



## D.H. Lawrence: A Study Of The Novels (The Plumed Serpent)

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**Abstract:** The Plumed Serpent is a product of the author's long-standing fascination for the American continent. It has its place in Lawrence's ongoing quest for fullness in life: "I believe in America one can catch up some kind of emotional impetus from the aboriginal Indian and from the aboriginal air and land, that will carry one over this crisis of the world's soul depression, into a new epoch." Though, at times, he revolted against the Indian and later came to see the "hero" as "obsolete", till some time after writing the novel, Lawrence considered The Plumed Serpent his "chief novel so far" which lay "nearer" his "heart than any other work" of his.<sup>11</sup> The shortcomings pointed out by critics and Lawrence's own moments of repudiation for the American continent, the "acceptance-rejection ambivalence"<sup>12</sup> should not prevent one from seeing that the attempt, as ever, is to offer clues for better, healthy living, to take life to altogether more vivid circles of being.

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### Introduction:

D.H. Lawrence is one of the greatest and most controversial modern novelists. As a creative genius who defied convention, Lawrence may be easy to admire or admonish but difficult to ignore. His work compels attention on the strength of its originality, inventiveness, intelligence and insight. The bulk of critical comment invited by his fiction is astounding indeed. The impressive array of Lawrence's defenders and detractors sounds forbidding. Besides, so much has been written on Lawrence that an additional study of his fiction runs the risk of repetition, if not redundancy. One cannot claim to offer a fresh interpretation of the novels of D.H. Lawrence without inviting the charge of immodesty. And yet, new books and articles on Lawrence keep appearing with unflinching regularity. The ever growing mass of critical commentary on Lawrence bears testimony to the promise of excitement and discovery which Lawrence's fiction carries. Besides, as F.R. Leavis rightly observed in *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, re-reading can be useful because his novels continue to reward repeated frequentations. In fact, the enjoyment and appreciation grow with every reading.

### Lawrence and Psychoanalytic Criticism

Since Alfred Booth Kuttner's review of *Sons and Lovers* in 1915,<sup>57</sup> Lawrence's works have been read in the light of Freudian or more generally psychoanalytic theories. Kuttner interpreted the novel as the struggle

of a man to free himself from allegiance to his mother, the struggle which ends in tragedy: "Paul goes to pieces because he can never make the mature sexual decision away from his mother, he can never accomplish the physical and emotional transfer."<sup>58</sup> Lawrence's resistance to this mode of reading is well known: "I hated the *Psychoanalysis* [sic] *Review of Sons and Lovers*. You know I think 'complexes' are vicious half-statements of the Freudians: sort of can't see wood for trees."<sup>59</sup> He felt dismayed that the relationship between mother and son was interpreted as an Oedipal drama and that Paul Morel was identified with Lawrence himself.

*Freudianism and the Literary Mind* (1945) by Frederick J. Hoffman is an important early book that incorporates a detailed discussion about Lawrence's reception of Freud's ideas. Though Lawrence's consistent opposition to Freud is documented in his discursive writing, Hoffman finds that Lawrence at least allows the general significance of the psychoanalyst to his contemporaries.<sup>60</sup> One of the best known Freudian responses to Lawrence is Daniel Weiss's *Oedipus in Nottingham* (1962). The title of the book hints at the diagnostic tendency of the book. Offering a Freudian analysis, the study looks at the Oedipal crisis which underpins the novels.<sup>61</sup> Weiss's reading of *Sons and Lovers* is guided by the conviction that the Oedipal situation, as Freud describes it, prevails in the novel: "For Paul the sexuality Clara

offers is feasible incest, just as his relationship with Miriam, although consummated, is not; and both relationships are determined by the root Oedipal relationship."<sup>62</sup> Weiss's study tends to become over ingenious in ferreting out signs of the author's unconscious intentions. The subtleties and the complex dynamics of literature are sacrificed and the work made systematic, even schematic than it is.

