taken from any biographical, critical and/or theoretical writings by the authors which are deemed relevant. Such examination of the novels attempts to illustrate that in contradistinction to Kazantzakis, Lawrence, like his central characters, persisted in the belief that there is a goal in the search for the new image. What Kazantzakis and his literary characters reveal is that it is the goal itself which must be denied and abnegated so that, like the woman of Isis, man becomes the participant in the pure search, confident and happy that there is *no goal possible*, let alone in sight.

The choice of novels which have been used has also been determined on this basis. This must be kept in mind particularly when

one considers the analysis of the novels taken from the Lawrence canon. Better Lawrence novels (in the purely literary sense) can be found.

Lawrence did write comparatively better novels than *Kangaroo*, especially. But the literary quality of the works is not the primary question dealt with in this discussion, as has been shown. Therefore,

if the comparatively obscure reputation of Nikos Kazantzakis can be held to result from the inferior literary quality of his writing as compared to the critically acclaimed quality of that of Lawrence, this discussion is meant in no way to "raise" the reader's estimation of Kazantzakis's writing, nor to reverse his estimation of Lawrence's.

If such was the intention, the choice of *Kangaroo* as a "representative" work by Lawrence could surely be seen as grossly unfair. On the contrary, the choice of novels is determined simply by the attempt to illustrate both authors' attraction to similar thematic and philosophical concerns. Little attempt will be made to compare the individual texts as literary works of art, as such, or to comment on their literary merits except in those instances where a unanimous critical opinion about a literary defect can be used to support the previously explained definitions of failure vs. success as they apply to the literary characters examined.

The avoidance of textual comparison is partly explained by the limitations imposed by the use of translation in the case of Kazantzakis but it is clear also that, except within the strict limitations of the parameters for comparison as outlined above (and further expanded in subsequent chapters) the *literary intentions* of both groups of novels are blatantly different. Without getting into a

semantic discussion concerning the meaning of terms here it can be said that Rupert Birkin and Richard Lovat Somers are far more "realistic" characters than are Alexis Zorba and Michales in the sense that the former pair act and react with motivations and emotions which are relatively understandable not only within the context of the novels but also within a context which is identifiable by the average reader's personal associations. Zorba and Michales, on the other hand, are fictional constructs whose actions and motivations must be understood mainly within the context of what the novel is symbolically or thematically attempting to express. While Birkin and Somers do have their thematic functions as characters, they can be viewed as believable individuals outside this thematic function. Such is not the case with Zorba and Michales.

By extension, then, *Zorba the Greek* and *Freedom or Death* must be seen as falling into the epic Greek tradition with larger than life, Homeric heroes, while *Women in Love* and *Kangaroo* should be seen in the context of the realistic and/or autobiographical novel. Judgements concerning the characteristics of the people in the individual novels, then, must be understood in this context.

This difference between the literary intentions of the works, however, is not a valid argument against comparing them. It is the very supra-human qualities of the Kazantzakian heroes which enable them, as literary characters, to illustrate the more satisfactory and authentic nature of the Kazantzakian self-image construct as compared to that constructed by Lawrence. It is, in most cases, the human, the "all-too-human," nature of the Lawrentian characters which

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indicates the qualities of mind and philosophies that the Kazantzakian
heroes see as needing to be conquered or transcended for a satisfactory
self-image to be constructed.

CHAPTER I

THE DEATH OF THE TRADITIONAL SELF IMAGE

Dr. Thomas Hora, in an essay entitled, "Psychotherapy, Existence and Religion," recounts the following description of a dream told to him by a patient who described himself as "religiously indifferent."

I dreamt that I left home and found myself in a strange city in a foreign country. I discovered to my dismay that I didn't know the language of the people, I couldn't remember where I came from, I didn't know where I was heading. I experienced a sense of isolation, helplessness and anxiety. I was walking the streets aimlessly hoping to remember where I came from. But to no avail. At the height of my despair I cried out, "God help me!" Then a single raindrop which impressed me as a tear drop fell from the sky and in the course of its falling, it reflected the sun in all the colours of the rainbow. I felt overwhelmed by this sight. The scene shifted and I found myself on my knees in a church. In the moment of awakening, the thought occurred to me that the meaning of life is to reflect in oneself the divine light, like the raindrop reflected the sun in the course of its falling from the sky.¹

What we see reflected in this description is much more than the sun reflected in a falling raindrop. What is most graphically displayed here is the tendency on the part of the human organism to define itself, to relate its "self" to some thing, thought or concept which is external to the encasement of flesh which is the human body. Traditionally, this Image of Man, or more precisely, man's image of himself, has been

¹*Psychoanalysis and Existential Philosophy*, ed. Hendrik M. Ruitenbeek (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1962), p. 79.

supremely dependent on an "in relation to ..." concept. Furthermore, the thing which man has habitually defined himself in relation to, has been the idealization of some extra-human unknown, or at least unprovable concept which, whatever it was, came to be assigned the name, God. It was a natural tendency of the human spirit to seek, and find, some measure against which the human animal judged his worth, or lack of it, his goodness or lack of it, and finally his salvation or lack of it. "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them," said Kant in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, "the starry heavens above and the moral law within."

The object of the "in relation to ..." being God both these things were subsumed under his eminent domain. God was the being before whom man was humbled and awe-struck when he beheld the glory and splendor of the Divine, but God was also the being who gave man his power and pride in a world over which man had been granted complete dominion. Kierkegaard, in his *The Sickness Unto Death*, expresses the dialectic implicit here in the following manner:

The gradations in the consciousness of the self with which we have hitherto been employed are within the definition of the human self, or the self whose measure is man. But this self acquires a new quality or qualification in the fact that it is the self directly in the sight of God. This self is no longer the merely human self but is what I would call, hoping not to be misunderstood, the theological self, the self directly in the sight of God. And what an infinite reality this self acquires by being before God! A herdsman who (if this were possible) is a self only in the sight of cows is a very low self, and so is a ruler who is a self in the sight of slaves--for in both cases the scale or measure is lacking. The child who hitherto has had only the parents to measure himself by, becomes a self when he is a man by getting the

state as a measure. But what an infinite accent falls upon the self by getting God as a measure.²

Man's image of himself, then, was one that was reflected in the blazing countenance of a wrathful, just, omnipotent Deity. Michael Novak summarizes the basis of this image as follows:

Western consciousness rested for a long time upon three fundamental images: that each man is generally precious in God's sight; that God holds each accountable for his historical actions, which coalesce in the general building up of our historical order ...; and that all phenomena of human experience, no matter how random or trivial, are comprehended and united in the mind of God. Thus, men could feel that everything they might experience, no matter how random or trivial was related, had a place, offered at least a hidden, ultimate meaning--nothing wasted, nothing random, nothing unconnected.

There is contained in this image a feeling of absolute security and safety. The "things of earth" are subordinated to the things of heaven and thus the seeming injustice, evil and violence which pervade the human sphere all fall under the unfathomable mystery of "God's plan." There is a certain excusability, or at least explainability, in the resigned but content expression "God's ways are not our ways" which is sustained by the continual dependence on and hope for what Julian Hartt calls the Day of God.

... when He will return to bring everlasting peace to this dark, tormented and turbulent scene. This, of course, is but one expression of an eschatological image of human

²Soren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 210.

³Michael Novak, "The Experience of Nothingness," in Helmut Thielicke, *Nihilism: Its Origin and Nature - with a Christian Answer*, trans. John W. Doberstein (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 7.

existence, that is, man is a being whose fulfillment is bound into some future event in which all history, if not the cosmos at large, will be consummated.⁴

At this future time of consummation man would repay the great price with which he had been bought (the crucifixion of God's son) and all the torture, misery and penance which he had stolidly endured in his purgatory on earth would take on its ultimate significance while at the same time it would be completely overshadowed and forgotten in the experience of the eternal bliss of the afterlife.

It is almost a truism, then, to say that man, *ante mortem Dei*, persisted in a firm belief in the existence of a God-centred universe where, if nothing else, man could console himself with and justify his existence by the knowledge that the creator and the ordering agent of his world, his actions and his fate, was everpresent and continually had him in mind. What the psychologists term the "self-concept," then, was one which defined itself totally *in relation to* an alien force termed God who was indeed "in his heaven" making all things "right with the world."

It is with this self-concept in mind that the impact of the following words by Friedrich Nietzsche must be considered:

The saint answered: "I make songs and sing them; and when I make songs, I laugh, cry and hum. Thus I praise God. With singing, crying, laughing and humming, I praise the God who is my God. But what do you bring us as a gift?"

When Zarathustra had heard these words he bade the saint farewell and said: "What could I have to give you? But let me go quickly lest I take something from you!" And thus they separated, the old man and the man,

⁴ Julian Hartt, *The Lost Image of Man* (Louisiana State University Press, 1963), p. 72.

laughing as two boys laugh.

But when Zarathustra was alone he spoke thus to his heart:
"Could it be possible? This old saint in the forest has not
yet heard anything of this, that GOD IS DEAD!"⁵

For Nietzsche at least this was the basis of the concept of necessitous nihilism which would give rise to the solely human or "I"-centred overman endowed with the full flowering of his individual creative power and potential.

But this nihilism, this recognition of the nothingness inherent in human existence is, for most twentieth century writers, a terrifying but distinctly identifiable condition or experience. It is this post-Nietzschean reaction that will be my concern here. To describe this reaction I will rely on Michael Novak who has made an attempt at actually defining this experience which arises from the contemplation of the corpse of the dead God.

The experience of nothingness defined: that experience in which a man perceives that his former perceptions were structured in a way that they did not have to be, in an arbitrary and unnecessary way. There is no obligatory way to perceive things. A kind of giddiness and dizziness arises. One's former goals, aims, purposes now seem suspended in air. The structure one had put into existence one pulls out. The unity of one's life slips from one's grasp, dissolves. Raw tumultuous experience is overwhelming: how can one shape it, manage it, reduce it to form?.... It is as though at the heart of the human animal there were a love of dissolution, a longing to split into a million measureless particles and fly apart in scattered mist. The experience of nothingness is an experience of the formlessness at the heart of human consciousness. We exist only through form; the experience of our formlessness is terrifying.

⁵Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), p. 124.

We know our kinship to nothingness. We dread being reminded of it.⁶

And the cause? Novak explains more prosaically the modern equivalent of the death of God.

The experience of nothingness arose when man glimpsed the possibility that human life may not be structured either by a personal God or by an impersonal reason--that neither religion or science gives adequate shape to man's experience and his questions. The forms inherited from religion and scientific progress are comforting, many agreed. But what if they do not apply?

In the existential literary tradition (or at least what has come to be called existential) this condition and the reaction to it has taken many forms and been expressed by many names. One writer will speak of being afflicted by *nausea*, another will express it in terms of seeing the *absurd* meaning of all things, another will speak of becoming alienated from any and all things around him. But it would seem that whatever the term, the underlying experience comes from the terrifying knowledge that suddenly the burden of definition in terms of the self image must now fall totally and heavily on the internal resources of that which Nietzsche most celebrated, the *individual man*. This, however, is an awful and sometimes sickening burden which can be compared to what Nietzsche says of true Dionysian knowledge. While the comment is not directly related to the experience of nothingness the description is a very pertinent one for our purposes here. Speaking of the impact of *true knowledge*, Nietzsche characterizes the

⁶Michael Novak, "The Experience of Nothingness," in Helmut Thielicke, *Nihilism*, p. 3.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 7.

feeling in terms of the separation between the everyday world and the world of Dionysian reality.

But as soon as this everyday reality rises again in consciousness, and nauseates us, an ascetic will-paralysing mood is the fruit of these states ... No comfort avails any longer; his longing goes beyond the world after death, beyond the gods themselves; existence with its glittering reflection in the gods or in the immortal other world is abjured. In the consciousness of the truth he has perceived man now sees everywhere only the awfulness or the absurdity of existence ... and loathing seizes him.⁸

Once the God, the measure, has been eliminated existence becomes more than anything else a continuing attempt to reevaluate the old connections which, while they were comforting, now have disappeared.

Frederick Hoffman puts the situation in this way:

The modern self is strenuously engaged in analysing moments of existing, knowing, enduring. The modern philosophical hero is almost invariably a split self: the self who exists and the self who reflects upon his role as an existing being.⁹

But we are getting slightly ahead of ourselves because it would be well at this point to examine the nature of the so-called freedom which modern man's spiritual delirium has produced. It is a type of freedom which hitherto has been unknown and consequently it is beset with pitfalls and dangers. Erich Fromm has examined this freedom and the consequences of it and he concludes,

⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 62.

It is pertinent to note here that Walter Kaufmann, the foremost translator and interpreter of Nietzsche says, "the last three paragraphs invite comparison with existentialist literature, notably Sartre's *La Nausée*."

⁹ Frederick Hoffman, *The Mortal No: Death and the Modern Imagination* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 319.

Freedom, though it has brought him independence and rationality, has made him isolated and, thereby, anxious and powerless. This isolation is unbearable and the alternatives he is confronted with are either to escape from the burden of this freedom into new dependencies and submission, or to advance to the full realization of positive freedom which is based upon the uniqueness and individuality of man.¹⁰

Obviously it is the positive freedom that we are concerned with in this discussion but unless the terror and uncertainty that this newly acquired freedom brings can be overcome the state or condition itself can become a simple gesture or cliché leading only to despair and the eventual adopting of a morbid concentration on death as an escape from the burden and the responsibility of that freedom. In other words, this freedom which is possessed of so much creative potential could easily turn into an act of "bad faith" whereby the modern man turns his back on all transcending ambitions and, in despair, chooses again the comforting slavery of his former condition.

It is probably for this reason that Nicholas Berdyaev notes that the condition of existential freedom is composed of two stages, the *initial* and the *final* "... and between the two stretches man's road, beset with sufferings, the road of inner division."¹¹ The lesser initial stage can be seen as just the attaining of this freedom while the final stage entails disposing of this freedom in a positive fashion. But when one looks at the enormity of the problem one is not surprised at the depth of the terror that it engenders.

¹⁰ Erich Fromm, *Escape From Freedom* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1941), p. viii.

¹¹ Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky: An Interpretation*, trans. Donald Attwater (New York: Sheed and Ward Inc., 1934), p. 68.

In various ways they (the modern artists) tell us that ties have snapped that formerly bound western man to himself and to the world about him. In diverse language they say that man in modern industrial societies is rapidly becoming detached from nature, from his old gods, from the technology that has transformed his environment and now threatens to destroy it; from his work and its products, and from his leisure; from the complex social institutions that presumably serve but are more likely to manipulate him; from the community in which he lives; and above all from himself--from his body and his sex, from his feelings of love and tenderness, and from his art--his creative and productive potential.¹²

Thus, the modern "victim" of this frightening freedom is presented with a unique problem; how to gain back, with *new connections*, some meaningful association with the world, one's work and the physical environment while at the same time retaining and fulfilling the uniqueness and individuality of the "I". While the nihilistic void implies a largely negative condition one's responsibility lies in finding some positive re-definition which will eventually lead to overcoming the despair caused by the realization that "he is of the earth, earth, a creature of flesh and bone doomed to die."¹³

But since the actual, tangible cause of man's terror is the feeling of isolation from the things (of the world especially) with which man had formerly felt so in touch, it soon becomes obvious that, given the loss of the theological image, a new image must be constructed in terms of new connections with that same world. The human condition has now been reduced to the common denominator of existence within the bounds of the everyday, day-to-day reality. But it must be remembered

¹² *Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society*, eds. Eric and Mary Josephson (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1962), pp. 10-11.

¹³ Charles Glicksberg, *The Self in Modern Literature* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1963), p. 176.

that the attempt at redefinition is conducted in a condition of no prior, pre-ordained rules or codes such as had been formerly present under the domain of the traditional God-oriented image. Even in the battle to reaffirm his vital connections with the world, the modern man is the sole possessor of the power (or the necessity?) of doing so according to the dictates of his own demands and needs. Fritz Pappenheim sees this realization as itself the beginning of the new image:

... a new image has arisen of man who shapes his life and is master of his destiny. Once this concept of the individual's sovereignty has been awakened in the minds of men, a new climate is prepared. The consciousness that man's yearning for self-realization is thwarted becomes a crushing experience.... In such a situation the alienation of man is not any longer accepted as an inevitable fate; more than ever before in history it is felt as a threat and at the same time a challenge.¹⁴

For most writers of the modern existentialist tradition it is the response to this challenge that has been instrumental in creating an almost fanatical concern with the remaking of some kind of new image of man. But it is the positiveness of the response that is particularly notable for our purposes here. Helmut Thielicke expresses a recognition of this positiveness when he quotes the poet Gottfried Benn:

It is in this sense that Gottfried Benn, the poet, once said, "All the great spirits of the white people have sensed that they had but this one task, *to cover up their nihilism creatively* ..." for no man can endure the confrontation with pure Nothingness and therefore he seals it off with an insulating layer. But the "cover up" is a factor that should be ranked as a creative achievement. Even though its motivation may be dread, anxiety, or *horror vacui* ... what comes out of it is nevertheless imposing. In a certain

¹⁴ Fritz Pappenheim, quoted in *Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society*, p. 48.

sense there is nothing more productive than Nothingness, or rather, than the confrontation with Nothingness.¹⁵

The modern response, then, is one with which Nietzsche would probably not totally agree. The contemporary attitude is one which, besides rejoicing in Nothingness, attempts to do something reconstructive and positive with it, however paradoxical that might be.

But given this situation the question arises as to what must be the nature of what we have come to call the new or contemporary image of Man. In keeping with the "I"-centred, totally alone condition that man is now faced with, it is obvious that this contemporary image must be completely *authentic* and intensely personal, born out of an internal, on-going quest on the part of the individual. Maurice Friedman states it most lucidly in the following passage:

The image of man ... is an integral part of man's search to understand himself in order to become himself, of his search for an image of authentic personal existence. "Authentic personal existence" does not mean some moral standard imposed from without, or some universal "ought" that need only be applied. It implies a meaningful, personal direction, a response from within to what one meets in each new situation, standing one's ground and meeting the world with the attitude that is rooted in this ground.¹⁶

In this sense the traditional God-centred image of man can be seen as what Friedman calls an *inauthentic* one because it is not born out of an inward quest but rather accepted as an imposition from without. And it is also in this sense that the modern interpretation of the Nietzschean

¹⁵ Thielicke, *Nihilism*, p. 39.

¹⁶ Maurice Friedman, *To Deny Our Nothingness: Contemporary Images of Man* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1967), p. 18.

theocide can be seen as ultimately a positive one because it has forced the individual to come face to face with his own inauthenticity in a way that the traditional non-anxious, God-centred security did not permit. But a note of further explanation is required here. It cannot be said that the experience of Nothingness is a *desirable state* which man searches for, that man kills God for, in order to gain creative freedom. The situation is not that simple. However, once man through whatever means catches a glimpse of the fact that the old ways of structuring existence might not apply, the inauthenticity of that former structuring principle becomes evident. Admittedly there is a dilemma here since the question arises as to why man would want to leave the old security in order to plunge into the experience of nothingness. But I hope I shall not be accused of begging the question when I say that this is not really my object here. My interest is in the ways that the feeling is coped with once it is experienced, not in how the feeling arises to begin with. For my purposes I shall refer to the attempt at redefining an image of self, of beginning one's authenticity as an effect, obviously, rather than a cause of the experience of nothingness or nihilism.

That effect means that the modern man, however he has got there, is faced with a fear, dread, loneliness and anxiety the like of which he has never experienced before and is thereby forced by his very condition to draw on and to inquire into energies and internal resources which he has never had the need or the occasion to employ before. The quest begins, then, for an authentic image of self

derived from within the self and this quest explains the existence of that persistent theme in modern literature of the "pilgrimage" of the hero or anti-hero. There is no doubt that modern man is *not* distinctly unique in his experiencing these feelings of spiritual dread, despair, doubt and anxiety. Other peoples and times have also been confronted with similar metaphysical concerns. Likewise the literary result of this in modern literature has its counterparts in the quest and pilgrimage themes and motifs that have been a part of the literature since Chaucer and probably before. What is unique, however, in the modern condition is the frightening cause of the situation--the death of a "concept" which to this time had held such a central and ordering place in the mind and heart of man. Similarly, while there have been pilgrimage and quest motifs in literature through the ages, they have never existed as a result of this particularly terrifying cause. However, like its counterparts in more traditional literature, this *modern* pilgrimage or quest is an inward one which plumbs the depths of the individual, the self, in search for not so much a *lost* self as a *new* self. The old image is gone and in a way modern man is that much better off without it. But what is to be done with what is left?

The modern writers, speaking for the modern human condition, have seen that what is left is a situation possessed of a profoundly disturbing paradox. It is obvious that the new image must come from the inward awareness of the human individual but just as obvious is the fact that such an individual is unavoidably *in the world*. He is a part of a society, a section of a whole. While it may be true that the spiritual pilgrim feels alienated, detached or unrelated to this

whole it is blatantly obvious that a part of the newly created image must be in terms of that whole. Part of the newness of the contemporary image must stem from a reevaluated relationship to the individual's history, society, and fellow men. Indeed it is this paradox to which Lawrence and Kazantzakis sought basically to address themselves and it is for this reason that both came to reject the image of man as a hermit or detached ascetic.

Several commentators have attempted to explain this paradox and this discussion may serve to elucidate it further. Friedman speaks of this awareness (of the past in particular) as being a part of making the contemporary image authentic.

No modern man is excluded from a relationship to the images of man of past ages--Jesus, the Buddha, Saint Francis, Socrates, Lao-tzu, Job--but he must relate to them just as the modern man that he is, bringing the whole complexity and perplexity of his modern existence into that relationship, or they will not be genuine images of man for him.¹⁷

I think it can accurately be assumed that this is also what Paul Tillich has in mind when he speaks of the two kinds of courage. The first kind he calls "the courage to be--oneself" and this needs no further discussion, but the second kind is directly related to man's place in the social and historical reality of things.

But the self is self only because it has a world, a structured universe to which it belongs and from which it is separated at the same time. Self and world are correlated, and so are individualization and participation ... self-affirmation if it is done in spite of the threat of non-being is the courage to be. But it is not the courage to be oneself, it is the "courage to be as a part."¹⁸

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁸ Paul Tillich, *The Courage To Be* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1952), pp. 88-89.

By extension it can be assumed that it is not just man's relationship to himself and his society that needs revaluation, but this revaluation must occur in terms of everything that goes to make up the man.

Friedman suggests this in the last comment quoted but its pervasiveness is revealed even further in the following remarks by Enrico Garzilli:

Modern man's existence becomes a kind of pilgrimage in search of the self and the creation of the self. It reveals man searching for himself alone, within himself, in his relationships to other people, in his language and myths, in his dreams, in his creativity and in his creations. These are all different routes to the many selves in which man must seek his identity. As the study progresses, not only does the pilgrim find that the path becomes labyrinthine because of the maze outside, but also the maze is within. Many times the path seems to become circular as it unfolds before him. The journey and the pilgrim, the dream and the dreamer become one as man explores a circle whose circumference seems to be everywhere and whose centre seems to be nowhere. This circle is himself; it finds its many surfaces in consciousness, in other people, in his language, his personae, and his dreams.¹⁹

But what is further revealed here is that ultimately the individual and his pilgrimage become one. The image of man somehow comes to take on an identification with the pilgrimage that the individual is on.

This facet of the spiritual pilgrim's quest is central to our discussion here. On one hand it must be realized that the spiritual quest, the pilgrimage, is an open-ended and continual one.