**The Plumed Serpent:** If *Kangaroo* was a political novel that went beyond politics in search of the "dark gods", the search is carried out in *The Plumed Serpent* with a renewed vigour. Whether the leap from politics to religion marks a continuity or progression in Lawrence's thought and belief or not, *The Plumed Serpent* certainly accords a greater respect to the wonder and mystery of the religious aura of the gods of antiquity. The novel, which came out in 1926, has certainly been no favourite with Lawrencean critics and scholars. It has been criticized, in particular, for its insistent ideology, the killings, and what is taken to be its advocacy of male supremacy. Even the sympathetic critics like F. R. Leavis, Harry T. Moore, Mark Spilka and Mark Kinkead-Weekes have found fault with the novel. While F. R. Leavis cautiously condemns it for having "none" of the "flexibility of mode and mood for which the preceding novels are remarkable,"<sup>71</sup> Harry T. Moore says that "the ideology of *The Plumed Serpent* is repugnant to many who nevertheless admire the prose-poetry of the book."<sup>72</sup> Mark Kinkead-Weekes calls the book "altogether more dictatorial,"<sup>73</sup> and Fjagesund criticizes it for showing "a collapse in moral values."<sup>74</sup> Taking cue from the feminists, even an otherwise sympathetic critic like Mark Spilka calls it "an embarrassing literary odyssey of male wish fulfilment."<sup>75</sup> The novel has its faults and excesses. One should, however, be wary of condemning the novel wholesale. Terry Eagleton has certainly done no service to Lawrence when along with *Aaron's Rod* and *Kangaroo*, he enlists the preoccupations of *The Plumed Serpent*: "a protofascist veneration of power, 'blood hierarchy', racial purity, male bonding, charismatic leadership, the revival of 'primitive' ritual and mythology, and the brutal subjugation of women"<sup>76</sup> and dismisses it as "execrable."<sup>77</sup>

*The Plumed Serpent* is a product of the author's long-standing fascination for the American continent. It has its place in Lawrence's ongoing quest for fullness in life: "I believe in America one can catch up some kind of emotional impetus from the aboriginal Indian and from the aboriginal air and land, that will carry one over this crisis of the world's soul depression, into a new epoch."<sup>78</sup> Though, at times, he revolted against the Indian and later came to see the "hero" as "obsolete,"<sup>79</sup> till some time after writing the novel, Lawrence considered *The Plumed Serpent* his

"chief novel so far"<sup>10</sup> which lay "nearer" his "heart than any other work" of his.<sup>11</sup> The shortcomings pointed out by critics and Lawrence's own moments of repudiation for the American continent, the "acceptance-rejection ambivalence"<sup>12</sup> should not prevent one from seeing that the attempt, as ever, is to offer clues for better, healthy living, to take life to altogether more vivid circles of being.

The end of *Kangaroo* saw Richard Lovat Somers setting sail from Australia to other lands. His hope of sending out "a new shoot in the life of mankind" (PS, 65) by getting men to move with him in sincere, passionate action remained unfulfilled. In *The Plumed Serpent*, which takes the "important step from political and religious theorizing to the world of action,"<sup>13</sup> Somers's dream is realized on the ancient land of the Aztecs and the Toltecs as men move ahead and bring the gods of antiquity back to Mexico again. Set on the dark soil of the North American continent, the novel encompasses many quests. Kate Leslie is at once an individual and a representative. Her quest is that of a woman facing mid-life crisis, the "bright page" (PS, 14) of whose book of life is finally turned. At the same time, while in her search there is a reflection of the quest of the white race whose ideology has left it stranded on a dead-end road, the unspoken, unconscious urges of countless Mexicans are given voice by Don Ramon Carrasco. Quetzalcoatl, the feathered snake, a deity of this ancient land, holds out the promise for all these quests. Kate Leslie, the widow of an Irish revolutionary James Joachim Leslie, a widely travelled woman of experience, comes to Mexico, for in Europe she had heard "the *consummatum est* of her own spirit" (PS, 41). The whole Europe she found mired in politics or sordid spiritualism, its youth without any mystery or seriousness. Now at the age of forty, youth and spontaneity are already behind her and the next page of her book of life appears "profoundly black" (PS, 41). What can be written on so dark a page? Will Mexico provide some clue, some answer? While the unnamed white woman in the story "The Woman Who Rode Away" is more a representative of her race and is not individualized, Kate Leslie is a more complex and independent character. The unnamed woman in the story is leading a nullified existence and her terrible leap into the unknown – her courting of death – is her almost unconscious, impulsive and rash reaction to her state of non-existence. Kate, on the other hand, is acutely aware of the meaninglessness of her own life and the directionlessness of the Western Culture. Her journey to Mexico, the land of ancient gods, is in the form of a more deliberate and conscious quest. Her search is for spiritual as well as sexual fulfilment that she has been denied by the European civilization, for neither body nor spirit alone is the

way to wholeness. Will she find clues to a wholesome, entire life on this dark continent? Does Quetzalcoatl, the morning star, represent a complete way of living?