It is through one small step after another that the human pilgrimage ... proceeds. No grand assault upon utopia is possible. No utopia withstands the experience of nothingness. There is no resting place. Yet the toil is not like that of Sisyphus. It is not a rock we push. What we push is not inanimate but capable of growth.²⁰

¹⁹ Enrico Garzilli, *Circles Without Centres: Paths to the Discovery and Creation of Self in Modern Literature* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 8.

²⁰ Michael Novak, *The Experience of Nothingness* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1970), p. 119.

On the other hand, as this quotation suggests, the very nature of the quest is such that it cannot be denoted truly tragic or hopeless. The hopelessness that seems to be implied by the fact that there is no resting place is mitigated by the realization that in that very hopelessness lies man's potential. In essence this is what makes the quest a heroic one.

Finally, then, the question arises as to what precisely is the object of redefinition for modern man. In the contemporary critical literature on the subject of the "images" of man one finds mention and discussion of many attempts to construct this image, such as "The Animal Image of the Self,"²¹ "The Image of The Mechanical Self,"²² "The Image of the Absurd Self,"²³ "The Fictive Self,"²⁴ etc. All of these seemingly fruitful definitions reveal man in a constant attempt at redefining himself in terms of the things around him, be they political, social, historical, or economic. But it is generally concluded in that same literature that these examinations do not successfully confront the questions of individual being and reevaluated relationships because, in the words of Maurice Friedman, they are basically inauthentic since they either rely on an attempt to subsume oneself under some authority which is larger than oneself or they arise out of something other than the inward quest of the individual. There is a very troublesome difficulty here which William Mueller presents in the following manner:

²¹ Charles Glicksberg, *The Self in Modern Literature*, p. 39.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

²⁴ Garzilli, p. 37.

The first step toward answering the question is to ask a prior one: To what basic authority or first principle should I turn for direction, for apprehension of my proper place in the world? Though many answers are possible, most of them fall into one of three categories. I may fashion my life in accordance with a divine will, with my society's needs or with the demands of my own, intrinsic being. My motivating source may be primarily religious, ethical, or existential.²⁵

Of course, once the experience of nothingness is confronted the religious motivating source becomes obsolete except with regard to Kierkegaard's "leap of faith." In addition, the fashioning of one's life "in accordance with ... society's needs" is equally unsatisfactory because it is the perfect example of Friedman's "inauthentic" subsuming of one-self under the larger authority. Ultimately, the existential becomes the most valid of the three because in this fashioning of one's life the accent falls on a motivation which has sprung from no other than the demands of one's own intrinsic being. And, indeed, this is all that's left once the experience of nothingness has been faced.

Furthermore, once the motivation for the fashioning of one's life has come from this intrinsically personal source the redemptive and creative potential of action and experience becomes clear. There is no other force than self which drives the individual on this basis so that Richard Lehan's conception of the human being as the source of his own redemption, as his own redeemer, is a perceptive analysis.

Existential man is the sum of what he does: his meaning follows from his actions and not some preconceived notion about human nature. He is man in motion. His values cannot be divorced from experience.... Existential man embodies his fate. While he may struggle to bridge the absurd gap between his actions and the consequences of those actions, he believes that he

²⁵William R. Mueller, *Celebration of Life: Studies in Modern Fiction* (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1972), p. 3.

has brought the ruin on himself and that he remains the source of his own redemption.²⁶

This realization has been the cause of much frantic searching in an inauthentic direction such as is described by Eric Hoffer in his book, *The True Believer*, where the desperation and the desire for restructured existence leads to the creation of an individual who exists for the sake of joining some cause--any cause. But the hero with whom we are dealing is the concerned, discriminatively sensitive prototype of the Promethean rebel whose sole object is the creation of meaning out of the absurd, chaotic world by the remaking of an image of the self which is somehow viable and consistent given the loss of the traditional one. We are concerned with the individual who holds that "the unexamined life is not worth living and that the examined life, whatever its loneliness and agony, leads to a self-determination which is also a self-creation."²⁷

D.H. Lawrence and Nikos Kazantzakis, in their own particular examinations of life, found it meaningful to redefine, reevaluate and re-address three distinct facets of their existence in an on-going effort to incorporate these three areas into some viable, contemporary image of the self. In the comparisons which will follow in later chapters we shall examine both authors' similar treatment of those relationships which demanded redefinition for them. The first area of study will involve man in his association with other men and women and our authors'

²⁶Richard Lehan, *A Dangerous Crossing: French Literary Existentialism and the Modern American Novel* (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), pp. xv-xvi.

²⁷Mueller, p. 8.

redefinition of that association. The second area of concern will centre in man's relationship to the historical figure of Jesus who, strangely enough, was a figure of preoccupation and fascination for both men. The third will entail inquiry into the redefined relationship between man and his political environment.

However, before we deal particularly with how these authors have treated their respective revaluations of these relationships in their fiction some preliminary questions must be answered and possible immediate doubts must be addressed.

The most immediate question is why these three areas of concern have been chosen for discussion in connection with these authors and furthermore how these authors' responses to these areas are unique to an extent which makes them worthwhile as subjects for discussion.

To answer the first question, it should suffice to indicate that the political and social realms represent most obviously those situations with which every individual is most continually confronted. So it is not surprising that our authors should display their primary concern for a redefinition and revaluation of those areas in particular. The concern for the Christ figure, however, can be seen as a display of interest and fascination in an individual who was prototypic of the struggle with which the authors saw themselves and modern man involved. To indicate what is particularly unique about the treatment of these areas of concern by Lawrence and Kazantzakis, however, a few further remarks are needed specifically concerning the nature of the areas themselves and the inauthentic attempts which have been made to redefine relationships with them. What must again be accentuated is the previously mentioned view of man as "the source of his own

redemption" which is the over-riding concept which makes all the difference for our authors' treatment of the three areas of concern. We must now examine, in general terms, what this view means when applied to each of the areas of revaluation.

From the outset it must be seen that the involvement of the spiritual pilgrim in the political realm or with a particular political ideology *can be* an immediate and desperate attempt to redefine his relationship to the thing which holds almost as much force in the definition of the self as God once did. But once he is aware that he is the creator of his own salvation the spiritual pilgrim realizes that political ideology rests upon a set of myths and institutions which are just as meaningless as the theocentric myths. The experience of nothingness is just as destructive to the myths on which politics rests as it is to the myths on which religious dependency are founded. And so it is the task of the modern man to re-examine and reevaluate these myths and institutions that now have absolutely no meaning in themselves and to approach them with the idea that he alone is the creator of meaning. Michael Novak explains the effect of the experience of nothingness on political myths and institutions in the following manner:

The myth appropriate to the new time requires a constant return to inner solitude, an unbroken awareness of the emptiness at the heart of consciousness. It is a harsh refusal to allow idols to be placed in the sanctuary. It requires also a scorching gaze upon all those bureaucracies, institutions, manipulators, symbol-makers and hucksters who employ technology and its supposed realities to bewitch and bedazzle the psyche. Countless numbers of men in the technological society are hired

to keep goods moving, those goods pouring from the machines, hired to bark and bellow and rage and cajole. They are hired to sell.²⁸

But what needs to be remembered is that the modern searcher is only *slightly less* susceptible to the influence of this "hard sell." Thus, the pilgrim's association with the political realm can be a severe test of his commitment to authenticity, especially if the overriding concept of man as his own redeemer is neglected. Novak goes on to point out that the reason for this is to be found in the very nature of the myths and institutions themselves, but also it is tied to the nature of the experience which the searcher is undergoing.

Politics is the realm of illusion. Politics is the restless man's mysticism. It has its own magic, rituals, symbols, doctrines. Politics is the art of power, yes, but it is primarily the art of shaping consciousness. The primary locus of politics is human consciousness. Politics issues from the end of a symbol. Who controls minds controls guns.²⁹

So while there is no doubt that man's relationship with such a monolithic structure as the political one (which has such obvious comparisons to the theological structure) must be redefined, there is also no doubt that the existential man-alone could possibly find blessed relief in the security that possible political activity might provide. It is for this reason that Erich Fromm holds such a negative view of modern man as he sees him.

... modern man, freed from the bonds of pre-individualistic society, which simultaneously gave him security and limited him, has not gained freedom in the positive sense of the realization of his individual self; that is the expression

²⁸Novak, *The Experience of Nothingness*, p. 89.

²⁹Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, pp. viii and xiv.

of his intellectual, emotional and sensuous potentialities ... (because) the majority of men have not yet acquired the maturity to be independent, to be rational, to be objective. They need myths and idols to endure the fact that man is all by himself, that there is no authority which gives meaning to life except man himself.³⁰

Fromm's contention is that it *has been* the purpose of the existentially free individual to "escape from" this freedom by adopting as a part of himself, by subsuming his existence under, some political ideology such as Communism or Fascism which regains for him the feeling of being at one with a collective group of individuals with whom he can identify. Richard Crossman finds this phenomenon to be the motivating cause behind the journeys into Communism of such people as Richard Wright, Ignazio Silone, Stephen Spender and Arthur Koestler.

The strength of the Catholic Church has always been that it demands the sacrifice of that freedom uncompromisingly, and condemns spiritual pride as a deadly sin. The communist novice, subjecting his soul to the canon law of the Kremlin, felt something of the release which Catholicism brings to the individual, wearied and worried by the privilege of freedom.³¹

Thankfully, the salvation of the pilgrim is to be found not only within himself but also in the very nature of these God-like institutions because for the existential man who might fall prey to making this ideological "leap of faith" disillusion with the new God called the state sets in early. Gradually the spiritual searcher discovers himself to be wandering in a maze of soul-destroying anonymity where he is not the controlling force of his own life but rather the unwilling

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *The God That Failed*, ed. Richard Crossman (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1949), p. 6.

cog in a political machine whose end-product is most often anathema to his personal goals. Individual self-assertion, just as in the traditional Christian universe, becomes sacrificed to the demands and far-reaching goals of the political philosophy. The involvement which could have been so socially reforming, for example, becomes characterized not by beneficial reform but by unbearable repression, and a repression of that which the spiritual man so values--individuality. Arthur Koestler notes this as an explanation of his disillusion with the Communist movement.

The lesson taught by this type of experience, when put into words, always appears under the dowdy guise of perennial commonplaces; that man cannot be treated as units in operations of political arithmetic because they behave like the symbols for zero and the infinite, which dislocate all mathematical operations; that the end justifies the means only within very narrow limits; that ethics is not a function of social utility, and charity not a petty-bourgeois sentiment but the gravitational force which keeps civilization in its orbit--yet every single one of these trivial statements was incompatible with the Communist faith which I held.³²

For the authors we are dealing with, Lawrence and Kazantzakis, however, their personal response to the experience of nothingness served not only to redefine the individual in terms of his political environment (as I shall subsequently show) but also to save him from making an act of bad faith which could quite possibly enslave the existentially free individual once more. And this, indeed, is what makes these authors' response unique. For them the involvement in the political realm was such that it furthered their commitment to the overriding concept of man as his own savior instead of replacing one

³²*Ibid.*, p. 60.

external, and therefore unsatisfactory, "idol" by another.

A similar situation of confrontation arises when we examine the second focus of attraction for our authors and modern man--the figure of Jesus. It must be noted that the historical figure to whom the existential man-alone is attracted is the *man-God* as opposed to the *God-man*. The spiritual searcher sees in the figure of Jesus a prototype of the tormented modern man, an ancient example of the individual searching for his meaningful associations with and definition of himself, his society, and in Christ's case, his God. As J. Middleton Murry points out, the focus of interest in the Christ figure has changed. "What the devout Christian has worshipped in the God-man, we can revere in the man-God." He continues:

Faith in the God-man, knowledge of the man-God--both spring alike from contemplation of the imagination and act of the man Jesus. One is the response of a soul which says: No man could have conceived or done this thing; the other the response of the soul which says: No one but a man could have conceived or done it. Both are true. But the former truth belongs to the past; the latter to the future.³³

For the existential inquirer there is a direct comparison between this figure of Jesus and the figure of Nietzsche's superman--a tablet breaker, so to speak, who accepted the struggle with the problem of self-definition as a personal challenge directly related to survival. Albert Schweitzer, an exponent and practitioner of the "new criticism" of the synoptic gospels, puts it this way:

They (the teachings of the historical Jesus) are appropriate, therefore, to any world, for in every world they raise the

³³J. Middleton Murry, "The Man of the Future," in *Jesus*, ed. Hugh Anderson (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 150.

man who dares to meet their challenge, and does not turn and twist them into meaninglessness, above his world and his time, making him inwardly free, so that he is fitted to be, in his own world and in his own time, a simple channel of the power of Jesus.³⁴

The attraction to the historical Jesus is an attraction to a predominantly secular or human figure who is engaged in a predominantly human self-examination and who had as a part of that problem an actual crucifixion and death. This is the same crucifixion and death, birth and rebirth which is found so symbolically expressed in the pilgrimage motif of modern fiction, a motif which is most carefully examined, for example, by Dostoyevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Richard Lehan's comment about this picture of the new Christ as depicted by Dostoyevsky coincides with our concern here.

Ivan's story is a condemnation of the Roman Catholic Church and other forces that attempt to regulate the individual; it is also a "praise of Jesus", although a kind of secular and humanistic Jesus, as Alyosha tells him.³⁵

The modern interpretation of the figure of the historical Jesus is one which accentuates the responsibility of the individual to carve his own niche and one which sees the man Jesus as isolating the "aloneness" of his situation and addressing that in an attempt to conquer and transcend it. The bearer of such a responsibility is the man who is capable of overcoming the realization of the reality of the base, human self, of becoming in Nietzsche's words, the *übermensch*. For the modern pilgrim Jesus was indeed such a man. But most importantly he was completely human and had advanced to the bravery of "he who

³⁴ Albert Schweitzer, "The Wind of Change," in *Jesus*, ed. Hugh Anderson (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 143.

³⁵ Richard Lehan, *A Dangerous Crossing*, p. 7.

knows fear but conquers fear, who sees the abyss, but with pride."³⁶ For our authors, then, he was prototypic of the individual who accepted, albeit with fear and trembling, the responsibility of being the sole determiner and creator of his own personal salvation.

With reference to Lawrence and Kazantzakis, however, we should not and indeed cannot stop here. We must deal with the third area which demands revaluation of the individual in terms of other men and women in view of the experience of nothingness. And again what must be reiterated is that for both authors the dominant notion was the attitude that the individual himself is the sole basis for that revaluation. It can be said, indeed, that for Lawrence and Kazantzakis this area was the focal point for the *whole* redefinition of man's association with *everything* around him.

Of course, once the basis of the redefinition hinges on the radically changed conception of freedom and on the creative immediacy that this freedom demands, the existentially free individual sees the potential that life now holds once it has been freed from the restrictive bonds of an other-imposed regulatory morality which has become logically meaningless. The life that man possesses suddenly becomes immensely valuable and real because its source is found in the depths of the creative spirit. Thus, the value of life affirmed and celebrated takes on sudden and powerful possibilities in terms of its self-creative potential.

What is unique about this view of life and living is that the virtue of life lies in the sheer joy of existence rather than in some

³⁶*The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 400.

narrow, restrictive, other-centred rationale. Henri Bergson, the most notable proponent of vitalism (of which this attitude is part) states the condition in the following way:

What was immobile and frozen in our perception is warmed and set in motion. Everything comes to life around us, everything is *revivified in us*. A great impulse carries beings and things along. We feel ourselves uplifted, carried away, borne along by it. We are more fully alive and this increase of life brings with it the conviction that grave philosophical enigmas ... arise from a frozen vision of the real.³⁷

With this attitude of being more fully alive and living comes the tendency for creative and active participation and involvement in everything around one. (And with the removal of the restrictive bonds of the outside-imposed regulatory morality everything and everyone becomes "fair game" for this involvement. One result of this is the breakdown of the restrictive social, religious and racial barriers which had formerly dictated man's associations. But another result is the breakdown of the traditionally adopted conventions of behavior which had formerly ruled the domain of man's interaction with his fellows.

Just as the religious rules of conduct have lost their meaning so, too, have the social rules which on a very practical day to day basis are soon seen as being unnecessarily restrictive to the self-creative, actively participatory man-alone. Rules of social contact and interaction come to be formed from the demands of the individual and the situation in which he willingly finds himself.

³⁷ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946), p. 186.

But as the abolition of the religious code and the reassessment of the basis for political involvement had their dangers so, too, does the absence of the conventional determiners of social interaction. And as the political and religious freedom had the tendency to manifest itself in the immediate grasping at alternatives which were ultimately inauthentic, the social freedom has the tendency to result in a plunging into defiant excess and an overly blatant disregard of social propriety simply for the sake of it. The most obvious and most inauthentic result of this could be the immediate participation in excesses "of the flesh" with the assumption that this is an example of real and free living. On the other hand, an equally inauthentic and unsatisfactory response to the problem of social freedom is the personal *denunciation* of any participation in activities which could be considered as satisfying the intrinsic desires "of the flesh."

What is unsatisfactory about both of these alternatives is that neither sees the physical aspect of man's make-up as a *part of* the vital, creative spirit, and only a part. The individual that will be the focus of our concern is he who accepts and affirms the physical body as an integral and necessary component of the creative self rather than he who denounces it or, on the other hand, revels in it for its own sake. Julian Hartt notes this creative distinction between excess and denunciation in his comment on the modern interpretation of the Nietzschean saint.

... (the) saint does not live to eat, drink, copulate, or make money. When he does any of these things, he does them freely; and when he refrains from doing them he refrains freely; and in both cases he is free from the bondage to conventionality ... (but) The real saint must not be a prodigy of renunciation, because he who renounces the world

must see more evil than good in it and feel himself to be unequal to its massive power and cherish something of himself as too precious to be lost in the world's manure and rubble. The saint must affirm rather than renounce the world; and to affirm it is to rejoice in its simply being there, rather than to praise it as a step to something higher and holier.³⁸

What is implied here is what Kazantzakis called "turning flesh into spirit" rather than transcending flesh to become spirit. Hartt goes on to make this distinction clearer when he speaks of the three ways of Sanctifying Death. The first he calls *denial* of death, the second, *love* of death, and the third, *affirmation* of death. Denial is obviously inadequate and needs no comment. Love of death entails a negative rather than a positive stance toward life. The lover of death is simply enduring life in the hope of future peaceful release by death. But,

Death affirmed is death incorporated in its own meaning in the form of sanctification. This means that man has access to full human existence only through death. His most notable achievements are possible because of his mortality, not in spite of it ... the future is significant now so far as one is able to project things which will stand the test of death, that is not whether they will endure forever but whether we can love them with joy though they and we sometime perish from the earth.³⁹

Ultimately, the view of life is integrally tied to the stance toward death.

But what is most pertinent in this attitude towards death is the further accentuation of that concept already introduced by the reference to J.M. Murry's comments on the Christ figure--that "no

³⁸ Julian Hart, *The Lost Image of Man*, pp. 114 and 118.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123.

one but a man" could reach these notable achievements of which Hartt speaks. The inauthentic responses toward life had previously arisen, in part, because of an inauthentic or unsatisfactory response towards death and hence towards humanness. Inauthentically, the human condition had previously been seen as incapable of possessing any creative potential simply because of the constant reminder of its mortality. With the change of focus being that man is the sole inspiration for his redemption the existence of death is seen as a challenge rather than a curse. For the existentially creative individual the existence of death is the spur which constantly motivates that individual towards the goal of full human existence. It is the source of the Odyssean urge which prompts him continually "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

D.H. Lawrence and Nikos Kazantzakis both strove towards this goal of full human existence and the subsequent chapters of this discussion will examine the respective journeys towards this goal as it is revealed in their literary work. But before I deal specifically with this a few introductory remarks about the two authors are in order.

At this stage it would be superfluous to embark on an in-depth analysis of the philosophy which Lawrence held which was based on a belief in a "blood consciousness," a denial of the supremacy of the mind, a belief in man's centre being the solar plexus. This has been amply expressed by any number of Lawrence critics and its repetition here would be less than revealing. However, it will serve the purposes of our discussion to indicate that the relationship between D.H.

Lawrence and Nikos Kazantzakis is not totally a spurious, tentative or unsupported one. In this regard, Kimon Friar, a friend and astute commentator on the life and work of Kazantzakis, devotes considerable time to enumerating what he considers to be the most striking areas of similarity between his friend and D.H. Lawrence.

... There are extraordinary similarities between the two men.... Both were Dionysian, demon-driven men; both placed instinct and the promptings of the blood above the more ordered deductions of the mind; both celebrated the primitive and even atavistic origins of the human spirit; both were insatiable travellers who in landscape and inscape discerned the contours of God's or Nature's purpose (for Kazantzakis these two words are synonyms); both turned to the physical universe for their imagery and away from urban mechanics and subtleties; both extolled strife and crucifixion as the unavoidable and necessitous law of life, and even of love; both were impatient of refinements of craft, and entrusted themselves to the demonic outpourings of creative inspiration; both were disciples of Nietzsche's Zarathustra, valuing above all else the moment of cleaving insight given the man of vision; both placed the prophet above the man of letters; both were obsessed with messianic drives and dreams....⁴⁰

As our discussion continues these comparisons will be further explained but what soon becomes obvious is that there is an additional point, not of comparison but of disparity between the two men. This point of dissimilarity can easily be noted by examining the deaths of both men.

The majority of critics agree that D.H. Lawrence did not die in what could be called a happy or fulfilled state. He was severely ill in the last months of his life and a letter to his wife's sister serves to throw a great deal of light on the cause of Lawrence's unhappiness and our concerns here.

My illnesses I know come from chagrin--that goes deep in and comes out afterwards in hemorrhage or what not. When

⁴⁰ Pandelis Prevelakis, *Nikos Kazantzakis and His Odyssey: A Study of the Poet and the Poem*, trans. Philip Sherrard (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1961), pp. 8-9.

one learns ... not to be chagrined, then one can become like your Burgomeister ... fat and *lustig*, to the age of eighty.⁴¹

In all the accounts of Lawrence's life and death there is a definite feeling of desperation, chagrin, unfinishedness, failure. Most biographers argue that Lawrence *fought death* to the very last moment which was in line with his philosophy of worshipping the *living*, creative spirit. But when one looks at the letters written by Lawrence in the final months before his death one sees not a heroic fight with death but rather a resigned giving up which is less than noble in a man who constantly hoped to get from life every possible drop of experience. Speaking of these last days, Aldous Huxley writes:

And finally, as his illness begins to get the better of him, we see him obscured by a dark cloud of sadness--the terrible sadness, out of which, in one mood, he wrote his savage, *Nettles*; in another, *The Man Who Died*, that lovely and profoundly moving story of the miracle for which somewhere in his mind he still hoped--still hoped, against the certain knowledge that it could never happen.⁴²

It is this spirit of giving up and the clinging to an unreasonable hope which distinguishes Lawrence from Nikos Kazantzakis, about whose death his wife, Helen, wrote:

Confronting death as he had lived, he had just given up his soul. "Like a king who had taken part in the festivity, then risen opened the door and, without turning back, crossed the threshold."⁴³

⁴¹ Eliot Fay, *Lorenzo In Search of the Sun* (London: Vision Press Ltd., 1955), p. 125.

⁴² *Selected Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Richard Aldington with introduction by Aldous Huxley (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1950), p. 30.

⁴³ Helen Kazantzakis, *Nikos Kazantzakis: A Biography Based On His Letters*, trans. Amy Mims (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1968), p. 562.

This feeling of desperation and dissatisfaction is echoed in all of Lawrence's books and it affects the reader each time with a profound sadness. William Mueller's assessment of Lawrence's work is a good explanation of why this is so.

... I think it can be said that Lawrence's novels are largely studies in human failure at life's most intimate level, the relationship between individual man and individual woman.⁴⁴

However, it will be my contention throughout that the difference between Lawrence and Kazantzakis lies in Lawrence's failure on a level which is even more basic than what Mueller suggests. Even though both writers sought, as is illustrated in their fiction, to construct a *new image of the self* by establishing redefined connections with their fellow human beings, the political order and the metaphysical world, the self image which Kazantzakis constructed was positively satisfactory enough for him to end his life in happiness and fulfillment while the image which Lawrence constructed did not ultimately save him from anguish and despair.

My task now is to illustrate why I think this to be so.

⁴⁴William Mueller, *Celebration of Life*, p. 149.

CHAPTER II

MAN AND HIS FELLOWS: ZORBA THE GREEK AND WOMEN IN LOVE

The attempt to compare D.H. Lawrence's novel *Women in Love* with Kazantzakis's *Zorba the Greek* may at first seem to be at best a forced and at worst a senseless one. However, there is one primary reason why this comparison serves us so well in the context of our discussion.

It is widely accepted that *Women in Love* was and still is Lawrence's best work. Lawrence himself considered this to be true and Richard Aldington notes that a possible reason for this is that the novel was written at the height of Lawrence's creative power. Aldington also points out that in many ways the novel contains the quintessence of Lawrence's philosophy and his message. While it cannot be said that *Zorba the Greek* is Kazantzakis's best work (this accolade is reserved for *The Odyssey--A Modern Sequel*, his epic continuation of the Homeric poem) this novel does contain much of what is quintessential Kazantzakis both philosophically and stylistically. Since *The Odyssey* is not a novel in the real sense, it would not be making too unpopular a claim to say that *Zorba* is Kazantzakis's best *novel*, though not his most important literary work. Therefore, the comparison of these two novels is second only to a comparison of the same Lawrence novel with *The Odyssey*, but such a comparison would have to be of such a magnitude and scope that it would go completely beyond the admittedly narrow restrictions of our

discussion here.

The essential similarity which is evident from a reading of both novels is that both stories have as their thematic core a redefinition of man's image of himself which is based on a celebration of the individual's sensual self. Again the injunction must be urged that the use of the term sensual has to be seen in the full context of all the senses and not just the sexual side of them. Zorba is the prototypic example of the individual who is completely defined by his responses to the urges of the sensual body and in being so defined is also closely in contact with the mystical, natural, primitively pulsating environment. Boss, the persona of Kazantzakis in the novel, sees this centrally significant aspect of Zorba very shortly after their first meeting.

Yes, I understood. Zorba was the man I had sought so long in vain. A living heart, a large voracious mouth, a great brute soul, not yet severed from mother earth.

The meaning of the words, art, love, beauty, purity, passion, all this was made clear to me by the simplest of human words uttered by this workman.¹

The attraction of Kazantzakis to the figure of Zorba, then, is based on the notion that Zorba has established, or indeed never lost, the vital connection between himself and the greater soul of the earth or the universe. Speaking again of Zorba, boss metaphorically expresses this essential quality of the man.

All the problems which we find so complicated or insoluble he cuts through as if with a sword, like Alexander the Great cutting the Gordian knot. It is difficult for him to miss his aim, because his two feet are held firmly planted on the ground by the weight of his whole body. African savages worship the serpent because its whole body touches the ground and it must,

¹Nikos Kazantzakis, *Zorba the Greek*, trans. Carl Wildman (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1952), p. 13.

therefore, know all the earth's secrets. It knows them with its belly, with its tail, with its head. It is always in contact or mingled with the Mother. The same is true of Zorba.²

The obviously implied notion here, that man must re-establish the vital connection between himself and the "earth's secrets" so that a new, viable image of himself might be created, is a central concern in Lawrence's *Women in Love* also. Nowhere is this stated with so much force and beauty in the novel as when Birkin, the persona of Lawrence in the story, responds to Hermione's violent attack by wandering naked in the woods.

He was happy in the wet hill-side, that was overgrown and obscure with bushes and flowers. He wanted to touch them all, to saturate himself with the touch of them all.... Nothing else would do, nothing else would satisfy, except this coolness and subtlety of vegetation travelling into one's blood. How fortunate he was, that there was this lovely, subtle, responsive vegetation, waiting for him.... The leaves and the primroses and the trees, they were really lovely and cool and desirable, they really came into the blood and were added to him.³

Not only Birkin, but each of the four protagonists in the novel, is spoken of time and again in terms of his or her connection with the secrets of the earth or the lack of this connection. The description of Gudrun as she draws the water plants before her encounter with Gerald in the "Sketch-Book" chapter is also in this context.

Gudrun had waded out to a gravelly shoal, and was seated like a Buddhist, staring fixedly at the water plants that rose succulent from the mud of the low shores. What she could see was mud, soft, cozy, water mud, and from its festering chill, water plants rose up.... But she could feel their turgid fleshy structure as in a sensuous vision, she *knew* how they rose out of the mud, she *knew* how they thrust out

² *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

³ D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* (New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1960), p. 100.

from themselves, how they stood stiff and succulent against the air.⁴

Numerous other incidents and descriptions, such as Gerald swimming naked as the two women watch from afar, Gudrun and Ursula swimming, also naked, in retreat from the Criches' water party, Gerald's death in the navel-like depression of the snow-covered mountain side, all demonstrate the central importance in the novel of this vital connection between man and the natural universe.

This is the very connection which Zorba has maintained, a quality which boss finds so admirable about him. For Zorba things are not simply things; they, all things have a vitality about them. Zorba states, very emphatically at one point, "Everything seems to have a soul--woods, stones, the wine we drink and the earth we tread on. Everything, boss, absolutely everything."⁵ And for boss, Zorba's soul seems to be astonishingly in accord with the soul of everything else.

I looked at Zorba in the light of the moon and admired the jauntiness and simplicity with which he adapted himself to the world around him, the way his body and soul formed one harmonious whole, and all things--women, bread, water, meat, sleep--blended happily with his flesh and became Zorba. I had never seen such a friendly accord between a man and the universe.⁶

In both novels, then, the first requirement for redefining the *lost image of the self* is to redefine the connection between man and the universe. Furthermore, in both novels, the way of attaining this lost connection with the universe or the natural environment is

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁵ *Zorba the Greek*, p. 77.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

remarkably similar. The road is not one which is travelled by the progress of the rational mind. Indeed, for Birkin/Lawrence reason plays a very minor role in the attainment of this harmonious state. A different quality of awareness is necessary which Birkin prefers to call "blood consciousness," rather than a mind consciousness. One particular conversation between Ursula and Birkin serves to make this distinction clear.

"But do you really want sensuality?" she asked puzzled.
 "Yes," he said, "that and nothing else, at this point. It is a fulfillment--the great dark knowledge you can't have in your head--the dark involuntary being. It is death to one's self--but it is the coming into being of another."
 "But how? How can you have knowledge not in your head?" she asked, quite unable to interpret his phrases. "In the blood," he answered; "when the mind and the known world is drowned in darkness--everything must go--there must be the deluge."⁷

In Kazantzakis's novel boss gradually arrives at the same realization concerning the rational and intellectual aspect of his own being as compared to Zorba's. Speaking of this intellectuality, boss denies its importance but, like Birkin, he also admits that such a denial is necessarily destructive of the overall, *traditional* self-image.

All these things which had formerly so fascinated me appeared this morning to be no more than cerebral acrobatics and refined charlatanism.... The last man--who has freed himself from all belief, from all illusions and has nothing more to expect or to fear--sees the clay of which he is made reduced to spirit, and this spirit has no soil left for its roots, from which to draw its sap.... Everything having turned into words, every set of words into musical jugglery, the last man goes even further: he sits in his utter solitude and decomposes the music into mute, mathematical equations....

⁷ *Women in Love*, p. 36.

Writing *Buddha* was, in fact, ceasing to be a literary exercise. It was a life-and-death struggle against a tremendous force of destruction lurking within me, a duel with a great NO which was consuming my heart, and on the result of this duel depended the salvation of my soul.⁸

Both personae, then, Birkin/Lawrence and Boss/Kazantzakis arrive at similar philosophical conclusions concerning the road to the redefined image of the self. First, it is one which is constructed of a "knowledge" concerning the connection with the universe, but a knowledge which is not a *mind* knowledge but rather a mystical blood consciousness or emotional connection. Second, the attainment of such a condition necessitates the destruction of the old image of the self which would have been far more reliant on the traditional, mind-centred knowledge. Birkin concludes, "You've got to learn not to be before you can come into being."⁹

It is impossible to stress too strongly the central place that this concept holds in both novels and how the ramifications of the concept pervade the subthemes and motifs of each novel as a whole. The inadequacy which Boss accuses himself of having vis-à-vis this concept is the same inadequacy or lack of something which Birkin accuses Hermione of having. Boss expresses it, "I alone was impotent and rational, my blood did not boil, nor did I love or hate with passion."¹⁰ And using almost the same words, Birkin rails against Hermione.

What is it but the worst and last form of intellectualism; this love of yours for passion and the animal instincts ... you want them hard enough, but through your head, in your consciousness ... your passion is a lie.... It isn't passion at

⁸ *Zorba the Greek*, p. 134.

⁹ *Women in Love*, p. 37.

¹⁰ *Zorba the Greek*, p. 162.

all, it is your will.... You haven't got any real body, any dark sensual body of life. You have no sensuality.¹¹

A look at Hermione's thoughts about herself reveals the realization of the truth of this statement on her own part.

She always felt vulnerable, vulnerable, there was always a secret chink in her armour. She did not know herself what it was. It was a lack of a robust self, she had no natural sufficiency, there was a terrible void, a lack, a deficiency of being within her.¹²

In addition, the possession of this quality or the lack of it is what marks the difference, the opposition between the characters in the novels. In both stories the conflict of opposites (of all kinds) is the dominant tension throughout. This is revealed in the Lawrence novel by the obvious attempt to portray Birkin and Gerald especially as polar opposites. The description of their physical make-up previous to the gladiatorial contest is a graphic example.

They were very dissimilar. Birkin was tall and narrow, his bones were very thin and fine. Gerald was much heavier and more plastic. His bones were strong and round, his limbs were rounded, all his contours were beautifully and fully moulded. He seemed to stand with a proper, rich weight on the face of the earth, whilst Birkin seemed to have the centre of gravitation in his own middle. And Gerald had a rich, frictional kind of strength, rather mechanical, but sudden and invincible, whereas Birkin was abstract as to be almost intangible. He impinged invisibly upon the other man, scarcely seeming to touch him, like a garment, and then suddenly piercing in a tense fine grip that seemed to penetrate into the very quick of Gerald's being.¹³

Several points in this description bear particular notice. Gerald is described as "mechanical" while Birkin is "abstract." This is a notion

¹¹ *Women in Love*, p. 35.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

which is explored very closely in the chapter, "The Industrial Magnate," where Gerald's view of the social scheme of things is seen to be vastly more pragmatic and success-oriented than Birkin's. Also, the feeling given by the above description is that Gerald is a very hard, solid and unyielding being while Birkin is much more fluid, flowing and incisive. But more significant than this is the strangely physical attempt, implied by the description of Birkin in the last sentence, to attain a oneness with the other individual and to slice through the hard shell which the "invincible" Gerald wears.

As the two men wrestle the striking contrast between them becomes increasingly clear. While Gerald has the greater brute strength and force and wrestles with a kind of predetermined, mind-centred accent on technique, Birkin seems to have the greater edge in the struggle because of the accent on a knowledge of the other man which is *not* mental.

He seemed to penetrate into Gerald's more solid, more diffuse bulk, to interfuse his body through the body of the other, as if to bring it subtly into subjection, always seizing with some rapid necromantic foreknowledge every motion of the other flesh: It was as if Birkin's whole *physical intelligence* interpenetrated into Gerald's body, as if his fine, sublimated energy entered into the flesh of the fuller man, like some potency.¹⁴

In short, this, and the entire tone of the further descriptions of the two men indicates a basic opposition and contrast in their natures. Gerald is the advocate of the mind-centred kind of knowledge and Birkin is the advocate of what has just been described as "physical intelligence" or blood consciousness.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* (Italics are mine).

This distinction is drawn considerably more sharply by the Kazantzakis novel since Zorba and boss are considerably more fixed in their opposition than are Birkin and Gerald. Zorba is *continually* associated with a kind of intelligence which is not mind-oriented. His is an intelligence which centres itself in the heart, in the blood, in the sensual part of his nature as opposed to being centred in the mind.

The universe for Zorba, as for the first men on earth, was a weighty, intense vision; the stars glided over him, the sea broke against his temples. He lived the earth, water, the animals, and God, *without the distorting intervention of reason.*¹⁵

Indeed, when the man is called upon to use the rationally intellectual part of him his whole nature rebels and the task becomes almost unbearably difficult. The concentration on figures needed to calculate the slope for the intended cable railway results in headaches, frustration and actual physical illness for Zorba. Even the rational, deductive, logical process of writing is a laborious process for this impetuous talker so that "when he writes, (he) breaks his pens in his impetuosity."¹⁶

Boss, on the other hand, is the example of the opposite characteristic. His intelligence is centred in the mind, in the analysis of metaphysical problems, in the philosophical weighing and measuring of right and wrong. Furthermore, the entire novel could be seen as boss's attempt to extricate himself from total dependence on this kind of intelligence since he realizes that the creation of the new image of the self requires an adoption of at least some of the qualities of Zorba.

¹⁵ *Zorba the Greek*, p. 136. (Italics are mine).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

Admittedly, too, because of this Birkin cannot be compared with either Zorba or boss *consistently* even though the identification of Birkin with Lawrence and boss with Kazantzakis invites one to do so. While there is a tension and opposition between Birkin and Gerald in the Lawrence novel, Birkin, in his greater complexity as a fictional character embodies *in himself* those characteristics, roles and functions which are separately attributable to Zorba *and* boss in the Kazantzakis novel. Consequently, one is forced to compare Birkin and boss at times simply because of their roles as the personae of the individual authors, and Birkin with Zorba at other times because of the attributes and qualities they possess as purely novelistic characters.

The novel begins with boss's admission and criticism of the aspects of his character which had prompted his friend, Stravridaki, to brand him a "bookworm." Boss complains, "How could I, who loved life so intensely, have let myself be entangled for so long in that balderdash of books and paper blackened with ink!"¹⁷ This difference between boss and Zorba is the platform for the many discussions which occur between them in the course of the novel. The mind centred intellectuality of boss is also the focus for Zorba's most severe criticism of him. It should also be noted how similar Zorba's criticism of boss is to Birkin's criticism of Hermione previously quoted.

"I understand things, Zorba, don't forget!"
 "Yes, you understand with your brain. You say: 'This is right, and that's wrong....' But where does that lead us? While you are talking I watch your arms and chest. Well, what are they doing? They're silent. They don't say a word."

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 8.

As though they hadn't a drop of blood between them. Well, what do you think you understand with? With your head? Bah!"¹⁸

Boss and Zorba, then, would appear to have the same symbolic relationship to each other as do Birkin and Gerald. Both exemplify opposing forces which continually struggle to control the motivations and outlook of the individual--the forces of blood consciousness versus the forces of mental knowledge.

But a word of caution is needed here. As we have said previously, neither author is denigrating the attainment of knowledge of an intellectual variety nor is either author claiming that intellectual inquiry into the metaphysical mysteries of the universe is a second-rate endeavour. Consequently, Birkin severely criticizes Hermione for making this claim with her insistence that teaching the component parts of a flower to the school children is dangerous. To say this would be the same as saying that blood knowledge and mind knowledge cannot exist simultaneously within the same individual. What Birkin is obviously seeking is the situation where both modes of "knowing" are equally strong and equally balanced. What Hermione is arguing for is the situation where blood knowledge would exist in the individual as a replacement for or from a total lack of mental knowledge.

This is also the force of Zorba's argument against boss. Boss sees his old self-image, previous to the meeting with Zorba, as being totally out of balance in this regard. But for boss the imbalance was in the opposite direction. Boss's life had been leaning toward total immersion in the attainment of Mind knowledge, and Zorba sees the

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 223.

imbalance too, but expresses it in his own characteristic terms.

"If you take a magnifying glass and look at your drinking water--an engineer told me this, one day--you'll see, he said, the water's full of little worms you couldn't see with your naked eye. You'll see the worms and you won't drink. You won't drink and you'll curl up with thirst. Smash your glass, boss, and the little worms'll vanish and you can drink and be refreshed."¹⁹

Neither Birkin nor Zorba is saying it is bad to know, or to have attained the knowledge through inquiry, that the little worms are there. However, both would insist that it is bad, it reveals an imbalance, to let this knowledge spoil your spontaneous enjoyment of a cool, refreshing drink of water. Hermione, on the other hand, would insist that the very knowledge of the existence of the worms does, in itself, spoil the spontaneity. Birkin does not agree, and neither would Zorba.

Not only do both authors personify their paired and opposing characters in a similar fashion but also their characters' attitudes and reactions to similar things and situations are remarkably in accord.

A dominant thematic consideration in both novels is the relationship between men and women and the attitudes of a man towards women. Neither Birkin nor Zorba is content with the simple definition of marriage between a man and a woman. Such a simple definition is based on an outmoded, traditional view of the self and the creation of the new image of the self demands a new definition of relationship also. Both men need and demand something further than the traditional relationship. For Birkin this "something" is possible to be found within a marriage and for Zorba the "something" is only possible when the fidelity to one woman, which the traditional marriage definition implies, is removed.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

But for both there is something awesome, mystical and incomprehensible about the essence of the man-woman relationship. For both there is a condition of perfection in the heterosexual relationship which is constantly elusive but which must constantly be striven for. Birkin expresses his inability to define that higher plane in a conversation with Ursula.

"... we want to delude ourselves that love is the root. It isn't. It is only the branches. The root is beyond love, a naked kind of isolation...."

"And you mean you can't love?" she asked in trepidation.

"Yes, if you like. I have loved. But there is a beyond, where there is not love...."

"But how do you know--if you have never really loved?" she asked.

"It is true what I say; there is a beyond, in you, in me which is further than love, beyond the scope, as stars are beyond the scope of vision...."²⁰

It is this mystical and indefinable plane of love beyond the ordinary which Birkin insists on pursuing to the very end and it is in this pursuit that Birkin/Lawrence departs from the traditional view of women, relationships and marriage. Marriage, as Birkin sees it, is not an end point which man attains and then rests with, contented. Marriage only serves as the beginning, as the starting point in an individual's attempt to build a relationship which will eventually lead to this "beyond." Birkin implies this, and much more, in an early conversation with Gerald.

"You might marry," Birkin replied...

"That is your panacea," said Gerald. "But you haven't even tried it on yourself yet, and you are sick enough."

"I am," said Birkin. "Still, I shall come right."

"Through marriage?"

"Yes," Birkin answered obstinately.

"Salvator femininus," said Gerald satirically.

²⁰ *Women in Love*, p. 137.

"Why not?" said Birkin.

"No reason at all," said Gerald, "if it really works.

But whom will you marry?"

"A woman," said Birkin.²¹

The cause for Gerald's negative reaction here is a misunderstanding of what Birkin is saying. Birkin agrees with Gerald that he will "come right" *through marriage* but not simply *by marrying*. It will not be the end but rather the beginning of the road to the beyond.

Much later in the novel this conversation between Birkin and Gerald continues and Birkin makes his ideas much clearer. The discussion is still about the virtues of marriage but now it is particularized to whether Gerald should marry Gudrun.

"One does have the feeling that marriage is a *pis aller*," he (Gerald) admitted.

"Then don't do it," said Birkin. "I tell you," he went on, "the same as I've said before, marriage in the old sense seems to me repulsive. *Egoisme a deux* is nothing to it. It's a sort of tacit hunting in couples: the world all in couples, each couple in its own little house, watching its own little interests, and stewing in its own little privacy--it's the most repulsive thing on earth."

"I quite agree," said Gerald. "There's something inferior about it. But as I say, what's the alternative?"

"We've got to find one. I do believe in a permanent union between a man and a woman. Chopping about is merely an exhausting process. But a permanent relation between a man and a woman isn't the last word--it certainly isn't."

"Quite," said Gerald.²²

For Birkin and Gerald this conversation eventually leads to the discussion of the additional relationship between a man and a man. But for our purposes here it is sufficient to note the dissatisfaction both feel with the traditional view of marriage and the insistence on the necessity of constantly striving for a redefinition of the self within

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 344-345.

the confines of the marriage condition.

Although Zorba's outlook is different from Birkin's (Zorba looks outside the marriage bond for the ultimate relationship and concentrates on variety rather than monogamy), like Birkin, Zorba sees marriage as also the starting point. According to Zorba, every man must go through this stage, this plane, this level of relationship called marriage and Zorba has done so many times. But it is after, or above marriage that the truly mysterious and irrational aspects of heterosexuality are dealt with. When we meet Zorba in this novel he has reached this next level of response to the man-woman relationship so that now the coupling of man and woman is one more example of man's totality of response to another equally strong component of the universe which has a soul. His reference to women, or a woman, as the "female species" makes this clear. Zorba's response to old Madame Hortense or to Lola in the city can only be seen as the universal, eternal, male response to the universal, eternal female. For this man there is a distinctly male aspect to the universe which is in constant attraction to the distinctly female aspect. They are opposites and their attraction is natural so that to go against or suppress that attraction is against natural law, according to Zorba. After telling boss the story of once being afraid to go to share the bed of a Turkish Pasha's daughter, Zorba concludes:

"If Hell exists," he said, "I shall go to Hell, and that'll be the reason. Not because I've robbed, killed or committed adultery, no! All that's nothing. But I shall go to Hell because one night in Salonica a woman waited for me on her bed and I did not go to her."²³

²³ *Zorba the Greek*, p. 103.

This is obviously not promiscuity on Zorba's part. It is rather the realization of the necessity of all men to "obey the natural rhythm" whether it be in satisfying one's thirst, one's hunger, one's curiosity, or one's sexuality. As boss later comments, it is only years after his meeting with Zorba that he finally came to realize that "it is a mortal sin to violate the great laws of nature."²⁴

This obedience to the law of nature plays an incredibly large role in the relationships that are portrayed in *Women in Love* also. But nowhere in the novel is it illustrated so well or so fully as in the "Mino" chapter where Ursula and Birkin are watching the male cat in its attempts to subdue the stray female. Ursula sees the male as the ultimate bully but Birkin disagrees and sees the male cat as symbolic of the natural law being enacted between male and female.

"No," said Birkin, "he is justified. He is not a bully. He is only insisting to the poor stray that she shall acknowledge him as a sort of fate, her own fate: because you can see she is fluffy and promiscuous as the wind. I am with him entirely. He wants superfine stability ... with the Mino, it is the desire to bring this female cat into a pure stable equilibrium, a transcendant and abiding rapport with the single male. Whereas without him, as you see, she is a mere stray, a fluffy sporadic bit of chaos."²⁵

This consideration of the activities of the cat ultimately leads Birkin and Ursula to discuss their own relationship.

"It is disgusting, people marrying for a home."

"Still," said Ursula, "a man has very little need for a woman now, has he?"

"In outer things, maybe--except to share his bed and bear his children. But essentially, there is just the same need as there ever was. Only nobody takes the trouble to be essential."
"How essential?" she said.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 121.

²⁵*Women in Love*, pp. 141-142.

"I do think," he said, "that the world is only held together by the mystic conjunction, the ultimate unison between people-- a bond. And the immediate bond is between men and women."²⁶

Comparing the ideas contained in these quotations with those found in Zorba's philosophy we find some striking similarities and some meaningful differences. What Birkin is saying above is that only when there is a recognition of the inevitable importance of the natural law will the "superfine stability" be achieved between man and woman. Wholeness of the individual can be achieved only through the obedience to this law and both Birkin and Zorba see the necessity of obeying that natural law which dictates that man and woman belong together. But there is an important difference here, too. Birkin insists that such a stability is most desirable when it is achieved between one man and one woman in a permanent relationship. Zorba, on the other hand, admits no such restriction. For Zorba it is femininity, and not just one particular woman, which is the magnet that constantly attracts his masculinity. Zorba speaks of all women, young and old, attractive and unattractive, when he says:

"Woman is a fresh spring. You lean over her, you see your reflection and you drink; you drink until your bones crack. Then there's another who comes, and he's thirsty, too; he bends over her, he sees his reflection and he drinks. Then a third ..., a fresh spring, that's what she is, and she's a woman, too...."²⁷

But where Zorba closely approaches Birkin's idea of the "mystic conjunction" is in his conception of the kind of man who partakes of the spring. After Bouboulina dies Zorba tells boss why men like himself are special and can have this bond with the "female species."

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 142.

²⁷*Zorba the Greek*, p. 83.

"When she, Bouboulina, was alive, no kind of Canavaro had ever given her so much pleasure as I did--old rag-and-bone Zorba.... Because all the Canavaros in the world, while they were kissing her, kept thinking about their fleets, or the king, or Crete, or their stripes and decorations, or their wives. But I used to forget everything else, and she knew that, the old trollop.²⁸

Earlier, Zorba had touched upon the reason why the others who had lain with her were inferior.

"It's all because of doing things by halves ... saying things by halves, being good by halves,--that the world is in the mess it's in today. Do things properly by God! One good knock for each nail and you'll win through.²⁹

Of course, it is unavoidable to notice that in the tone of how they are expressed the two attitudes towards marriage are very different. Zorba is admittedly striving for a much more "naturally perfect" relationship while it is clear that Birkin seeks a perfection which is more spiritual--or so it would seem. This apparent difference, however, must be seen in the context of Zorba's relationship with the natural universe as a whole. It has already been mentioned that Zorba has seen a very mystical and spiritual connection between Zorba and the natural universe. Zorba's relationship with woman, then, even though it is couched in terms which are often comic, sometimes snide but never crude, has a serious spirituality about it which is similar to the spiritual nature of Zorba's connection with everything else in the natural universe.

Once these similarities have been noted it is not surprising that both Lawrence and Kazantzakis see the pathway to the achievement

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 273.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 230.

of this perfect relationship blocked by the existence of the same barrier. Furthermore, the cause for the existence of that barrier is the existence of vestigial remains of the old self-image.

Birkin defines it as *the will*--the will which constantly seeks power over the other individual in the relationship, the will which craves dominance to the detriment of the individuality and freedom of the dominated. (Throughout the Lawrence novel this is the constant stumbling block for the four protagonists and especially for Gerald and the two women. Ursula does come to some realization of the existence of the block late in the novel but approximately midway into the story it can be seen that her hesitancy in marrying Birkin is the result of this very aspect of her character--this will to power.

She was not at all sure that it was this mutual union in separateness that she wanted. She wanted unspeakable intimacies. She wanted to have him, utterly, finally to have him as her own ... in intimacy. To drink him down.... She made great professions, to herself, of her willingness to warm his foot-soles between her breasts, after the fashion of the nauseous Meredith poem. But only on condition that he, her lover, loved her absolutely, with complete self-abandon.³⁰

And while Ursula, at this point, wants Birkin's complete self-abandonment and knows she can't get it because of Birkin's self-sufficiency and self-completeness, Gerald does not have enough self-sufficiency and self-completeness not to be totally assimilated by Gudrun. Birkin can stand by himself but in addition wants the perfect union with Ursula. Gerald wants a union with Gudrun because,

³⁰ *Women in Love*, p. 257.

at this point at least, he is afraid to stand by himself.

... it was her (Gudrun's) night, to be closed round upon herself, self complete, without desire. He realized it, he admitted it, it only needed one last effort on his part, to win for himself the same completeness. He knew that it only needed one convulsion of his will for him to be able to turn upon himself also, to close upon himself as a stone fixes upon itself, and is impervious, self completed, a thing isolated. He could see that, to exist at all, he must be perfectly free of Gudrun, leave her if she wanted to be left, demand nothing of her, have no claim upon her.

But then, to have no claim upon her, he must stand by himself, in sheer nothingness.³¹

From this the problem can easily be discerned. While marriage, according to Lawrence, has to be seen as the beginning, it has to be also a union of two perfectly whole, complete and self-sufficient entities who will refuse to let themselves be completely submerged by the dominance of the other. Even in the context of relationships the primary concern remains the constant creation of the new self-image. The search for the perfect relationship cannot replace the quest for the lost image since this would be an "inauthentic" response to the problem. In this sense, we can recall the words of Paul Tillich. One must attain the "courage to be" before one can hope to attain the "courage to be as a part."

This danger of the loss of individuality and freedom, of being completely submerged by the other is also the stumbling block in the marriage condition for Zorba, given his eternal, earth-mother view of

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 436.

women. For Zorba the marriage condition is narrow and limiting simply because of his view of what women's traditionalist attitude toward marriage is. Madame Hortense presents a perfect example of this. While boss pretends to read the supposed words of endearment to her from Zorba's letter, all these words only leave her asking the question, "Is there anything else?" When boss finally does pretend to read the words she wants to hear her reaction is tellingly significant.

"... He wants to make you, he says, his own little wife, Madame Hortense Zorba, so that you need never be separated again."

This time the tears really began to flow. This was the supreme joy, the ardently desired haven; this was what she had hitherto regretted not having in her life! Tranquility and lying in an honest bed, nothing more!³²

Immediately a tremendous change comes over Madame Hortense.

She arranged her list of orders, already making an errand boy of her husband. She stood up. She had suddenly taken on the look of a dignified married woman.³³

Two things, then, seem to be at work here which prevent the total fulfillment of the individuals within the marriage situation and these two things are very similar to the problems which Birkin/Lawrence is attempting to overcome. First, Madame Hortense sees the proposed marriage to Zorba as the end point, as the fulfillment of all her dreams. Secondly, once the prospect of marriage looms large for her she immediately assumes an attitude which, if the marriage were completed, would eventually tend to rob Zorba of those particular aspects of *his self* which go to make up what is essentially Zorba. Again the problem

³² *Zorba the Greek*, pp. 158-159.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

is the mixing or revising of priorities. Madame Hortense places the *relationship* first and Zorba second. Such a condition is basically detrimental to the separate selves within the relationship. This is exactly the problematic attitude which Birkin and Ursula continue their struggle to overcome in the novel, with success, and the same attitude which Gerald and Gudrun never do overcome and with tragic results.

Another very significant point bears mentioning by which the two novels can be compared. The previous chapter concluded by noting that in the distinctly modern situation the "view of life is integrally tied to the stance towards death" and this statement is given validity by the considerations of death in both novels even though both stories are seemingly so totally concerned with the votive adoration for and profound affirmation of *life* lived to the fullest.

Birkin's contemplation of death comes, obviously enough, after the rather gruesome scene of the drowning of Diana Crich.

"Death is all right--nothing better."

"Yet you don't want to die," she (Ursula) challenged him. He was silent for a time. Then he said, in a voice that was frightening to her in its change: "I should like to be through with it--I should like to be through with the death process."

"And aren't you?" asked Ursula nervously.

They walked on for some way in silence, under the trees. Then he said slowly, as if afraid, "There is life which belongs to death, and there is life which isn't death. One is tired of the life that belongs to death--our kind of life."³⁴

Zorba's discussion of death is seemingly more straightforward but is symbolically just as enigmatic.

³⁴ *Women in Love*, p. 178.

"Look, one day I had gone to a little village. An old grandfather of ninety was busy planting an almond tree. 'What, grandad!' I exclaimed. 'Planting an almond tree?' And he, bent as he was, turned round and said: 'My son, I carry on as if I should never die.' I replied: 'And I carry on as if I was going to die any minute.' Which of us was right, boss?" I kept silent. Two equally steep and bold paths may lead to the same peak. To act as if death did not exist, or to act thinking every minute of death, is perhaps the same thing.³⁵

Birkin's remarks here are seemingly very negative and resigned but in his tiredness from the long struggle to retrieve the bodies of the lovers this attitude is rather understandable when taken in context. Birkin sees, just as Zorba sees, that life, in reality, "belongs" to death in many ways. Most importantly, life is a constant series of deaths and renewals or rebirths. But at this point, in the mental weakness caused by physical fatigue Birkin admits a momentary reluctance to continue with the life which is so integrally tied to this "process." However, it is essential to note that this scene is immediately followed by a very sensual and passionate "coming together" of himself and Ursula which causes Birkin to restate his vital positiveness.

Then, satisfied and shattered, fulfilled and destroyed, he went home away from her ... lapsed into the old fire of burning passion ... what did anything matter save this ultimate and triumphant experience of physical passion, that had blazed up anew *like a new spell of life*. "I was becoming quite dead-alive, nothing but a wordbag," he said in triumph, scorning his other self.³⁶

The similarity here is in the fact that both Birkin and Zorba see the progress of one's life as centrally connected to the attitude one has

³⁵ *Zorba the Greek*, p. 35.

³⁶ *Women in Love*, p. 180. (Italics are mine).

toward the "process" called death. Both characters indicate a dissatisfaction with the life which is lived either in constant fear of death or in the stagnant and resigned inactivity of waiting for the "process" to be over--"dead-alive." Either of these conditions is little more than living death itself. One is reminded of Julian Hartt's comments quoted in the previous chapter. When death is affirmed, when life is lived as if death did not exist or as if death were the next moment, then there is seen the necessity to crowd one's life with the utmost totality of living. When such is the case it makes little difference whether Zorba's or the grandfather's attitude is right because one has, in Birkin's terms, reaffirmed the "process of death." Birkin falters momentarily but then he reaccepts the process of death as necessary for the rebirth to the new life which is his goal.

In addition, it is important to note that in the symbolic context of both novels, the event of one's death, the death of the living body, has to be seen as another example of the symbolic death and rebirth motif which has already been introduced. It is the death of the old image of the self and the rebirth of the new image which has been the dominant concern throughout. Consequently, when such a constant changing, growing, evolving process (such as Birkin reaffirms after his momentary faltering) is the mainstay of life itself, the event of one's death takes on the new context of being one more example of a death which will result in a rebirth to something different, higher, nobler and more transcendent. So, when such an attitude is present one is indeed "through with the process of death"

because one is living a life which does not "belong to death," in the negative sense. Rather, death has been incorporated and accepted into life in a positive fashion.

For both Birkin and Zorba, then, the event of death is far more philosophically acceptable even though it is also realistically, but only momentarily, dreadful.

An examination of the respective characters' reactions to the actual deaths which do occur in the novels will serve to further strengthen this claim.

Zorba's reaction to the death of Madame Hortense, although it is initially tinged by the all too human tendency towards emotional outbursts, is quickly modified to fit into the context of the philosophical framework already mentioned. The death of Bouboulina does not carry with it the expected period of contemplation, inaction, or stagnant mourning for Zorba, nor does it serve to remind him of opportunities lost with her, the brevity of man's existence, or the proximity of his own death. To boss's charge that Zorba quickly forgot Madame Hortense after her death, Zorba replies:

"A fresh road, and fresh plans!" he cried. "I've stopped thinking all the time of what happened yesterday. And stopped asking myself what's going to happen tomorrow. What's happening today, this minute, that's what I care about. I say: 'What are you doing at this moment, Zorba?' 'I'm sleeping' ... 'Well, sleep well' ... 'I'm working.' 'Well, work well' ... 'I'm kissing a woman' ... 'Well, kiss her well, Zorba! And forget all the rest while you're doing it...'"³⁷

Zorba very quickly put the death of Madame Hortense into the context of an on-going process rather than seeing it as the end-point of a

³⁷ *Zorba the Greek*, p. 273.

half-finished product.

Similarly, once Birkin finds himself contemplating what might have been, after the death of Gerald, he concludes that such contemplation is senseless.

He turned away. Either the heart would break or cease to care. Best cease to care. Whatever the mystery which has brought forth man and the universe, it is a non-human mystery, it has its own great ends, man is not the criterion. Best leave it all to the vast creative, non-human mystery....

... God could do without the ichthyosauri and the mastodon. These monsters failed creatively to develop, so God, the creative mystery, dispensed with them.... The eternal creative mystery could dispose of man, and replace him with a finer created being....

... If humanity ran into a cul-de-sac, and expended itself, the timeless creative mystery would bring forth some other being, finer, more wonderful, some new, more lovely race to carry on the embodiment of creation. The game was never up. The mystery of creation was fathomless, infallible, inexhaustible, for ever.³⁸

For both Zorba and Birkin, then, the question is one of immediacy and creativity with always a concern for the present, and somewhat for the future, but never for the past. The death of Madame Hortense is forgotten because the memory of it for Zorba would come in the way of total commitment to the present and the creative enjoyment of that present. Likewise, for Birkin, the death of Gerald has to be seen as a necessary destruction of the old and the stagnant to make way for the new, the unknown and the higher form. Both attitudes take on intolerably cruel connotations unless they are understood within this context.

But if there is any *justifiable* basis for sorrow and regret on Birkin's part over the death of Gerald it is in the fact that while

³⁸ *Women in Love*, pp. 469-470.

he was alive, Gerald failed to attain with Birkin the highest possible level of love that was available for them. The attainment of this, as Birkin tells Ursula, would have made all the difference to Birkin's reaction in the aftermath of Gerald's death.

Birkin remembered how once Gerald had clutched his hand with a warm, momentaneous grip of final love. For one second-- then let go again, let go forever. If he had kept true to that clasp, death would not have mattered. Those who die, and dying still can love, still believe, do not die. They live still in the beloved. Gerald might still have been living in the spirit with Birkin, even after death. He might have lived with his friend a further life.³⁹

Appropriately enough, for the two friends boss and Zorba, this is precisely what happens. Zorba did keep true to his clasp of friendship and love with boss and so at the end of the novel Zorba's death prompts little sorrow or regret for boss because boss now has the completed manuscript of Zorba's story finished in his lap when he receives the news of Zorba's death. Because of the intensity of what Zorba experienced in life, he will live "in the spirit" and he will live "with his friend, a further life" in death.

In the context of the discussion of these particular deaths an additional point needs clarification. It would be incorrect to assume that any part of Birkin's sadness over Gerald's death is caused by a feeling that Birkin had not succeeded in making Gerald more like himself. Likewise it would be incorrect to assume that after Zorba's death boss will make every attempt to become "another Zorba." Such conclusions would imply that Lawrence and Kazantzakis saw the controlling characteristics of Birkin and Zorba as being those which everyone should possess. Such is not the case.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 471.

The Birkin-Gerald opposition and the boss-Zorba duality must be seen in both novels as symbolic personifications of opposing forces which actually exist within the *same individual*. Consequently, when Lawrence speaks of a state of equilibrium between Birkin and Gerald he is also speaking symbolically of the equilibrium between the forces that each represents. In the same way Zorba and boss must be seen as similarly symbolic--as representative of opposing forces *within one* person. The tragedy of Gerald's death is that the tension between the two forces has been eliminated. Zorba's death has no such sting because we leave boss with the notion that he has incorporated those Zorba-like qualities into his own being so that a new image of boss's self has been created which holds the intellectual and the instinctive forces in a precarious balance.

At this point it should be clear that the philosophical approach of both authors to similar situations and conditions is very much the same. It remains only to maintain and illustrate that the symbolic rendering of this approach in both novels is also similar. This has, indeed, been hinted at in the early pages of this chapter with the references to both authors' use of the natural environment and their characters' affinity to it as symbolic of the need for man's further contact with the essential rhythms of the universe as a whole. The similarity of symbolism is also seen in both authors' tendency to pair opposing individuals on the basis of that aspect of their make-up (either cerebral or visceral) which dominates them.

Two other very striking examples can be briefly stated as evidence of the similar fashion in which both authors and their characters

symbolically see the world and their relationship to that world.

While it is perhaps axiomatic to assert that Lawrence supremely valued the necessity of conflict and suffering as the only road to creative fulfillment, it does bear noting that Kazantzakis, through Zorba, indicates this same attitude when Zorba says:

"Every time I suffer, boss, ... it just cracks my heart in two. But it's all scarred and riddled with wounds already, and it sticks itself together again in a trice and the wound can't be seen. I'm covered with healed wounds, that's why I can stand so much."⁴⁰

But what is most notable is that the constantly desirable and constantly elusive goal of this creative suffering is the same for both authors. Boss is unable to express this goal to Zorba but he thinks of it as:

The proud quixotic reaction of mankind to conquer Necessity, and make external laws conform to the internal laws of the soul, to deny all that is and create a new world according to the laws of one's own heart,--to create a new world which is purer, better and more moral than the one that exists.⁴¹

Birkin's following words in answer to Gerald could just as easily have been spoken by boss:

"Yes, but where's your special world?" said Gerald.
"Make it. Instead of chopping yourself down to fit the world, chop the world down to fit yourself. As a matter of fact, two exceptional people make another world. You and I, we make another separate world. You don't want a world same as your brothers-in-law. It's just the special quality you value. Do you want to be normal or ordinary? It's a lie. You want to be free and extraordinary, in an extraordinary world of liberty."⁴²

⁴⁰ *Zorba the Greek*, p. 272.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

⁴² *Women in Love*, p. 197.

Without fear of forcing the point it can be said that Zorba himself speaks in very much the same terms: "It can't go on like this, boss; either the world will have to get smaller or I shall have to get bigger. Otherwise I'm done for!"⁴³

And finally there is in both novels the symbolic significance of the dance. Admittedly, in *Zorba the Greek*, Zorba's dancing is much more thematically central than is the dancing in the Lawrence novel, but in both the dance is used for virtually the same symbolic purpose. One function of the dance in both novels is to illustrate the inadequacy of words as the ultimate means of communication and another is to accentuate the primitive, the emotional and the sensual as the preferable alternative to the verbal or cerebral. The first function is beautifully illustrated in the "Breadalby" chapter of *Women in Love* where Ursula, Gudrun and the Contessa dance the "little ballet, in the style of the Russian Ballet of Pavlova and Nijinsky."⁴⁴ No meaningful conversations have occurred yet in the novel among the four protagonists but during this dance both Gudrun and Ursula communicate more to Gerald and Birkin, respectively, than volumes of written or spoken dialogue could have done.

Gerald was excited by the desperate cleaving of Gudrun to Naomi. The essence of that female, subterranean recklessness and mockery penetrated his blood. He could not forget Gudrun's lifted, offered, cleaving, reckless, yet withal mocking weight. And Birkin, watching like a hermit crab from its hole, had seen the brilliant frustration and helplessness of Ursula. She was rich, full of dangerous

⁴³ *Zorba the Greek*, p. 188.

⁴⁴ *Women in Love*, p. 84.

power. She was like a strange, unconscious bud of powerful womanhood. He was unconsciously drawn to her. She was his future.⁴⁵

This function of the dance is quite in accord with the desires of all four people for the "unspeakable intimacy," "the unknowable mystery" of the ultimate union which Birkin especially strives for with Ursula.

Similarly, when Zorba is unable to communicate what he wants to say or when emotional or sensual forces within him come to the point where they are bursting for release he either "plays it out" of himself with the santuri or it is relieved by the mystic catharsis of the dance. Conversely, when boss's arguments become, for Zorba, just words, he longs for boss to have that similar mode of communication--the dance. Zorba verbalizes this longing at the conclusion of one such discussion with boss.

"... everything, men, animals, trees, stars, we are all one, we are all one substance involved in the same terrible struggle. What struggle? ... Turning matter into spirit." Zorba scratched his head.
"I've got a thick skull, boss, I don't grasp these things easily.... Ah if only you could dance all that you've just said, then I'd understand."⁴⁶

The second symbolic function of the dance in both novels can be seen by comparing the descriptions of the dancing and the dancers in each instance. Gudrun dances again by herself in the "Water Party" chapter when she and Ursula escape from the Crich's party to a secluded spot of their own. The description, though lengthy, deserves complete quotation.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

⁴⁶*Zorba the Greek*, p. 278.

Gudrun, looking as if some invisible chain weighed on her hands and feet, began slowly to dance in the eurythmic manner, pulsing and fluttering rhythmically with her feet, making slower, regular gestures with her hands and arms, now spreading her arms wide, now raising them above her head, now flinging them softly apart, and lifting her face, her feet all the time beating and running to the measure of the song, as if it were some strange incantation, her white, rapt form drifting here and there in a strange impulsive rhapsody, seeming to be lifted on a breeze of incantation, shuddering with strange little runs ... quicker, fiercer went Gudrun in the dance, stamping as if she were trying to throw off some bond, flinging her hands suddenly and stamping again, then rushing with face uplifted and throat full and beautiful, and eyes half closed, sightless.⁴⁷

The first instance of Zorba dancing in the Kazantzakis novel occurs when the foundations of the boss/Zorba relationship are being laid.

He threw himself into the dance, clapping his hands, leaping and pirouetting in the air, falling on his knees, leaping again with his legs tucked up--it was as if he were made of rubber. He suddenly made tremendous bounds into the air, as if he wished to conquer the laws of nature and fly away. One felt that in this old body of his there was a soul struggling to carry away this flesh and cast itself like a meteor into the darkness. It shook the body which fell back to earth, since it could not stay very long in the air; it shook it again pitilessly, this time a little higher, but the poor body fell again, breathless.⁴⁸

In both descriptions several similar qualities of both the dance and the dancer are evident. There is the sensual, emotional, unconscious component in both dancers which drives them onward in an almost frenzied attempt at creative expression of the verbally inexpressible. Likewise, in the case of both Gudrun and Zorba, the dance

⁴⁷ *Women in Love*, pp. 157-158.

⁴⁸ *Zorba the Greek*, p. 70.

is a particularly symbolic attempt to break free of the earth-bound, human "bonds" and ascend to some unknown level of unconscious connection with the dark, the primitive and the universal. The attempt in both instances is to transcend the capabilities of the all-too-human body and achieve this connection on a totally spiritual level. In a real sense the dance could be seen in both works as a controlling image which is being used to represent the creative, active, emotional, and continual attempt to redefine *the self* by reestablishing the contact with the vital, living universe that surrounds one.

CHAPTER III

CHRIST AS PROTOTYPE: *THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST* AND *THE MAN WHO DIED*

Both D.H. Lawrence and Nikos Kazantzakis were fascinated by the figure of the historical Jesus to the point where they both felt a need to examine this figure in their prose. Kazantzakis's interest found expression in *The Last Temptation of Christ*** and Lawrence found a similar release for his interest with *The Man Who Died*. This chapter will deal with a comparison of these two individual treatments of the Christ story.

Several points which have been mentioned in the previous two chapters make it particularly understandable that both men could share this focus of interest in Jesus. It was noted in Chapter I that the central problem facing the post-Nietzschean man is the redefinition of an image of the self once the traditional image had been destroyed. Chapter II further accented this by noting that such a redefinition involved the notion of constant struggle to maintain a balance between the cerebral and the corporeal, the spirit and the flesh, the rational and the instinctive aspects of the individual. Furthermore, it was noted that such an on-going struggle has as a controlling theme the effort to conquer death by affirming it as the "necessitous law of

***The Greek Passion* also uses the Christ story as its central thematic core but does not treat the *historical* Christ figure as such.

life." Both Lawrence and Kazantzakis, then, saw the Jesus figure as being prototypic in all these respects. Both saw the struggle which was inherent in the life and death of Jesus as being identical to the struggle in which the post-Nietzschean man was engaged. And furthermore they saw him as being one who, like themselves, positively affirmed the necessity of that struggle and, finally, as one who reached a supreme point in transcending that struggle.

However, it must be admitted that the area of fascination with this Jesus figure was not the same for the two men even though the thinking which caused the fascination had arisen out of the efforts to solve the same problem. So, before embarking on an examination of the two texts it would be helpful first to examine the attitudes which the two men professed concerning this historical figure and more specifically how these two attitudes differed. It is this difference which obviously resulted in the uniqueness of their respective treatments of the same subject. It is also this difference which can be used to support the larger and more significant difference between the two authors-- Lawrence's failure and Kazantzakis's success in constructing an authentic and satisfactory self-image.

It should be clear by now that the concept which was uppermost in the minds of both authors was man's achievement of complete and total personal and individual wholeness. In addition, it should be evident that the concern of both authors in their novels and writings were the struggle, suffering, pain, defeat and success which were essential to that achievement. Therefore, in viewing the figure of Jesus, both men saw him as a man who was totally involved with that

struggle and had attained some victory in it. But it is in the attitude toward the point at which that victory is achieved, the point of success in attaining personal wholeness, that the two authors differ and retain their uniqueness as writers.

Nikos Kazantzakis, in his "Prologue" to *The Last Temptation of Christ*, indicates why the figure of Jesus held so much attraction for him.

The dual substance of Christ--the yearning, so human, so superhuman, of man to attain to God or, more exactly, to return to God and identify himself with him--has always been a deep inscrutable mystery to me. This nostalgia for God, at once so mysterious and so real, has opened in me large wounds and also large flowing springs.¹

He continues:

Every man partakes of the divine nature in both his spirit and his flesh. That is why the mystery of Christ is not simply a mystery for a particular creed: it is universal.... Struggle between the flesh and the spirit, rebellion and resistance, reconciliation and submission, and finally--the supreme purpose of the struggle--union with God: this was the ascent taken by Christ, the ascent which he invites us to take as well, following in his bloody tracks.²

For Kazantzakis, then, the victory that culminates the struggle for Jesus Christ comes *on the cross* but only after Jesus has successfully resisted "the last temptation." Kazantzakis saw this last temptation as being "the deceptive vision of a calm and happy life" which Christ sees while hanging in agony on the cross. In the vision or dream Christ sees himself as he might have been if he had taken "the smooth, easy road of men." In the dream he is an ageing grandfather smiling with

¹Nikos Kazantzakis, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, trans. P.A. Bien (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p. 1.

²*Ibid.*, p. 1-2.

satisfaction at the playing grandchildren at his feet and he smiles with relief at having escaped the tortures and torments of the crucified Christ. "The vision vanishes and, with some effort, the crucified Christ realizes the "summit of sacrifice" that he has reached and he cries what Kazantzakis sees as being the triumphant cry, "It is accomplished!" "In other words," Christ concludes, "I have accomplished my duty, I am being crucified, I did not fall into temptation...."³

D.H. Lawrence, on the other hand, disagrees with the finality and victory that Kazantzakis sees in Christ's cry. Lawrence sees this as the culmination of only half the struggle of Christ. Lawrence prefers to concentrate on Christ Risen. He sees the image of Christ to be predominantly threefold--Christ-child, Christ-crucified and Christ-Risen. Furthermore, Lawrence sees each facet of this one image as being particularly attractive and applicable to three age groups respectively.

We have the old and the elderly, ... still fatuously maintaining that man is the Christ-child and woman the infallible safeguard from all evil and all danger.... Then we have the men of middle age,.... They accept Christ-crucified as their image, ... and take the great cry: Consummatum est!--It is finished!.. as their last word.⁴

But the young, Lawrence maintains, are not satisfied with this image of Christ. The young insist in the hope, the promise and potential that is inherent in Christ-Risen.

Christ Risen in the flesh! We must accept the image complete, if we accept it at all. We must take the mystery in its fulness and in fact. It is only the image of our own

³Ibid., p. 3.

⁴*Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished, and Other Prose Works* by D.H. Lawrence, eds. Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), pp. 572-573.

experience. Christ rises ... not merely as spirit. He rises with hands and feet ...; and if with hands and feet, then with lips and stomach and genitals of a man.... He rose a man on earth to live on earth. The greatest test was still before Him: His life as a man on earth.... This is the image of our inward state today.⁵

But it must be noted that the concern with sexuality here, for Lawrence and for Kazantzakis, is far more metaphysical than can be explained by simply attributing to Lawrence, for example, a belief that Christ necessarily had to rise solely in order to consummate a sexual relationship with woman. This will be expanded in the discussion of the particular text, *The Man Who Died*, but the metaphysical purpose behind the death and rebirth of Lawrence's Christ must be noted here so that the discussion of Christ's sexual encounters as they are treated in the following chapter might not be misconstrued as our being misled by what could be seen as surface similarities only between Lawrence's treatment and Kazantzakis's.

The metaphysical significance of Christ's rebirth can be discerned from an examination of Lawrence's essay on the subject entitled, "The Risen Lord" from which an excerpt has already been quoted. But in this essay Lawrence continues:

If Jesus rose a full man in the flesh, He rose to continue His fight with the hard-boiled conventionalists like Roman judges and Jewish priests and money makers of every sort. But this time, it would no longer be the fight of self-sacrifice that would end in crucifixion. This time it would be a freed man fighting to shelter the rose of life from being trampled on by the pigs.... For man has been dispossessed of the full earth and the earth's fulness long enough.⁶

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 574.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 575-576.

And placing his own words in the mouth of the risen Lord, Lawrence continues:

The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and I, the Risen Lord, am here to take possession. For now I am fully a man, and free above all from my own self-importance. I want life, and the pure contact with life. What are riches, and glory, and honour, and might, and power, to me who have died and lost my self-importance? I am going to destroy ... that tangled mass of self-importance, and greediness and self-conscious conceit which adds up to Mammon.⁷

The notable aspect of this is the denigration of the concepts of "self-importance" and "self-consciousness" which prevented Christ in his former life from being or becoming a full man in the generic sense. The risen Lord can have "pure contact with life" because the self-importance or old ego of individuality can be abnegated in favour of a search for what it means to be *man* rather than an individual man.

This is further explained in *The Woman Who Rode Away* which can be usefully quoted here since it deals with very much the same metaphysical concerns as *The Man Who Died*. Here the character's acceptance of her ritualistic death is seen in the following terms:

... she seemed at last to feel her own death; her own obliteration. As if she were to be obliterated from the field of life again. Her kind of womanhood, intensely personal and individual was to be obliterated again, and the great primeval symbols were to tower once more over the fallen individual independence of woman. The sharpness and the quivering nervous consciousness of the highly-bred white woman was to be destroyed again, womanhood was to be cast once more into the great stream of impersonal sex and impersonal passion.⁸

This story ends with the heroine's death and in a real sense the story can be seen as similar to *The Man Who Died* except that the latter

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 576-577.

⁸ D.H. Lawrence, "The Woman Who Rode Away," *Complete Works* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1969), p. 265.

begins where the former ends.

Lawrence, then, sees the need for modern man to identify with an image of the Christ who is still struggling, but whose struggle now is focused on the effort to redefine the self-image by affirming a connection with generic maleness which the historical Jesus had traditionally denied.

But it cannot be concluded from this statement of the dissimilarity between the two authors' approaches that Kazantzakis maintained a belief in complete *denial* of the flesh. His fascination with the figure of Zorba conclusively argues against such a conclusion. The picture of Christ that is drawn by Kazantzakis in *The Last Temptation* has to be seen not as the denial of the world or the flesh but rather the conquering of the flesh by the spirit. To illuminate this point we need only return to the same "Prologue" previously quoted in which Kazantzakis sees the soul as being a perpetual battle ground.

My principal anguish and the source of all my joys and sorrows from my youth onward has been the incessant, merciless battle between the spirit and the flesh.⁹

For victory in the battle to be sweet it must be assumed that the flesh and the temptations of the flesh are as strong as the spirit. Therefore, the denial of one in favour of the other denies the very necessity of the battle that must exist between the two. If there is a denial of the flesh, or as is more common, a denial of the spirit, this causes the individual to fall into a condition of complacent security and contentment where the battle no longer rages. In the dream sequence which comprises his "last temptation" Kazantzakis's Christ is seen in precisely

⁹ *The Last Temptation*, p. 1.

this condition of complacent security and contentment. In the context of his dream on the cross, Kazantzakis's Christ has denied the spirit in favour of the complacent abandonment to the flesh and in so doing has denied the necessity of the struggle between the two. This is precisely why the condition of Christ's dream is ultimately unsatisfactory.

It is in the light of these general comments that we can consider the actual texts themselves, Lawrence's *The Man Who Died* and Kazantzakis's *The Last Temptation of Christ*. And our first area of concern with these will be to examine, albeit briefly, the similarity of symbolism and imagery with which Kazantzakis and Lawrence surround their respective versions of the Christ story. It will be clear from these comparisons that the two authors not only were attracted to the Christ figure for virtually the same philosophical reasons (even though significant differences have been noted), but that they also rendered their versions in a very similar creative and literary fashion. To illustrate this it is necessary simply to examine two remarkably similar sets of metaphors that hold eminent positions in both works.

Lawrence's *The Man Who Died* opens with the anecdote of an intensely arrogant and virile gamecock which is owned by a peasant. Seeing the nobility and the promise contained in the "saucy and flamboyant bird," the peasant ties the rooster to a post so that he may not escape. Immediately a change is perceived in the bird.

His voice, above all, had lost the full gold of its clangour.
He was tied by the leg and he knew it. Body, soul and spirit
were tied by that string.

Underneath, however, the life in him was grimly unbroken. It was the cord that should break.¹⁰

In context it is clear that this tied rooster and the life force which is momentarily imprisoned within him are symbolic for Lawrence of the Christ "sleeping" in the tomb, for when the cock does break the cord Lawrence shifts the narrative.

At the same time, at the same hour before dawn, on the same morning, a man awoke from a long sleep in which he was tied up.¹¹

The author's intention is clear and Lawrence does not attempt to make the symbolic significance obscure as is often the case in his writing.

A strikingly similar passage occurs in *The Last Temptation*.

As has been explained this "last temptation" for Kazantzakis's Christ comes in the form of a dream while the crucified Jesus is yet hanging on the cross. In the dream he has just been apparently rescued from the cross and is being guided by a so-called guardian angel. The angel indicates a bull which is standing nearby.

Tied to the trunk of an olive tree was a gleaming full-rumped bull, black with white forehead. His tail was held high and a nuptial crown rested on his horns. Jesus had never seen such power, such brilliance, such hard muscles, nor eyes so dark, so full of virility....

The angel stood near him and smiled cunningly.

"Don't be afraid, Jesus of Nazareth. It's a bull, a young virgin bull. Look... how he shakes himself in order to break the rope and escape.... Look down there in the meadow. What do you see?"

"Heifers, young heifers. They're grazing."

"They're not grazing; they're waiting for the young bull to break the rope...."

"Let us go...."

"First I'll release the bull.... Don't you feel sorry for him?"

¹⁰D.H. Lawrence, *The Man Who Died* (New York: Vintage Books, 1953), p. 164.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 165.

He approached and untied the rope. For a moment the chaste beast did not move. But suddenly he understood: he was free. With a bound he rushed toward the meadow.¹²

The similarity between the simple mechanics of the two metaphors is obvious enough. But what is more notable is that both metaphors are being used for precisely the same purpose, to symbolize the release of the awakening of the long dormant sensual life-force in the bodies of the respective figures of Christ. This comparison is made abundantly clear when, like Lawrence, Kazantzakis pointedly shifts his narrative after the preceding passage.

At precisely that instant Jesus heard the tinkling of bracelets and necklaces from within a lemon orchard. He turned. Mary Magdalene, crowned with lemon blossoms, was standing before him, bashful and trembling.¹³

Significantly, it is at this point that Mary and Jesus consummate a relationship which has been waiting for that consummation for some twenty years. At the moment of preparation for the sexual act, Jesus gazes down from the orchard and, "below in the meadow, the bull was mounting the hieifers."

In addition to their symbolic significance within the context of the novel, these incidents also have a central importance within the larger context of our discussion. These incidents are forceful reminders of the awakening of the modern man-alone to the condition of existential freedom and aloneness. In their symbolism the incidents indicate an awareness of an, as yet, "undiscovered country" for the Christ figures. Similarly, the modern man is awakened to both the

¹² *The Last Temptation*, p. 448.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 448.

positive, freedom giving aspects of life and also to its terror and responsibility.

Another important symbol which recurs in both works is the progress of the seasons and the choice of the particular season in which significant events do occur. Lawrence's Christ arises from his sleep of death in the still, cool hours of a *spring* morning and once the sun has fully risen Christ rests in the peasant's yard and sees for the first time since his death, "the first green leaves spurting like flames from the ends of the enclosed fig-tree, out of the bareness to the sky of the *spring* above."¹⁴ Similarly, Kazantzakis's Christ "awakes" in his dream to find the earth in a similar state of seasonal ripeness.

This was not a cross; it was a huge tree reaching from earth to heaven. *Spring* had come: blossoms covered the entire tree; and at the very very end of each branch a bird sat over the brink and sang....¹⁵

This, of course, is appropriate enough as a means of emphasizing the awakening life-force, sensuality, and heightened sexual awareness in both figures. It is a conventional novelistic technique and needs no further comment. However, as the individual narratives progress there is a particularly significant difference between them as to the seasons in which further events transpire. It is cold winter when Lawrence's Christ meets the woman of Isis, as can be seen by "Part Two" which opens with the description of the wind blowing "cold and strong from inland" and competing with the warming efforts of the "royal

¹⁴ *The Man Who Died*, p. 170.

¹⁵ *The Last Temptation*, p. 444. (*Italics mine*).

sunshine of the January afternoon." The winter passes and the spring reaches its fulness and it is after this fulness of spring has passed that Lawrence's Christ leaves the woman of Isis.

Plum-blossom blew from the trees, the time of the narcissus was passed, anemones lit up the ground and were gone, the perfume of bean-field was in the air. All changed, the blossom of the universe changed its petals and swung round to look the other way. The spring was fulfilled, a contact was established, the man and the woman were fulfilled of one another, and departure was in the air.¹⁶

This symbolism of the seasons is in accordance with the attitude Lawrence has towards the progression of Christ's resurrected life. The resurrection itself beginning in the spring is obviously symbolic of the newly awakened life. Furthermore, the introduction of the woman of Isis in a cold, wintry setting furthers the notion of her as the bearer of dormant life which the re-born man, whom she patiently awaits, will cause to awaken in her. Too, it is appropriate that Jesus should leave her after the fulness of spring has come about and she is with child since now she has fulfilled her purpose and Jesus has fulfilled his purpose with her.

What is particularly notable about the Kazantzakis story, however, is that there is no such *positive* seasonal association made with Mary's first birth. Even though her conception was in the spring their son was born when "Autumn overtook them, winter arrived."¹⁷ This fact further emphasizes the *negative* implications of what Kazantzakis's Christ is experiencing in the dream. Kazantzakis sees the dream as an ultimate temptation which Christ must overcome.

¹⁶ *The Man Who Died*, p. 209.

¹⁷ *The Last Temptation*, p. 463.

The experiences in the dream are surrounded with negative or unfavourable connotations to illustrate this attitude further. On the other hand Christ is forced to *awaken* from his dream when Passover is near and the spring is approaching in his dream. The symbolic significance here is, again, as clear as it was in the Lawrence story. The fulness, the fulfillment, the true spring is only beginning for Christ when he awakens. His death *must come about* for him to be reborn into the spring of the resurrected life.

Many other points of similarity arise out of an examination of both stories. Lawrence's story and Kazantzakis's both develop the notion of woman as a concept rather than a particular woman as an individual. Lawrence's female character, the woman of Isis, is not portrayed as a distinct and individual character. Moreover, nowhere in the novel is there to be found a description of her physical appearance. She is simply a human manifestation of the Goddess whose temple she serves and to whom she has devoted her life. The description of the characteristics of the Goddess is also a description of the woman herself. However, as will be further explained later, what does make this woman special in the context of her relationship with the risen Christ is this very identification with the Goddess which causes her to wait in her virginity for the god, Osiris, the reborn man.

Christ's attitude towards her also reinforces this idea that she is the *female concept* in the novel rather than being one particular woman. Jesus expresses this after he has repeatedly shared the sexual bliss with her. "I will ask her nothing," he said, "not even her name,

for a name would set her apart."¹⁸ As a result, for the reader as for Christ she remains simply, the woman of Isis, throughout the story.

In passing it should be noted that there is an added thematic significance given to the story by the fact that the Isis/Osiris myth is used by Lawrence at all. The combination of the a-sensual and non-sexual Christian myth with the very sexual and sensual myth of Isis further reinforces the necessity, that Lawrence insists on, for modern man to become like the risen Lord, more in touch with the "rose of life" which the Isis/Osiris myth epitomizes. The grafting of one myth (the Christian) onto the other (Isis/Osiris) must be seen as thematically intentional if only in this one respect. As Vivian de Sola Pinto notes, "... (Christ's) union with the priestess of Isis prefigures a religion which will unite the agapé of Christianity with the erōs or purified sensuality of the best kind of paganism."¹⁹

Christ's refusal to name her is also further support for the metaphysical as opposed to the physical concern of the risen Lord. Lawrence's Christ, as man, is consummating a relationship with woman, in the attempt to affirm both maleness and femaleness rather than as an attempt (as was seen in *Women In Love*) to further a specific relationship between *one* man and *one* woman.

This same effect is to be found in the Kazantzakis story. From the very beginning of the dream sequence the word, "Woman" meaning the entire female species, is used by Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Mary and

¹⁸ *The Man Who Died*, p. 208.

¹⁹ Vivian de Sola Pinto, "D.H. Lawrence," in *The Politics of Twentieth Century Novelists*, ed. George A. Panichas (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1968), pp. 47-48.

Martha, when referring to those urges, drives and needs which are characterized as being especially female. Such statements as, "Woman is a fountain of immortal water," "Woman, precious fellow worker of God, forgive me," make this idea clear. But Martha's cry very shortly after the meeting with Jesus in the dream is the most notable statement of the attitude. "We women," she said, "are two arms incurably open."²⁰ And finally it is expressed by the angel who guides Jesus and who repeatedly asks Jesus to be aware of the fact that "There is only one woman in the world; one, with innumerable faces."²¹

Another point of similarity in both accounts is the pervasive feeling of oneness and identity with the natural environment which is experienced by the Christs once they have lost their virginity. Sitting on his threshold after days and months have gone by in his dream, Kazantzakis's Christ marvels at the "profound correspondence between body and soul, between earth and man" that the new life in his dream brings. The angel explains, in somewhat more philosophical terms, the reason for this happiness.

"You are made of soil and water, and everything on the earth is made of soil and water. That's why you all match: men women, meat, vegetables, fruit.... Aren't you of the same soil, the same water? *Everything wants to join together.*"²²

This same feeling of oneness, of joining together, expressed in similar terms, is found in the musings of Lawrence's Christ. Sitting under the pre-dawn starry sky, Lawrence's Christ looks around and thinks:

²⁰*The Last Temptation*, p. 461.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 466.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 455. (Italics are mine).

How it leans around me, and I am part of it. The great rose of Space. I am like a grain of its perfume, and the woman is a grain of its beauty. Now the world is one flower of many petalled darknesses, and I am in its perfume as in a touch.... This is the great atonement, the being in touch. The grey sea and the rain, the wet narcissus and the woman I wait for, the invisible Isis and the unseen sun are all in touch, and at one.²³

Both figures of Christ, then, are seen as attempting a restructuring of an image of the self which is at least partially based on a renewed or redefined connection with the distinctly physical universe.

But what strikes the reader of Lawrence's story from the opening pages is the constant repetition of the idea of *disillusionment* which the man, Jesus, experiences once he has indeed awakened from his deathly sleep. As one reads on it becomes clear that this sense of disillusionment arises from some feeling on Christ's part of having missed or not experienced a facet of human existence which had been available to him during his thirty-three years on earth. But further than this is the notion that his lofty idea of attempting to raise all men to a spiritual awareness of God, of spirit, of becoming something more than they were, which characterized his mission on earth, was wrong and misguided. It was wrong, he sees, because he had been asking men to forsake life instead of teaching them to proclaim the triumph of life in the face of death. The sad result of his former teaching Jesus now sees graphically represented in the "tremulous," "dirty," "stupid," peasant who was "without fire," who would never make anything of his life because he did not defiantly assert life. Using the terms of our opening chapter it can be seen that Christ views his teaching as having been misguided

²³ *The Man Who Died*, p. 208.

because it taught men to deny life in favour of the life after death.* Again we return to the recurring problem noted by Julian Hartt. Jesus sees the fault in his teaching as his having proclaimed an inauthentic attitude towards death. He had preached a love of death as the entrance to the much awaited afterlife with the result that the peasant patiently awaits his reward with simply a "tremulous desire to exist and to be," rather than vitally asserting life while waiting for the inevitable death. In contrast to this peasant Christ sees the fighting cock who in its very cry proclaimed "the necessity to live, and even to cry out the triumph of life."²⁴

It is in this context that we must see Christ's seeming acceptance of the physical limits and limitations of the earth-bound man.

"... I wanted to be greater than the limits of my hands and feet, so I brought betrayal on myself.... Now I can live without striving to sway others any more. For my reach ends in my finger-tips and my stride is no longer than the ends of my toes."²⁵

This may at first appear to be a complacent acceptance of human limitations but when it is seen against the attitude Christ has toward the peasant it is clear that what Christ is accepting is simply *humanness*. What is further implied, however, is that whatever man can accomplish he must accomplish *as man*--because he is human. This, too, returns to the ideas of our Chapter I. The risen Christ is now asserting that only man, in the fullest potential of his *humanness*, can accomplish anything.

*It is paradoxical, however, that Lawrence's Jesus is aware of this only when he, himself, is experiencing a hypothetical (albeit symbolic) life after death. This will be further discussed in due course.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 171.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 174.

This is the basis for his criticism of the peasant because this man is not even attempting to fulfill any human potential of any sort.

Another point that is clear from the statement of Christ just quoted is that Christ sees himself as having been mistaken in the very fundamental motivations of his mission on earth. He assumed during his teaching that he could be responsible for the salvation of other men. What he is now aware of is the essential concept which was explained in our opening chapter--that each man is, and must be, the *source of his own salvation*.

Kazantzakis's Christ, in the dream sequence, also reveals a disillusionment and also preaches the acceptance of humanness. Speaking to the raging Judas, Kazantzakis's Christ berates him for his idealism:

"Judas," he said, his voice trembling, "you were always intractable and wild; *you never accepted human limits*. You forget that the soul of man is an arrow: it darts as high as it can toward heaven but always falls back down to earth. Life on earth means shedding one's wings."²⁶

But the difference between this statement and that of Lawrence's Christ is crucial. In the contented, complacent context of his dream Kazantzakis's Christ is rationalizing and denying the attainment of the fullest *human* potential--the culmination of which must occur on the cross. In a real sense Kazantzakis's Christ in the dream can be compared to Lawrence's peasant in that both are using human limits as an excuse for not striving after the ultimate attainment of human potential.

It is pertinent to note that earlier in the dream sequence, while the complacency and comfort of the situation had not fully

²⁶*The Last Temptation*, p. 493. (Italics are mine).

overtaken him, Kazantzakis's Christ makes a statement the spirit of which is much more in accord with the attitude of Lawrence's Christ. Speaking to the Negro-boy, Christ reveals a flash of the defiance which will unerringly lead to the cross.

"If your purpose was to smother me in honey, like a bee, your pains have gone to waste. I've eaten all the honey I wanted ... but I did not dip my wings."²⁷

However, for both Lawrence's risen Christ and Kazantzakis's Christ in his tempting dream there are no longer any ideal visions of man attempting to ascend to something which is beyond the limits of the physical human body. There is rather a new attempt to affirm the value of the distinctly human, the earthy, the practical and the procreative, although it must be admitted that one Christ figure uses the attempt as an excuse while Lawrence's Christ sees the attempt as a long-awaited fulfillment of the truly human.

This procreative aspect gives rise to another point of comparison which is evident, again on the more metaphorical level. Both Lawrence's Christ and Kazantzakis's Christ see themselves not only as having abstained from a source of joy in avoiding sexual gratification but also as having somehow deprived the human body of a source of its human fulfillment and the opportunity to pursue its innate, inherently needed function on earth. In the Kazantzakis narrative this concept of the male role is combined with the notion of the female as having a "need for excessive giving," as being the prison for unborn children who need the male to set them free. This, indeed, is the reason (in Kazantzakis's version) that Magdalene pursues her life of sin; at an

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 483.

early age Jesus had refused her the release that was contained in the maleness of his body. The virgin of Isis is waiting for a similar release in the Lawrence story but with one crucial difference. Her release can only come from the coupling with the male Osiris--the reborn man.

And through the years she found him (Osiris) bit by bit, heart and head and limbs and body. And yet she had not found the last reality, the final clue to him, that alone could bring him really back to her. For she was Isis of the subtle lotus, the womb which waits submerged and in bud, waits for the touch of that other inward sun that streams its rays from the loins of the male Osiris.²⁸

For Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus in the Kazantzakis story, Christ in the dream is the answer to *their* long wait. Martha defines it when she says, "We women are two arms incurably open."²⁹ And when Jesus does in fact use the phallic key to unlock the wombs of the two women, it is only then that they have found true happiness since they had both been virgin to this time.

And Martha and Mary held out their hands and touched the man they loved and the children which issued from their wombs and resembled him, touched them to see if they and all this joy and sweetness were real. So much happiness seemed much too much to them and they trembled.³⁰

Lawrence, then, and also Kazantzakis in the dream sequence of *The Last Temptation*, both view the procreative function of man and woman as spiritual and valuable in its own right. Furthermore, he who denies it is in a sense denying a God-sanctioned and a God-directed function of man. Lawrence's Christ is seen as being suddenly aware of

²⁸ *The Man Who Died*, p. 188.

²⁹ *The Last Temptation*, p. 461.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 467.

this function shortly after his resurrection.

Risen from the dead, he had realized at last that the body, too, had its little life, and beyond that, the greater life. He was virgin, in recoil from the little greedy life of the body. But now he knew that virginity is a form of greed; and that the body rises again to give and to take, to take and to give, ungreedily.³¹

Kazantzakis expresses, again in the dream sequence, the same pejorative attitude towards abstinence when he puts the following sentiment in the mouth of Magdalene:

If you're in the seventh heaven and a passer-by requests a glass of water of you, descend from the seventh heaven in order to give it to him. If you are a holy saint and a woman requests a kiss of you, descend from your sanctity in order to give it to her. Otherwise you cannot be saved.³²

But to all appearances it would seem that there is an irreconcilable difference in attitude being expressed by both authors towards the value of each Christ's journey into the distinctly human or sensual self. It is unavoidable to note that Lawrence appears to have a much more favourable attitude toward his Christ engaging in the joys of the flesh, while Kazantzakis sees that same enjoyment as being a severe, devil-sent temptation. The entire tone of Lawrence's *The Man Who Died* is one which indicates that Christ now has a perfect right and indeed an obligation to explore this earthy area of his self while it is clear from the very title of Kazantzakis's novel that overcoming this temptation is absolutely necessary for the fulfillment of the dying, dreaming Christ.

³¹ *The Man Who Died*, pp. 177-178.

³² *The Last Temptation*, p. 449.

There is a severe guilt present in the heart of the Kazantzakian Christ even while he is enjoying the comforts of Mary and Martha and the children they have given him. No such guilt afflicts Lawrence's Christ.

To understand this seeming divergence of opinion it is only necessary to remember one crucial point. During the accounts of the awakening sexuality of both Christ figures one paramount difference is immediately recognizable. Lawrence's Christ has died and has risen. Kazantzakis's Christ, in his dream, has escaped the death of crucifixion. It is pertinent to note, therefore, that Lawrence's Christ did not embark on the journey of sexual discovery as a substitute for the journey to the cross. However, Kazantzakis's Christ in his dream is doing just this. Therefore, Kazantzakis's Christ hears the echoing cries of "Coward! Deserter! Traitor!" with a particularly keen anguish before he awakes on the cross once more.

To recall what has been mentioned in earlier chapters of our discussion would be salutary at this point.

In the progress of existence from birth to death and *beyond*, the presence of strife, struggle, pain, death and rebirth is seen by both authors as being the "necessitous law of life." But the path which Jesus is taking in the dream portion of Kazantzakis's novel is appropriately branded as a betrayal by Kazantzakis because it is the path of ease, peace, contentment and happiness. In his dream, Jesus has escaped what in reality *must* occur--his own death by crucifixion. For Kazantzakis, this is what makes it the last and the ultimate temptation.

To make this forcefully clear we need but briefly examine another aspect of the two novels--the attitude toward this suffering

which is contained therein and the place it holds in both accounts.

It is clear that when Lawrence's Christ emerges from the tomb what he confronts immediately, and gradually has to come to terms with, is a concept which has been a part of this discussion from the beginning--aloneness. Throughout *The Man Who Died* the distinction is made between that element of the living Christ which demanded that he give himself totally to others and that element of the risen Christ which permits him to be totally alone--*by himself*, but more importantly, *for himself*. This condition of *aloneness* is particularly notable too because it is so analogous to the condition of the existentially free individual whom we spoke of in Chapter I. The risen Christ and the existential man-alone are remarkably similar in this context because both have been freed from any bonds or preconceived notions of a traditional nature and both are presented with the situation of redefining their relationship with what Lawrence's Christ calls the "wider phenomenal world." It is also worth noting that the distinction between the *living* Christ and the *risen* Christ is spoken of in the novel in terms of two different selves.

... in the tomb he had slipped the noose which we call care. For in the tomb he had left his striving self, which cares and asserts itself. Now his uncaring self healed and became whole within his skin, and he smiled to himself with *pure aloneness*, which is one sort of immortality.

Then he said to himself: "I will wander the earth, and say nothing. For nothing is so marvellous as to be alone in the phenomenal world, which is raging, and yet apart. And I have not seen it; I was too much blinded by my own confusion within it. Now I will wander among the stirring of the phenomenal world, for it is the stirring of all things among themselves which leaves me purely alone."³³

³³ *The Man Who Died*, p. 180. (Italics are mine).

So, then, Lawrence sees the risen Christ as setting out on a new journey into a "wider phenomenal world" where he can redefine his connection with that world without having to take on the terrible, crushing responsibility for the lives and salvation of other men.

"How good it is to have fulfilled my mission and to be beyond it. Now I can be alone and leave all things to themselves, and the fig-tree may be barren if it will and the rich may be rich. My way is my own alone."³⁴

This same sense of relief arises in Kazantzakis's Jesus once he has settled into the domestic life with Mary and Martha. Jesus sees himself as no longer feeling compelled to "save the world." In Jesus's dream, Paul in his exuberance claims, "I shall save the world." Jesus replies:

"I've already come back from where you're headed. I remember that when I was young like you, I too set out to save the world. Isn't that what being young means--to want to save the world?"³⁵

However, the crucial difference is that in his dream Kazantzakis's Christ has *not* "fulfilled his mission" so that his sense of relief comes as a result of having *escaped* the death as opposed to having gone "beyond" it as is the case with Lawrence's Christ. This, also, is what determines that the dream of Kazantzakis's Christ must be only that--a dream.

Even though Lawrence's Christ no longer has the necessity to assume the responsibility for other men, he still has to cope with a different kind of greed which will continually attempt to prevent him from reaching the ultimate goal. To overcome this simple greed of

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

³⁵ *The Last Temptation*, p. 490.

licitious pleasure and achieve the "greater life of the body" is that goal toward which Lawrence's Christ embarks.

Now he knew that he had risen for the woman, or women, who knew the greater life of the body, not greedy to give, but greedy to take and with whom he could mingle his body. But having died, he was patient, knowing there was time, an eternity of time. And he was driven by no greedy desire, either to give himself to others, or to grasp anything to himself. For he had died.³⁶

It is only now that the "greater life of the body" could be sought because only now has the greater life of the soul been found in death. The ultimate goal of his spiritual journey had been attained with his death so that now the goal of the physical journey could be sought. So, Lawrence's Jesus sets out on another journey, similar in many respects to the journey which had culminated in the death of crucifixion, but different in that now the goal would be different.

And perhaps one evening, I shall meet a woman who can lure my risen body, yet leave me my aloneness.³⁷

Notably, it is this same concept of aloneness, devilishly twisted, with which the black Satan tempts Kazantzakis's Christ. Looking on Christ's son, the angel of the devil laughs:

"Alone you cannot find God. Two persons are needed, a man and a woman. You didn't know that--I taught it to you; and thus, after so many years of seeking God, you finally found him--when you joined Mary."³⁸

But the falsity of this for both Christ and Kazantzakis is indicated in the description of the sexual act which had engendered the child that the devil is, in the previous quotation, personifying as God:

³⁶*The Man Who Died*, p. 178.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 182.

³⁸*The Last Temptation*, p. 465.

Taking a mat and the blanket which was decorated with the cross and the swallows, they (Jesus and Mary) went up to the roof of the house. A merciful cloud covered the sun. *They hid under the embroidered blanket so that God would not see them.*³⁹

The description of the similar encounter between the Goddess of Isis and Lawrence's Christ is couched in terms of no such guilt or concealment. It is described as a wonderful awakening and as an unlocking of mysteries long concealed from the virgin Christ. But furthermore it is described as a beginning.

Then slowly, slowly, in the perfect darkness of the inner man he felt the stir of something coming. A dawn, a new sun. A new sun was coming up in him, in the perfect inner darkness of himself. He waited for it breathless, quivering with a fearful hope.... "Now I am not myself, I am something new."⁴⁰

Christ's final statement here, "I am not myself, I am something new," reinforces the metaphysical rather than the basely physical nature of the sexual encounter--a notion that has been mentioned earlier but bears repetition here. Christ has risen to partake of the greater life of the body but he is doing so as man, not as one particular man. The self-consciousness which characterized his former life is gone so that the final statement above has profound metaphysical significance when taken in this context.

Thus in the indescribable joy of the physical encounter there is the awareness on the part of both Christ and the woman of Isis that such joy could only occur with one who had been reborn (in Nietzsche's words, the tablet breaker) because, "... reborn, he was in the other.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 463. (Italics are mine).

⁴⁰ *The Man Who Died*, p. 206.

life, the greater day of the human consciousness."⁴¹

This concept of rebirth, which up to now has only been an implied one, can be more concretely stated and expanded in this context.

The encounter between Christ and the woman of Isis is not a fleeting momentary revelling in the base pleasures of the flesh by two promiscuous, but deprived individuals. For this Christ, it takes a particular type of woman, "to lure my risen body, yet leave me my aloneness." And the description of the woman makes it clear that she, likewise, has been waiting for such a man.

Once she had asked a philosopher: "Are all women born to be given to men?" To which the old man answered slowly:

"Rare women wait for the re-born man. For the lotus, as you know, will not answer to all the bright heat of the sun. But she curves her dark hidden head in the depths, and stirs not. Till, in the night, *one of these rare, invisible suns that have been killed and shine no more*, rises among the stars in unseen purple, and like the violet, sends its rare purple rays out into the night. To these the lotus stirs as to a caress, ... "AH, I tell you wait for the re-born and wait for the bud to stir."⁴²

As a result, when the virgin of Isis first sees the sleeping Christ she responds not so much to his maleness (that she can get from any man) but rather to that special quality which the re-born man possesses as a result of his death *and resurrection*.

... she looked at the sleeping face. It was worn, hollow and rather ugly. But, a true priestess, she saw the other kind of beauty in it, the sheer stillness of the deeper life.... There was a beauty of much suffering, and the strange calm candour of finer life in the whole delicate ugliness of the face. For the first time, she was touched on the quick at the sight of a man, as if the tip of a fine

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 189-190. (Italics are mine).

flame of living had touched her. It was the first time. Men had roused all kinds of feelings in her, but never had touched her with the flame-tip of life.⁴³

Kazantzakis's Christ, on the other hand, even though he enjoys the peace and serenity of the life with Martha and Mary, cannot enjoy it as one who has been re-born, either symbolically or physically. He cannot enjoy it as one who has partaken of that "greater day of the human consciousness." In his dream there is still the plaguing reminder that he has taken this road instead of the road to the cross and has not travelled to the end of that road to go beyond it. In the terms of Chapter I Christ cannot enjoy the condition with Martha and Mary because he has accepted, in the dream, an inauthentic substitute rather than the truly redefined image of the self--an image which demands his death on the cross.

But there is an additional point of comparison here.

The life which Kazantzakis's Christ is living in his dream is a betrayal not only for these reasons previously stated, it is a betrayal because it goes against the "necessitous law of life," the law which demands the existence of strife, struggle, and growth, the law which also places the participation in the journey over the attainment of the end or goal of that journey.

In comparison to the previous chapters of Kazantzakis's novel Christ in the dream is a stagnant, domesticated, complacently contented figure who, as he says, has "finished wrestling with God." But it takes the figure of Paul, the one-time persecutor of God, to state what is the dominant, non-dreaming reality not only for Kazantzakis's

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

Christ but also for Lawrence's. Paul's words bear full quotation here because they apply so perfectly as a statement of purpose for both figures of Christ.

"No, I won't keep quiet. I don't give a hoot about what's true and what's false, or whether I saw him or didn't see him, or whether he was crucified or wasn't crucified. I create the truth, create it out of obstinacy and longing and faith. I don't struggle to find it--I build it. I build it taller than man and thus I make man grow. If the world is to be saved, it is necessary ... for you to be crucified, and I shall crucify you, like it or not; it is necessary for you to be resurrected, and I shall resurrect you, like it or not.... If you want to know, I shall compel the air to take your shape. Body, crown of thorns, nails, blood.... The whole works is now part of the machinery of salvation--everything is indispensable. And in every corner of the earth, innumerable eyes will look up and see you in the air--crucified.... But on the third day I shall raise you from the dead, because *there is no salvation without a resurrection*. The final, and most horrible, enemy is death. I shall abolish death. How? By resurrecting you as Jesus...."⁴⁴

It is not only Paul who must insist on Christ's death. Christ himself must ultimately insist on it because only through his death can his life-long search for a redefinition of the self have any meaning. We began this portion of our discussion by noting that Kazantzakis saw the struggle of the Christ figure as prototypic of the struggle of the modern existential man to remake an image of the self. For Christ this image can only be completely attained by his death.

But in comparison with this complacent, contented Jesus is Lawrence's Christ who, even after he has been presented with the "healing and the bliss in the crocus-like body of a tender woman"⁴⁵ still fights against the desire to settle down in a stagnant, treadmill

⁴⁴*The Last Temptation*, p. 477. (Italics are mine).

⁴⁵*The Man Who died*, p. 196.

relationship of domestication with the woman of Isis. Furthermore, the woman of Isis, because she is the "woman of the pure search," is aware of this hesitancy in him and indeed possesses elements of the same desire for aloneness herself.

"I must go now soon.... I am a man, and the world is open. But what is between us is good, and is established...."

She said: "O don't go! Stay with me on half the island, and I will build a house for you and me under the pine-trees by the temple, where we can live apart."

Yet she knew that he would go.... And even she wanted the coolness of her own air around her....⁴⁶

Whatever has been "established" between the two would only wither with the complacency of a constant life together. The narrative ends as it must, with Jesus setting out on yet another journey, and the comparison between this and the Kazantzakis ending is striking.

"I have sowed the seed of my life and my resurrection, and put my touch forever upon the choice woman of this day, and I carry her perfume in her flesh like essence of roses. She is dear to me in the middle of my being. But the gold and the flowing serpent is coiling up again, to sleep at the root of my tree."

"So let the boat carry me. Tomorrow is another day."⁴⁷

Another step has been taken in the journey which has an infinite number of steps but no end. But Kazantzakis's Christ was, momentarily at least, tempted with the condition of making no more steps, of never reaching the condition of greater consciousness which would come with inevitable resurrection. It is, then, with incredible joy, relief and pride that Jesus wakes from the dream to find himself still on the cross.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 211.

Suddenly he remembered where he was, who he was and why he felt pain. A wild indomitable joy took possession of him. No, no, he was not a coward, a deserter, a traitor. No, he was nailed to the cross. He had stood his ground honorably to the very end; he had kept his word.... Temptation had captured him for a split second and led him astray. The joys, marriages and children were lies; ... all were illusions sent by the devil.

He uttered a triumphant cry: IT IS ACCOMPLISHED!
And it was as though he had said: Everything has begun.⁴⁸

The same attitude of beginning as opposed to ending concludes Kazantzakis's narrative as it does Lawrence's. The necessity for death is combined with the necessity for resurrection and both Lawrence and Kazantzakis send their Christs off on journeys. The journey of Lawrence's Christ is to explore the new found world of men. The journey for Kazantzakis's Christ is just one step behind: to conquer the world of death, to become the Risen Lord so that the new form of immortality might be initiated. But what is most important is that in the final analysis both Christ figures find and are true to an image of the self which has been constructed from nothing more than the demands of their own intrinsic being.

So far, no judgemental comparisons have been made. But even though such comparisons may be seen as odious there are several notably significant differences in the two approaches to the Christ story which make such comparisons necessary and unavoidable since they provide us with valuable clues for finding an answer to the question which is the central concern of this discussion--why the self-image as constructed by Kazantzakis should "work" while a similar self-image for Lawrence did not work and failed to save him from final anguish.

⁴⁸ *The Last Temptation*, p. 496.

First, the question must be addressed as to why Kazantzakis chose to retell the *entire* Christ story while Lawrence's narrative restricts itself to a hypothetical account of simply the risen Christ. This difference is easily explained with regard to the philosophical concerns of both authors which the stories were meant to illustrate.

As was explained earlier in this chapter Lawrence's concern with the Christ figure was based predominantly on an interest in Christ's exploration of his phallic, sensual and sexual self--his self as *man* rather than as an individual man. Examination of the Bible reveals little or no mention being made of this aspect of Christ's self which would lead one to believe that it had been suppressed and denied (or at least had been deemed of little importance by Biblical writers) during Christ's thirty-three years on earth. Lawrence, however, could have "changed" the traditional account of Christ's life as Kazantzakis did but as has been seen from the previous discussion the symbolic meaning of Christ's rising from both the real and the symbolic death suited Lawrence's philosophical purpose far better. As a prototype of modern man Lawrence's Christ had to die (i.e., the old self-conscious ego had to die) in order for the greater life of the body to be explored. Lawrence, then, suitably began his story after the death of Christ had occurred--a death which the traditional account of the Christ story had already provided Lawrence with. It is the concept of the *risen* Lord, after the death of the old ego, that is philosophically central and applicable here for Lawrence.

However, while it must be admitted that we are dealing here with stories of a different genre (parable versus symbolic novel) and since, as such, the stories have different foci and expectations, this

difference is significant as a possible answer to our central question.

It is clear from an examination of *The Last Temptation* that Kazantzakis saw the culmination of man's life--the turning of flesh into spirit--as being possible within the confines of man's life on earth or, more precisely, as possible by one's death. The triumph of Kazantzakis's Christ comes, then, on the cross and is accomplished by his death. However, while the resurrection of Lawrence's Christ has to be seen as symbolic of Lawrence's desire that all men be resurrected in the new life of the body, it is clear that the story is emblematic of Lawrence's recognition of his (and all men's) failure to achieve this. The fact that the story was written on his death bed is further evidence of this. Aldous Huxley's comment, already quoted, bears repetition here. Huxley describes *The Man Who Died* as the "lovely and profoundly moving story of the miracle for which ... he (Lawrence) still hoped--still hoped, against the certain knowledge that it could never happen."

It is the author's attitude toward death here which is significant. The fact that Lawrence's Christ is portrayed in a post-resurrection situation indicates an attitude towards death which is, in the terms of Chapter I, "inauthentic" since it portrays death as simply a passing to a greater life. There is an acceptance of death here but it is an acceptance based on a "miraculous hope" for the rebirth which is the concern of the Lawrence story. While Lawrence can say at one time that death is "not sad when one has lived," there is a profound feeling of sadness here that Lawrence's Christ can only partake of the "greater life of the body" after having experienced an actual physical death, however symbolic that death is in the context

of the Lawrence philosophy.

In the final analysis, then, the examinations of the respective Christ stories as indicators of Lawrence's failure to construct a satisfactory, despair-saving image of the self, versus Kazantzakis's success in so doing reduces itself to several significant differences. But the most significant is the feeling that Lawrence's Christ story is indicative of the author's constant clinging to a belief in a goal at the end of the search--however impossible the goal might be. On the other hand Kazantzakis's story portrays a Christ who has sacrificed the goal in favour of a belief in the value of the search in itself. The final cry of Kazantzakis's Christ, "It is accomplished" must be seen in this context; not as an indication of having reached a goal but rather as an affirmation of the value the search for it has had.

For Kazantzakis's Christ the search is ended but the "accomplishment" that Christ is speaking of here is not that of reaching the goal but rather of having not given up the search for it. Reaching death and affirming it in a positive fashion is also part of that "accomplishment." This is in contrast to seeing the death as the barrier which has prevented the Christ from achieving a final goal. Death is the end and it is seen as such in a positive and joyous way.

The fact that Lawrence's Christ has actually died and his "greater consciousness" is achievable only in a resurrected life is, obviously, to be taken as a metaphor indicating Lawrence's desire that all men undergo such a death of the old ego-oriented consciousness. As such it is eminently acceptable. But the necessity for Lawrence's Christ to actually die before this can be achieved is, in this author's

opinion, an indication also of Lawrence's sad acceptance of the fact that, in contrast to Kazantzakis, he (and all men) had not achieved the greater life of the body before physical death had occurred. If only in this one respect the story must be seen as a barometer of Lawrence's feelings of anguish and failure to construct a viable, authentic self-image.

CHAPTER IV

MAN AND POLITICS: *FREEDOM OR DEATH AND KANGAROO*

By now it should be clear that Kazantzakis and Lawrence were both seeking for a redefinition of man's image of himself by a concentration on similar concepts. The previous chapters have attempted to show this by accenting the notably similar ways in which both authors saw the need for a revaluation of the personal relationship between man and man (or woman) and the similar fascination both had, philosophically and novelistically with the Christ figure--this fascination stemming from the same view of Christ as the prototype of that individual who successfully achieved a redefinition of the self.

However, a third area of concern remains to be examined and that is the attempt by both authors to redefine the relationship between man and the socio-political order in which he finds himself.

There is obviously no doubt that both authors were supremely concerned with the political affairs of their respective societies. Both *Phoenix* and *Phoenix II - Uncollected Papers* contain abundant examples of Lawrence's attempts to deal with the sociological and political problems posed by the various ideologies which abounded in post-1900 Europe. Some fourteen essays in the former are so focused and the latter contains what could be called Lawrence's definitive treatise on the subjects of nationalism, class struggles, and political movements--"Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine." The impetus for these

writings is understandable when one considers the political and social ferment which surrounded all thinking individuals in the W.W.I period. Lawrence's attitudes towards the growing threat of war and the rapidly expanding Nazi menace caused him particular anguish for a number of reasons not the least of which was his hatred of the German "mechanical bullies." National pride was no doubt an understandable factor but besides this, Lawrence, because of his particularly Nietzschean attitude towards the necessity for there to exist a superior class--an aristocracy--found himself outside the mainstream of both the conventional and the radical thinking of his time. Indeed, he was often accused of being "pro-German" and "anti-democratic," "a fascist" and as having a "dislike of Jews and Celts."

These are baseless charges and arise out of a misunderstanding of the basic Lawrence philosophy which saw as many faults in the mechanized industrial society of his native England as it found in the brutal "bullying" of the Nazi "machine." The attitude represented by Gerald Crich in *Women in Love* and his eventual destruction in the novel illustrates Lawrence's denial of the cold, impersonal, anti-capitalistic industrialism which Gerald represents. Similarly, the anti-militaristic, basically innocent attitude of *The Prussian Officer* goes far in explaining Lawrence's basis for his hatred of the German militarist machine. Both stories argue against the negation of the individual when such negation is solely for the favouring of the cause.

Kazantzakis, too, while he was a far more actively involved political "worker" than was Lawrence, saw it necessary to redefine in some way the relationship between man and the political milieu. From

the moment he began his Paris studies in 1907 Kazantzakis's thought and his writings took on a distinctly political flavour. From then until his death in 1957 Kazantzakis flirted with socialism, bolshevism and communism while the whole time maintaining and reformulating a distinct but ever-changing nationalism.

And, like Lawrence, Kazantzakis continually found himself outside the mainstream of political thought and the focus of criticism for his repeated changing of attitude and ideological adherence. This was so because, again like Lawrence, Kazantzakis's larger and more all-encompassing philosophy prohibited him from adhering, for a continued period of time, to any one ideology which by its very nature could not change to meet the demands of what was, for Kazantzakis, the larger issue--individual fulfillment and spiritual freedom. The result was that, in the minds of his apparently more "committed" contemporaries, Kazantzakis seemed to flit from one doctrine to another with no basic adherence to any. Again, however, the charges of non-commitment arose out of a lack of understanding of one basic tenet of Kazantzakis's philosophy--the belief that all such ideologies are mere subjective realities which attempt to accomplish finite goals within the concrete sphere of practical politics and which have only incidental importance to the larger purpose--man's searching for his *infinite* potential. As Kazantzakis said in a document published in 1910, while it is necessary to "see the vanity of all things" it is still necessary "to clutch at various unbaptized ideas ... and name them truths. And they really are truths--subjective ones."¹

¹Peter Bien, "Nikos Kazantzakis" in George A. Panichas, *The Politics of Twentieth-Century Novelists* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1971), p. 154.

But in the comparison between this and the seemingly similar situation of Lawrence we find that it is here that the essential and crucial difference between the two authors is displayed. And it is this difference which will be the focus of this chapter. It is in the analysis of both authors' attempts to cope with the political realm that it becomes clear why Lawrence could never achieve the personal peace and fulfillment in the end which characterized the final days of Kazantzakis.

As has been said, both authors found no ultimate answers in any one ideology and both were severely castigated for what appeared to be a continuous and momentary flirtation with one doctrine after another. However, Lawrence's dissatisfaction with ideologies was markedly different from Kazantzakis's and this difference is crucial. Lawrence rejected all political movements and social action as being inadequate because they could accomplish nothing until the regeneration of the individual--all individuals--had taken place. Lawrence notes this in his introduction to "The Crown" where, in speaking of his involvement with J.M. Murry in publishing a monthly paper called *The Signature*, he says:

To me the venture meant nothing real: a little escapade. I can't believe in "doing things" like that. In a great issue like the war, there was nothing to be "done" in Murry's sense. There is still nothing to be "done." Probably not for many years will men start to "do" something. And even then, only after they have changed gradually; and deeply.

I knew then, and I know now, it is no use trying to do anything--I speak only for myself--publicly. It is no use trying to modify present forms. The whole great form of our era will have to go. And nothing will really send it down but the new shoots of life springing up and slowly bursting the foundations. And one can do nothing but fight tooth and nail to defend the new shoots of life from being crushed

out, and let them grow. We can't make life. We can but fight for the life that grows in us.²

It can be seen here, then, that political action was, for Lawrence, meaningless until the larger goal had been achieved. Furthermore, it was meaningless because it did little in helping to achieve that goal. However, it is clear from the quotation that Lawrence still believed that the larger goal was achievable within the context of man's finite life on earth--within the confines of the practical, the concrete and the do-able.

But Kazantzakis, from 1907 onward, gradually became more and more convinced that the "concrete world is by definition one of finite restriction and enslavement."³ Conversely, while Lawrence maintained up until the final years of his life that the goal for which he sought was attainable, Kazantzakis, from his earliest political involvement onward, became more and more convinced that it is the *finite goal* which must be sacrificed in favour of the continued struggle toward the infinite potential of man.

Lawrence comes close to a similar realization in his last works (such as *The Man Who Died*) but even here the realization is tarnished by the desperate conclusion that man--the individual--"can but depart from the mass, and try to cleanse himself. Try to hold fast to the living thing, which destroys as it goes, but remains sweet."⁴ There is a spirit here of a hermit-like departure from those unclean masses which precludes

² *Phoenix II - Uncollected Papers*, p. 364.

³ Peter Bien in Panichas, *The Politics of Twentieth-Century Novelists*, p. 157.

⁴ *The Politics of Twentieth Century Novelists*, p. 47.

any *positive* association with them since they do not contribute to the journey towards the goal.

The cause for despair, then, is evident. Within the "forms of our era" all action or "doing" is meaningless and therefore the departure from the masses is a desperate option which Lawrence is forced into as a necessitous fate, given the practical impossibility of his essential goal ever being achieved in the foreseeable future. However, since Kazantzakis saw from the outset the meaninglessness of action in the present "transitional age" he could visualize positiveness as being the heroic attitude of many of his protagonists. As Bien points out:

To die became paradoxically the one way his political heroes could act positively, helping to transform day break into a high noon sometime in the future. The later heroes are no longer pinned mothlike to their transitional times--their fates--unable to turn into lovely butterflies, yet too fine, too morally sincere, to become beetles. They are no longer melancholy or passive. Instead, they wrestle with fate and cheat it by selecting--with "pagan" exuberance, virility, strength--what necessity itself would otherwise have forced upon them. They are not trapped, simply because they walk into the trap knowingly, of their own free will.⁵

In order to examine Lawrence's attempts to redefine the relationship between man and the social or political order one could choose among three novels in particular, *Aaron's Rod*, *The Plumed Serpent* and *Kangaroo*. I have chosen to base my discussion of this point on *Kangaroo* for several reasons. First, the novel has been fairly conclusively viewed as an autobiographical one⁶ and for this reason we may assume that the opinions and thoughts expressed by the main character, Richard Lovat

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁶ Among others, Eliseo Vivas has made a fairly strong case for seeing the novel in this way in Chapter Two of his study, D.H. Lawrence: The Failure and Triumph of Art.

Somers, can be taken as Lawrence's own. Second, *Kangaroo* is the one novel of the three mentioned which primarily concerns the character's attempts to deal positively with a distinctly political or social situation. As with all of Lawrence's novels, however, this is not the only concern of the work. The protagonist is also confronted with the continual Lawrentian question of male-male, male-female relationships. But third and most importantly, this novel is a most graphic example of the essential difference between Lawrence and Kazantzakis. This difference is evident when one compares *Kangaroo* with Kazantzakis's *Freedom or Death* because, while not autobiographical in any sense, this latter novel deals with a character's attempt to handle a distinctly political situation and, furthermore, it displays the continued *positive* resolution of the problem of self-definition. By the comparison and contrast of these two works I shall attempt to show this essential difference between the two authors which will explain why one, Lawrence, ended his life and work in a condition of despair and disillusionment, and with a feeling that his goal had not been reached, while the other attained a positive self-fulfillment which he continually claimed was possible--"to turn flesh into spirit."

While there are many conflicts in the novel *Kangaroo*, the main one seems to involve Richard Lovat Somers's attempts to reconcile himself with the socio-political framework. The underlying question of the novel asks how the individual can come to grips with and redefine himself in relation to the overall social scheme of his environment once the traditional political and social myths have been exploded. There is no question that for Somers these traditional myths have suffered this very fate and for him the first World War has been the factor which caused their destruction. The novel is set in Sydney, Australia, and

Somers has gone there to escape post-war European society. Once there, however, Somers is presented with the problem of making the choice between the proponents of two different philosophies of social and political reform.

This is also the problem confronting Captain Michales in Nikos Kazantzakis's novel, *Freedom or Death*. Here we have a larger than life *palikar** who is torn between following his ancestral stirrings and patriotic feelings or obeying the logical arguments of escape by submission which are presented to him in so intelligent a fashion by all around him. With both Somers and Michales the question is the same-- what is the course that the self demands and where does the social realm and responsibility enter into that demand? Likewise, with both, the doubts and stumbling blocks are similar--the question of action versus inaction, the virtue and responsibility of being alone versus the release of being a part, the burden of brotherhood and friendship between members of opposing factions versus the ease of collective hatred. But what is most important is that both Michales and Somers are grappling with the problems arising from the same conditions-- freedom; although it must be admitted that Michales is trying to achieve freedom--whereas Somers is trying to decide what creatively to do with it once he has it. It will be recalled that this concept, explained at length in the first chapter of our discussion, was the springboard from which this comparative analysis was launched. But it will now be shown

*A Greek term for a man who is respected for having an inordinate amount of strength, courage and character. A warrior.

that the creatively successful handling of the situation of freedom, social and existential, is, in the last analysis, the final surmountable barrier for Kazantzakis and the continually unreachable goal for Lawrence.

From the outset we must admit that any interpretation of Lawrence's *Kangaroo* must be seen in light of the fact that the novel was written during what Vivian de Sola Pinto calls Lawrence's "traumatic phase," his "time of troubles," during which Lawrence

was obsessed by the sickness of Western society and the attempt to find a way out by means of a new order based on leadership and the cult of power.⁷

The character and personality of Somers in the novel must also be understood within this context because the first thing which strikes the reader about the character is the fact that he is beset by an almost immobilizing passivity and is continually being frustrated in his attempts to perform any concrete action. Somers could be severely criticized for this until it is realized that such a condition is an intrinsic reaction to the situation of freedom with which the character is confronted. Throughout the novel Somers is beset by a very understandable "fear and trembling" which is the direct result of being in such a socially and existentially "free" condition.

I begin with this because, in dealing creatively with the condition of freedom, positive action of some type is vital and central if one is to avoid the dreaded condition of stagnation and despair. But what is painfully obvious in the character of Somers is his seeming inability to act or make a firm decision on anything. This action is

⁷*The Politics of Twentieth Century Novelists*, p. 44.

not just one of deciding between the political leanings of Kangaroo and Willie Struthers because it is obvious that for Somers neither of these alternatives satisfies the longing within. The inability that I speak of concerns Somers's present hesitancy to do anything actively constructive about resolving the struggle that he admits to Harriet is inside him. Harriet points out to him at one point the possibilities for happiness in this new land, Australia. "Surely that is enough for any man. Why must you have more," she asks. Somers answers both for himself and for Lawrence:

"Because I feel I must fight out something with mankind yet. I haven't finished with my fellow men. I've got a struggle with them yet."

"But what struggle? What's the good? What's the point of your struggle? And what's your struggle for?"

"I don't know. But it's inside me, and I haven't finished yet. To make some kind of an opening--some kind of a way for the afterwards...." "I intend to move with men and get men to move with me before I die," he said. Then he added hastily: "Or at any rate I'll try a bit longer yet.... I've got to struggle with men and the work of men for a time yet...."⁸

This indeed is a praiseworthy aim and a very worthwhile reason for Somers not wanting to succumb to the quiet stagnation that Harriet is preaching. Furthermore, Somers seems to believe sincerely within himself that active participation is necessary for him and all mankind. In a later conversation, again with Harriet, he claims:

There must be action, brave, faithful action: and in the action the new spirit would arise.

"... I believe that the men with the real passion for life, for truth, for living and not for having, I feel they now must seize control of the material possessions, just to safeguard the world from all the masses who want to seize material possessions for themselves, blindly and nothing

⁸D.H. Lawrence, *Kangaroo* (London: Martin Sicker, Ltd., 1932), pp. 70-71.

else. The men with soul and with passionate truth in them must control the world's material riches and supplies: absolutely put possessions out of the reach of the mass of mankind, and let life begin to live again, in place of this struggle for existence, or struggle for wealth."⁹

Aside from the political philosophy which could be identified here this, too, seems to be a most notably idealistic opinion. But the course which is necessitated by this opinion is an active one which is directly opposite to the course which Somers follows in the novel.

This course reveals Somers to be constantly frustrated in his attempts to follow any self-directed, active participation in anything. This is revealed as being particularly frustrating when we see that this particular quotation calls for the existence of a certain type of individual--one with "the real passion for life, for truth, for living and not for having"--the very type one would expect both Lawrence, and Somers, at least to consider themselves to be.

The comparison between the situation of Somers and that of the existential man-alone whom we spoke of in Chapter I is striking here. Somers is fascinated by the condition of freedom which the sprawling Australian landscape exudes and in this context he is like the spiritual pilgrim who is faced with the experience of nothingness. But as was stressed in our discussion earlier this condition of freedom is, *at first*, a terrifying and frustrating one where no action seems worthwhile but which will eventually give rise to an active effort to cope creatively with this nihilistic experience--as Helmut Thielicke said, "to cover up one's nihilism creatively." It seems rather obvious that what Somers deems to be necessary is an instinctive return to the vital

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

basis of life for the individual man--a return to the essentially primitive situation where man is driven by instinctual promptings rather than by movements or clever arguments expounded from the political soap-box. Man's relationship with and response to the social order, then, would take on an immediacy and a relevance that text-book sociology or political science would never cause him to achieve. However, the condition we find Somers in during this novel is the one where all action seems meaningless and there is the fear that stagnation will result. Indeed there seems to be a total aversion on Somers's part to committing himself to any impulsive or instinctive actions--the actions of the moment. This is easily evidenced by his see-saw attitude towards Jack's desire that they be "mates" and also his inability to handle the love that is being offered him by Kangaroo which he is positively fearful of. At each and every turn Somers either intellectually argues himself out of or is emotionally fearful of the "instinctual promptings" of the Dark God that he speaks so often about. In the situation with Callcott,

Somers dropped his head. He liked the man. But what about the cause? What about the mistrust and reluctance he felt? And at the same time, the thrill of desire.... He wanted so much. To be mates with Jack in this cause. Life and death mates. And yet he felt he couldn't.... Somers was tempted to give Jack his hand there and then, and pledge himself to a friendship, or a comradeship, that nothing should ever alter. He wanted to do it. Yet something withheld him as if an invisible hand were upon him, preventing him.¹⁰

It is not the character or personality of Jack but rather the political faction that Jack is aligned with that is the stumbling block for Somers.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 112-113.

in this situation but the reservation that Somers has about Jack's "cause" is an intellectual response that is hindering the instinctive response that Somers so much wants to express towards the other man. A similar intellectualizing comes in the way of Somers being able even to say the words "I love you" to Kangaroo although the man is on his deathbed. Afterwards, in an attempt to rationalize this inability, Somers spends considerable time trying, very unsuccessfully, to convince himself and the reader that he loves *nobody*.

Indeed (and this may be worthy of further investigation), the only time in the novel that Somers acts in a "demon-driven" manner is during the disturbance at the speech given by Willie Struthers. Some excerpts from this scene are particularly worthy of note.

Everybody had started up save the Diggers. Even Somers was wildly on his feet, feeling as if he could fly, swoop like some enraged bird. *But his feeling wavered....* Somers tried to spring forward. In the blind moment he wanted to kill--to kill the soldiers.... Richard, small as he was, felt a great frenzy on him, a great longing to let go. *But since he didn't really know whom he wanted to let go at, he was not quite carried away.*¹¹

It could be said that for someone who continually preaches the necessity of following the "instinctual drivings of the blood" there is revealed here an awesome inability to answer the call of those "drivings." However, significantly enough, Somers is decidedly aware of his inaction since, after he has escaped, the feeling of sickness almost overwhelms him. But the sickness arises not out of a revulsion towards what he has seen, which would be quite explainable, but rather out of a confrontation with an existentially caused tendency towards *indecision* within himself.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 352-353. (Italics are mine).

Yet he wanted to go back into the town, into the melee. He felt he would even die if he did so. But then why not die? Why stay outside the row? He had always been outside the world's affairs. "I can't do anything. I can't be on either side. I've got to keep away from everything," murmured Richard to himself. "If only one might die, and not have to wait and watch through all the human horror. They are my fellow-men, they are my fellow-men."¹²

The attitude toward death expressed here is decidedly similar to that one of those which Julian Hartt rejected as being "inauthentic." It is a love of or a desire for death in a negative way rather than the positive affirmation of death. But, again, this is understandable given the very terrifying existential condition the character is in.

While Somers wants so desperately to be somehow a part of the social order he is not prepared to be a part of it as a result of any traditional notion of what is expected of him. Again, this is admirable. But at the same time he is as yet totally unprepared to say on what basis or framework his "being a part" will rest. He is willing to concede value to Kangaroo's demands for comradeship and love as well as to Willie Struthers's insistence on the working man's equality but when it comes to making a decision about being a part of one or the other Somers is hindered by the overpowering need for isolation.

Man's isolation was always a supreme truth and fact, not to be foresworn. And the mystery of apartness. And the greater mystery of the dark God beyond a man, the God that gives a man passion, and the dark, unexplained blood tenderness that is deeper than love, but so much more obscure, impersonal, and the brave, silent blood-pride, knowing his own separateness, and the sword-strength of his derivation from the dark God. This dark, passionate religiousness and inward sense of an indwelling magnificence, direct flow from the unknowable God, this filled Richard's heart, and the

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 354-355.

human love seemed such a fighting for a candlelight, when the dark is so much better.¹³

Again this is consistent with what we have stated before, that man now finds his salvation inside the darkness of his self-isolation. But given the context of Somers's statement here it must be admitted that Somers is, as yet, suspended in the condition of almost comatose inactivity, brought on by the terrifying confrontation with freedom. Since he is in this condition, his thoughts about isolation here can be observed by the reader as being rather unrealistic and a negation of the existence and demands of the ever-present society. This is not so much a criticism as it is an acceptance of the supremely problematic nature of the character's predicament. While Somers can look with longing at the primitive self-possession of the urchin "alone on the great shore all day, like a little wild creature himself," Somers's admiration is a poignant one for he also realizes that a reversion to this primitive condition on his own part would only be an inauthentic attempt to escape into a childish pipe-dream which would do nothing to solve his own problem of co-existence with a mass of fellow-men.

The conclusion of the novel, in actual fact, finds Somers no closer to such a resolution of the problem. This is partially explicable by the period of "turmoil" and trouble in which the novel was written but it is also explicable by an investigation of the attitudes which characterize Somers at the end of the novel. These attitudes must be examined in the light of the existential condition and its problems which the novel illustrates.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 367.

Aloneness is still a dominant concern for Somers at the end of the novel when his "conclusion" is that "the only thing to wait for is the men to find their aloneness and their God in the darkness." Admittedly, this has been Somers-Lawrence's concern throughout but there seems to be indicated here an attitude that the problem Somers is dealing with is centred in other men and not in himself. There is a feeling here that Somers is blaming his own condition on the fact that man as a species has not gotten to the point where he can accept the supreme value of what *Somers sees* as being necessary for mankind. This can only be seen as a very dangerous conclusion because it shifts the burden of responsibility onto the shoulders of the masses and away from the personal confrontation with one's own aloneness. In a very real sense Somers *retreats* into his own aloneness to wait for men to find their own "dark God." Neither Willie Struthers' philosophy nor that of Kangaroo has been satisfactory for Somers, but in rejecting them Somers is no closer to achieving the self-possession which will permit him to rejoice in his aloneness instead of retreating to it as a desperate and forced option.

One is regrettably reminded here of the distinction Paul Tillich makes between the two kinds of courage--the "courage to be" and the "courage to be as a part." He insists that the former must be attained before one can approach the latter. The problem that Somers seems to be facing throughout this novel is that of trying to resolve one without having first satisfied the demands of the other. And in this light I do not think there can be much doubt that *Kangaroo* is a severely self-revealing novel. However, this must again be seen in the context of the

time the novel was written.

It is well known that the great crisis in Lawrence's life was his estrangement from his fellow countrymen at the time of World War I when, as he wrote to Lady Cynthia Asquith, he felt himself to be "torn off from the body of mankind."¹⁴

No doubt a part of this crisis involved a severe self-examination of Lawrence's identity not only as a man but also as an Englishman. This can be seen most clearly in the opening pages of *Kangaroo* which are a very desperate attempt to pin down for the reader some depiction of Somers's character itself—"some definite Somers." Finding this individual, this self, becomes the reader's as well as Jack Callcott's task in the opening chapters. The glimpses that we do get are obviously of an individual who is supremely uncomfortable with his Englishness.

Now Somers was English by blood and education, and though he had no antecedents whatsoever, yet he felt himself to be one of the *responsible* members of society, as contrasted with the innumerable *irresponsible* members.¹⁵

It is partly the possession of this attitude which causes Somers to have such a terrified reaction to what he sees as the fascinating freedom inherent in the Australian atmosphere.

Freedom! That's what they always say. "You feel free in Australia." And so you do. There is a great relief in the atmosphere, a relief from tension, from pressure. An absence of control or will or form. The sky is open above you, and the air is open around you. Not the old closing-in of Europe.¹⁶

Somers admits earlier that he had come to Australia in order to escape from the oppressiveness of the "closing-in" feeling but when we keep in

¹⁴Vivian de Sola Pinto in Panichas, *The Politics of Twentieth Century Novelists*, p. 37.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 23.

mind what we said in the preceding chapter about the qualities of freedom, it can be seen that Somers's reaction to the feeling of freedom is crucial to our discussion here.

But what then? The vacancy of this freedom is almost terrifying. In the openness and the freedom this new chaos, this litter of bungalows and tin cans scattered for miles and miles, this Englishness all crumbled out into formlessness and chaos.¹⁷

Somers, then, is obviously attempting to come to some sort of personal discovery but the personal freedom which can be compared to the "absolutely and flatly democratic" freedom of Australia is for him a frightening situation. And herein lies the problem.

Early in the novel we are told that "Poor Richard Lovat wearied himself to death struggling with the problem of himself and calling it Australia," and we can conclude that this confusion besets Somers to the very end of the novel.* Somers is intelligent enough to realize that a consolidation with either Kangaroo or Struthers would be an *inauthentic* response to the problem of his freedom but he does not propose a positive alternative to this alliance. At the end of chapter two we are told:

When Somers was talking and telling, it was fascinating, and his quick, mobile face changed and seemed full of magic. Perhaps it was difficult to locate any definite Somers, and one individual in all this ripple of animation and communication.¹⁸

*Indeed, *Lawrence's* own awareness of this can be seen as a very possible reason for his having written the novel at all. We must presume that Lawrence recognizes the problem even though in the novel Somers does not.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

We do expect that as the novel progresses there will be some attempt made to reveal to us and to Somers himself the nature of the "dark God" called Somers. It is with a feeling of desperation and frustration, then, that we reach the final chapter because we are no closer to discovering, nor is Somers any closer to discovering, the basis of that problematic self. As a result the symbolic breaking of the farewell streamers from the ship can be seen as a particularly poignant image because for Somers no ties have been made with this land or the people in it. His insistence on his aloneness has prohibited it. No discovery has been forthcoming and it is with little hope that we send Somers off to New Zealand, four days away, "over a cold, dark inhospitable sea."

As a contrast to the inactive, suspended character of Somers, we are confronted with the savage, dynamic, irrepressible figure of Captain Michales in Nikos Kazantzakis's epic novel, *Freedom or Death*. What makes the comparison between this figure of Michales and that of Somers very striking is that, like Somers, Michales is torn between accepting two modes of ideology. One demands submission to the Turkish domination that has been present for years and the other demands a fight in the face of insurmountable odds. Just as Somers is repelled by both of the political ideologies that he is presented with, so too does Michales recoil from both of his alternatives. Pertinent, too, is that Michales is often faced with the charges of inaction and complacency that we have levelled against Somers. But most important, what we saw as being the quest for Richard Lovat Somers is also the quest for Michales--a return to the blood-fire, the undiluted

consciousness of one's atavistic roots. It must be noted here that even while we speak of man's relationship to the political situation (as we spoke of the relationship to the social order) the point which remains uppermost is that through these reevaluated connections and redefinitions man is searching for the redefined image of the *self*. Somers called the basis of this self the *Dark God* as opposed to the traditional Christian God of light. Michales, in his simplicity, calls it his grandfather. In a sense the entire novel can be seen as Michales's attempt to return in spirit and feeling to the state of his grandfather, whose passing he laments early in the story.

... in his mind's eye: his fear-inspiring grandfather Mad-Michales appeared in flesh and blood. How could he die, he who had so many children and grandchildren? Far and wide the old people still remembered him, the way he used to gaze along the coast of Crete, shading his eyes with his hand: he was watching to see if the Muscovite ships were coming out of the sea and sky. He would tilt his fez awry, saunter up and down the walls of Megalokastro, bow before the accursed Kyle and sing in the Turks' faces, "The Muscovites are coming!" ... and every Sunday after Mass he used to swagger along with *his* grandfather's bow over his shoulder and a quiver full of arrows as well.¹⁹

Michales sees in the figure of his grandfather the same spirit, the same confident *self-image* that Somers sees as necessary to be revived. Michales's comment could easily be spoken by Somers, "Those were men. Those were giants, not worms like us." Furthermore, it is this spirit which is the basis for the redefinition of the social and political framework for both characters. For Somers the redefinition of the relationship is in terms of the dark God and for Michales the redefinition is to be based on a return to the grandfather's passionate and defiant struggle against oppression.

¹⁹ Nikos Kazantzakis, *Freedom or Death* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1956), p. 5.

For Michales the hurdles and stumbling blocks which beset the journey toward attaining this redefinition are surprisingly similar to those which stood in Somers's path. Furthermore, the reasons for the existence of these barriers are similar in that both Lawrence and Kazantzakis lay the blame on the intellectualization, the ideological separations and the basic lack of action which are all inherent in the contemporary condition.

One conflict which prevents Michales from attaining a return to the spirit of his grandfather is seen very early in the novel, *Freedom or Death*, when the *palikar* confronts the complications that now exist in his relationship with the Turk, Nuri Bey. The significance of this must be stressed since, like Callcott and Somers, these two are forced by differences in ideology or "party politics" to exist in a love-hate relationship that clamours for resolution. Michales ponders his relationship with Nuri Bey in the following terms:

Did he hate this Turkish fellow here beside him, or was he fond of him? Was he disgusted by him? He had often asked himself the question and could come to no conclusion. And when by chance the two of them met in the narrow alleys of Megalokastro or on horseback outside, Captain Michales would look at the clear, lovable face of Nuri Bey and his heart would rejoice. He did not know what to think. Should he kill him or no? Ought he to embrace him as an old friend well met?²⁰

As a result we can see that the frustration that Michales feels in the confines of Nuri Bey's home is a frustration born not of hatred for the Turk but rather of a hatred for the situation which has caused them to be on opposite sides in this struggle. In like manner, the feelings of reservation which Somers has concerning Jack's notion that

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 21.

they become "mates" are aroused not by any qualities in Jack but rather by conditions which force Somers to be unable to accept Jack's political ideology. Both Somers and Michales are consequently prevented from following their instinctual promptings by the same doubts and reservations.

Somers's and Michales's respective reactions to this dilemma are notable in their similarity also. While both Somers and Michales are attracted by the need for communion with the other individual and are both repelled by the differences in ideology, they both have the tendency to be torn by a compelling demand for *aloneness*. But what is pertinent is the difference in the character and the effect of this aloneness when it is examined with Michales's reaction to it in mind.

Now he longed to get home. But he wished to see no one. They (his family) would hear his stride a long way distant. He would cough. They would understand and hide. That would be all right. Once he had kicked open his door, he would be quite alone. No wife, no children, no dogs--quite alone.²¹

It is this acknowledged need to be alone which makes Michales such a feared, mysterious and strong figure in the eyes of the people of Megalokastro. In this way Michales succeeds in keeping that portion of himself somehow separate. But Somers maintains throughout the novel, *Kangaroo*, that what he wants is "... to be alone, to stand clear from the weary business of unanimity, with everybody."²² Aloneness in this context, then, has symbolic connotations for our discussion also because it will be recalled that one important aspect of the search for salvation, the search for a redefined self-image, is that it must be

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

undertaken "by oneself--alone." The comparison is striking here, too, in that there is a sense that Michales has achieved this very positive attitude toward aloneness while Somers's aloneness is a result of feeling forcibly alienated from the body of mankind. The difference arises from the fact that Somers is never content or self-contained and assured in his aloneness. For him it is not a positive state but rather a condition where he usually laments over the situations which force him to be cut off from his "fellow men." The difference here is crucial. Both Michales and Somers react to the same situations by desiring to be alone. However, when Michales is alone what results from his ruminations is a further strengthening of the spirit of determination that he will not be swayed by others and that his actions will be completely self-motivated. There is no such determination arising as a result of Somers's periods of separateness.

On the other hand while we must admit the existence of the desire for aloneness in both characters they are also both seriously affected by the demands of their relationships with women. A very large portion of the novel *Kangaroo* is devoted to Somers's examination of his relationship with Harriet. For Somers, however, this relationship seems to have little or no connection with his problem of self-definition vis-a-vis the political milieu.* But Michales's relationship with Eminé, Nuri Bey's wife, does have a far greater thematic connection with Michales's quest for self-definition by a return to the

*Consequently, Lawrence could be severely criticized for devoting so much time to this relationship in the middle of the story (cf. "At Sea in Marriage").

raging spirit of his grandfather and for this reason the circumstances surrounding Michales's killing of Eminé bear examination.

It will be recalled that Michales leaves his battle post in defense of the Monastery of Christ to rescue Eminé who has been seized by Nuri Bey's forces. In his absence the monastery is attacked and the defending Cretans suffer a mass slaughter. But what is most pertinent to our discussion is the reaction of Michales once he discovers what has happened at the monastery in his absence.

He dismounted and picked up a handful of hot ashes. His impulse was to smear them into his beard and hair and rub them into his face. But he controlled himself....

"Let the one who's to blame burn and perish like that!"²³

The reason for Michales's sorrow and shame here is obvious but it goes much deeper than simple embarrassment at having deserted his post. He realizes that by the desertion he has betrayed the spirit of his grandfather which he is trying so desperately to attain as part of his self-image. Captain Elias expressed it when Michales, in his shame, claims, "It's my own business. I owe no explanations to anyone."

"You owe explanations to your forefathers, to my forefathers, to all our forefathers who are part of the earth of Crete on which we tread. Aren't you a Cretan? Aren't you one with the soil of Crete? What do you mean, then, by propping yourself up with the words, 'I owe no explanations'? Have you no shame?"

Captain Michales drove his nails into the trunk of the plane tree. It was the first time he had heard a man speak to him so boldly and contemptuously. *Was the old man right? But Captain Michales would not give ground.*²⁴

What Michales realizes is that Eminé is standing very much in the way of his journey towards incorporating the spirit of his forefathers as

²³*Ibid.*, p. 305.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 308.

a part of his self. Eminé, then, must be eliminated as a barrier. So Michales murders her while she sleeps in his Aunt Kalio's house. And while this act may offend one's sense of morality, as it no doubt offended Michales's sense of morality, we cannot quarrel with its appropriateness in the context of Michales's code.

When one considers the political alternatives, or courses of action which the two characters, Michales and Somers, have before them there is also a distinct comparison. It has been seen that Somers chafes against the bit of domination by the impersonal British state which places him in such subservient situations as the physical examination that he is forced to undergo, not once but three times. Somers sees this as part of the overall oppression which is just as bad as that which is practiced by the German "mechanical bullies."

... he would never forgive them, in his inward soul. But then the industrialism and commercialism of England, with which patriotism and democracy became identified: did not these insult a man and hit him pleasantly across the mouth? How much humiliation had Richard suffered, trying to earn his living! How had they tried with their beastly industrial self-righteousness, to humiliate him as a separate, single man? They wanted to bring him to heel even more than the German militarist did.²⁵

It is this oppression which Somers hopes the Australian freedom will help to alleviate.

In like manner Michales chafes under the yoke of the Turkish domination; but it is their respective responses to the intolerable situations which set them apart. This response to the situation is dictated by the response to the characteristics of Freedom itself and

²⁵ *Kangaroo*, p. 240.

here we must apply what has already been said about this concept in a previous chapter.

For Richard, even at the end of the novel, Australia signifies freedom--"silvery, untouched freedom." But as he says to Jaz, even though Australia tempts him, "I don't want to give in, you see. Not yet. I don't want to give in to the place. It's too strong. It would turn me quite away from myself. It would be too easy. It's too easy. It's too tempting." But this is in direct contradiction to what he preaches to Harriet. Attacking Harriet's picture of Australia as a "glisten of paradise" Richard rages:

Don't trust it. You can't have this absolved sort of freedom. It's an illusion. You can't have this freedom absolved from control. It can't be done. There is no stability.... You must have deep control from within. You must have a deep, dark weight of authority in your own soul. You must be most carefully, sternly controlled from within. You must be under the hand of the Lord. You can't escape the dark hand of the Lord, not even in free Australia. You'll get the devils turning on you if you try too much freedom. It can't be done. Too much freedom means you absolve yourself from the hand of the Lord, and once you're really absolved you fall a prey to devils, devils. You'll see.²⁶

At one point Somers is claiming that he *will not* submit to the freedom of Australia because it would be too easy and at another point he admits that the condition of too much freedom is too terrifying and dangerous for him. This comes very close to coinciding with the possible reactions to freedom of the existential pilgrim which we expressed in the first chapter of the discussion. In order for a redefined image of the self to arise from the experience of nothingness one must do exactly what Somers is fearful of; one must cope *creatively* and

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 393.

positively with the condition of complete, absolute and terrifying freedom.

But this is the very point at which Michales transcends the condition of Somers and makes that one more step beyond. It is the ability to accept that condition of freedom, with all its devils and terror and danger, that Michales is trying to attain throughout the Kazantzakis novel. It is this condition of being able to deal with "too much freedom" that Michales saw as being the admirable characteristic exemplified in his grandfather. It is not until the night before the final siege on the mountain that Michales comes to terms with all the fear of the devils and the danger. Another of the fighters has also struggled throughout the night and expresses his and Michales's thought:

"All night two devils struggled inside me. One of them said, 'Leave, there's no hope of winning.' The other said, 'Stay, *because* there's no hope of winning.' When dawn came, one of the two devils won."²⁷

Captain Michales has earlier expressed the result of the contest between the two devils in his own brain:

His lips and his brows contracted. He looked at his comrades, at the Turks far below, at the uninhabited sky. "Freedom or death," he muttered, shaking his head fiercely. "Freedom or death! O poor Cretans! 'Freedom *and* death'--that's what I should have written on my banner. That's the true banner of every fighter: Freedom *and* death! Freedom and death!"²⁸

This climactic scene is important enough to warrant very careful examination and consideration, but before this is done we need first to

²⁷ *Freedom or Death*, p. 427.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

examine this concept of death which Michales is addressing in terms of how Somers views it.

Somers's confrontation with the concept of death is conspicuous and notable by its absence. Somers does concern himself metaphorically with the idea of death as it relates to the necessity of the old image of man to die and be replaced by a new mankind who is more in touch with and has found the "dark God," but he does not deal with the actual concept of physical death as a reality. One would expect this to be a part of the chapter dealing with the death of Kangaroo especially, but the chapter skirts this issue and concerns itself with Somers's ability or inability to "love" the man. Then it goes on to deal with Somers's ambivalent attitude towards Australia itself.

This absence of the confrontation with such a central issue is especially notable when one considers that the theme has been a primary concern of the previous two Lawrence novels examined--*Women in Love* and *The Man Who Died*. Its absence here in *Kangaroo* provides us with a most valuable and provocative possibility of contrast between the characters (and the authors). We may now return to the final scene of the Kazantzakis novel to examine further that contrast.

Michales's companion is, significantly enough, speaking in the same personifying terms as Somers here in his characterization of the devils that are warring within him. However, the statements of the fighter's two devils are significant because one devil urges a philosophy of hopelessness, withdrawal and despair while the other devil urges a continuance even in the face of impending failure. This determination to fight even though "there's no hope of winning" could be mistakenly seen as simply a soldier's foolhardy and reckless bravado resulting

from the condition of shell shock or battle fatigue. However, when the statements are taken in the context of Michales's desire to return to the frame of mind of his grandfather, it can be seen that this is the very philosophy which designated Michales's ancestors as "men" and his contemporaries as simply "worms." These ancestors fought with a joyous acceptance of the possibility of death whereas, up to this scene in the novel, Michales and his contemporaries have been fighting with a deep-seated dread of death.

In this context Michales's changing of the phrase, "Freedom *or* Death" to "Freedom *and* Death" takes on vital significance. What Michales suddenly realizes is that freedom and death are not mutually exclusive concepts. Death is not the reluctantly accepted alternative when freedom cannot be achieved. Rather, freedom is achieved when one accepts the possibility of death joyously, *fearlessly* and affirmatively. This was the "secret" of the continued defiance and arrogant pride of Michales's grandfather--he no longer feared death as an enemy so consequently his opponents could threaten him with nothing. Michales achieves this condition for a few short moments before dying so that in every respect he dies a *free* man. But the most important point which cannot be stressed too strongly is that two subtly different meanings of freedom are being implied here. While Michales is speaking in the context of political freedom it is clear that in his struggle to decide on a political alternative or course of action, Michales has finally come to a redefinition and revaluation of *the self*. He has found the secret of his grandfather's defiant self-image and this has made clear and easy his connection with the political situation.

It is this final jump, this ultimate conquering of the last barrier--fear--that Somers never does make. It is pertinent to recall in this connection the number of times that Somers is gripped by fear in the novel. In some cases Somers attributes it to some unidentifiable quality of the Australian bush--some emptiness. But in other cases (as at the end of the heated confrontation with Kangaroo (Chapter XI)), it is attributable to the self-confessed weakness of the man Somers himself.

Admittedly this "weakness" is a realistic and understandable emotion given what Somers is experiencing and it is not being claimed that, compared to Michales, Somers is a coward and therefore a lesser man. Somers's "weakness" is in fact a central aspect of the thematic point of the novel since the story is written in a far more realistic mode than is the epically exaggerated Kazantzakis novel. But what is essential to note about Somers's indictment of himself for his fears is that it provides a very important clue in our search for the answer to the central question posed by our discussion.

This question was stated in the early pages and can now be posed again. Even though both authors sought to construct a viable, authentic image of the self, the self-image which Kazantzakis formulated permitted him to approach death in a happy, fulfilled and positive state. In contrast, the self-image which Lawrence constructed provided him with no such final and ultimate fulfillment so that he died in despair and anguish in spite of it.

The character of Somers goes a long way in providing the answer to this discrepancy. Somers, like Lawrence, persisted in approaching

the problem *with a goal in sight* and continually hoped for the attainment of that goal. And like Lawrence, when Somers found no such ultimately satisfying goal he was afflicted by profound despair as a result. Michales, like Kazantzakis, discovers that if there is a goal it is simply in realizing that no goal exists while at the same time maintaining the joyous and defiant participation in the search even in the face of this realization.

An examination of previously discussed novels in this context also shows this discrepancy. Boss's reaction to Zorba's death can be contrasted to Birkin's reaction to the death of Gerald in order to point up the same essential difference. In the Kazantzakis novel it was Zorba's joy in the search, in the quest, in life and in living which caused one to see Zorba's death in a positive fashion. No such positiveness surrounds the ending of Lawrence's *Women in Love* because the goal which Birkin strives for he still sees as attainable. Birkin's affirmation of the possibility of reaching it rings through with a certain sad futility simply because he places so much importance on the reaching of that goal. Birkin is not free in the real sense because he is driven by the insatiable desire to find his ultimate relationship with man and woman. He will not accept the impossibility of finding it and at the same time accept the joyous participation in the search for it, as Zorba has done. Ultimately, then, we could not envision Birkin meeting death, and accepting it freely and without fear, because he would see it as the final barrier to his achievement of that goal.

Similarly, it is ironic that Lawrence's Christ could only achieve a joyous freedom *after* the miraculous return from death.

Kazantzakis's Christ, on the other hand, attains this joyous freedom *in death* with no thought to the afterlife.

Returning to *Kangaroo*, however, it has been said that Somers did not conquer the barrier of fear. It might be more appropriate in this context to say that the final barrier he does not conquer is hope. In this connection we can recall Aldous Huxley's recollection of Lawrence's last weeks of life which was previously quoted but which bears repetition here. Huxley notes that it was during this time that Lawrence wrote *The Man Who Died*,

that profoundly moving story of the miracle for which somewhere in his mind *he still hoped--still hoped* against the certain knowledge that it could never happen.²⁹

This can obviously be contrasted with the answer provided by Michales who stays on the mountainside "because there is no hope."

What is revealed here is the total sacrificing of hope in the attainment of a goal and placing complete and ultimate value on the pilgrimage or search *itself*. Lawrence does not do this, nor does Somers, and it is particularly tragic in Somers's case because he comes so close to the realization of the necessity of doing so. In the dialogue with himself concerning his reasons for leaving and going to America Somers reveals himself to be very close to this realization.

No wonder Australians love Australia. It is the land that as yet has made no great mistakes, humanly. The horrible human mistakes of Europe. And, probably, the even worse human mistakes of America. "Then why am I going?" he asked himself. "Wait! Wait!" he answered himself. "You have got to go through the mistakes. You've got to go all round the world, and then half way round again, till you

²⁹ *Selected Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Richard Aldington with introduction by Aldous Huxley (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1950), p. 30.

get back. Go on, go on, the world is round, and it will bring you back...."³⁰

There is a spirit here of continual searching, a spirit which values the search in itself regardless of the object of that search. And even though we do leave Somers at the end of the novel in a very depressed and disillusioned state there is a *sense* that once he has gone "all round the world and then half way round again" he will have conquered the fear, the timidity and the clinging to an unreasonable hope which forced him to leave the "dangerous," devil-infested freedom of Australia. Although this part of his life has been unresolved he is still struggling with the same questions and has not given up trying to find the answers. His spirit of searching has not been dampened even though he is still envisioning an ultimate end to the search. It is this same spirit which Michales's father reveals when he is asked the meaning of the full life he has led.

"Grandfather ... I hear that you have lived like a great oak tree. You have breathed storms, suffered, triumphed, struggled, labored for a hundred years. How has life seemed to you during those hundred years, Grandfather?"

"Like a glass of cool water, my child," replied the old man.

"And are you still thirsty, Grandfather?"

The graybeard raised his hand, so that the wide sleeve of his shirt fell back and revealed the bony furrowed arm as far as his shoulder.

"Woe to him," he cried in a loud voice, as though he were pronouncing a curse, "woe to him who has slaked his thirst."³¹

CONCLUSIONS

It should be clear by now that an answer, though obviously not the only one, has been arrived at to explain how two authors who so

³⁰ *Kangaroo*, p. 388.

³¹ *Freedom or Death*, p. 323.

obviously sought the same things and in so very similar artistic ways ended their lives in so different a condition of fulfillment and satisfaction.

By examination of *Women in Love* and *Zorba the Greek* it was shown that not only did Kazantzakis and Lawrence have very similar concerns for achieving a redefinition of the self by seeking a redefinition of the relationship with fellow men and women; they also expressed this concern in novels which were thematically and imagistically similar and which examined similar dialectics, conflicts and tensions.

The treatment of the Christ story by both writers indicated a similar fascination with this figure as the prototype of that man who, faced with a similar spiritual struggle, had achieved ultimate victory in the search for the solution.

Once these similarities were noted the examination of *Freedom or Death* and *Kangaroo* illustrated the essential difference between the two writers as it is revealed in their art. However, several points need further comment. Because Kazantzakis ended his life in relative happiness as compared to Lawrence (even though both were seeking the same thing) it cannot be concluded from this that the "answer" came easier to Kazantzakis or that he simply chose to accept a facile conclusion. Nor can it be said on the one hand that Lawrence was a lesser intellect because he died in anguish or that Kazantzakis was a lesser intellect because he found peace. The failure of Lawrence to construct an image of the self which could save him from final anguish and despair is no comment on Lawrence as man, philosopher or writer. The possible reasons for the failure can be seen by an examination of the

writing (and hopefully this is what this examination has done) but Lawrence's failure to find peace must be seen as indicative of the profoundly intense and disturbingly complex nature of the experience of nothingness with which both authors found themselves confronted.

Likewise, it cannot be said that Kazantzakis found peace because he stopped searching or that Lawrence died in anguish because his dissatisfaction forced him to continue the search and die with no goal in sight. Indeed the exact opposite is true. Both authors, up to their dying breaths, *continued the search* for the positively satisfactory redefined image of the self (any halting of it would have been a denial of the basic tenets of their respective philosophies) but the difference lay in one author putting complete value on the positive, growth-oriented nature of the search itself while the other (Lawrence) engaged in the search solely as a means of achieving the goal that was hoped for.

Herein lies the central difference which I have illustrated in the foregoing analysis.

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