Compared with Europe, Mexico seems a hard, harsh country. Either bitterly cold or scorchingly hot, it knows not the soft mingling of sun and mist. With its barren, ribbed mountains, with either sunshine “beating” on land “like metal” (PS, 191) or “several storms prowling round like hungry jaguars, above the lake” (PS, 197) and the “crashing violence of rain” (PS, 191), Mexico, at first, appears hostile to the “gringuita” Kate. The “ponderous” mountains (PS, 40), the volcanoes Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl suppress all soaring of spirit. Indeed these “two monsters” seem to “emit a deep purring sound... audible on the blood, a sound of dread” (PS, 40). Revolutions have left the country devastated – “broken walls, broken houses, broken *haciendas*” (PS, 63). The modern buildings and the churches the Spanish invaders built are not integrated with the landscape. Like most other white people, Kate feels suffocated, crushed by a terrible oppression of the spirit all the time. She finds Mexico City evil, squalid underneath all its modernity. More than once she feels “the great folds of the dragon of the Aztecs, the dragon of the Toltecs, winding around” her and “weighing down the soul” (PS, 40). What is it that has made the cosmic forces, the elements and the dragon of the Aztecs and the Toltecs angry?

A brazen display of “human indecency” and “reeking cowardice” (PS, 10) in the cosmopolitan Mexico City shocks Kate, as the masses gathered in the bull-ring degenerate into a vulgar, rowdy mob. The crowd yells dictates at the military band, throws oranges and banana skins on all and sundry, snatches hats and sends them gliding around. This city-bred crowd keenly enjoys the spectacle of bulls being gored to death by effeminate-looking toreadors, deriving a perverse pleasure in “beastliness, a smell of blood, a nauseous whiff of bursten bowels” (PS, 9). Kate finds it strange that these people seem to want the ugly things, to “enjoy making everything fouler” (PS, 29). The root of the matter is that the modernity of these townish Mexicans lies at the surface of their consciousness. Their blood, chiefly “the old, heavy, resistant Indian blood” (PS, 45) is full of an impotent anger at the loss of their old way of life. Prevented from answering the call made directly on their blood by the massive elements of the continent, the bourgeois masses become corrupt. Can something restore their lost power and glory? Kate’s curiosity is also piqued by the black eyes of the natives which seem to have no “centre”, no “real I” in them, but a “ranging black hole, like the middle of a maelstrom” (PS, 32). Are these a people whose lives are not integrated enough, whose lives have no central

purpose? Are their lives also moving in a reversed direction, like those of the white people? Kate’s misgivings are soon put to rest as she comes to understand the dark continent and moves into the interior of the country. While Kate is repelled by the sense of grisly fear, the horror which the very earth in Mexico seems to exude, she finds a mysterious, elusive beauty in the natives. The “eternal peon of Mexico” (PS, 64), in his white, loose drawers, the shy women in their tightly drawn *rebozos*, make an appeal to her instincts. Mexico, then, alternately repulses and draws Kate. Should she stay or go away altogether? Now, at the age of forty, Kate is no longer interested in the bull-fights, the tea-parties, the enjoyments that her cousin Owen mistakes for life. The desire for human love and companionship has also left her. She has arrived at a stage of maturity where the “flower of her soul” (PS, 49) is softly opening and she feels that she must preserve herself from worldly contacts. At the same time, she must beware of falling into the cynicism and sterility of the modern world.

In Kate’s present state of indecision, “a strange beam of wonder and mystery” (PS, 47) seems to come out of the newspaper article announcing the return of the gods of antiquity to Mexico from lake Sayula, where they had once lived. Kate, who desperately wants a bit of magic in her life, wants to believe. As Ramon tells her, “The miracle is always there, for the man who can pass his hand through to it, to take it” (PS, 57). With the help of General Viedma Cipriano, Ramon is trying to let the ancient religion of Mexico sweep across the country. Kate is fascinated as she feels that these are men, face to face, not with death or after-life but with the life-issue. Filled with revulsion against a mechanical, “cog-wheel world” (PS, 91), Kate now wants to turn inwards. She decides to withdraw into an old Spanish house with a few flowers growing in its enclosed dark patio. Her rented house is in a village by lake Sayula from where emerges the ancient religion of Mexico.

It is while she is being rowed to Orilla in a boat that Kate is rewarded with a sudden revelation. So far she had been unable to understand the real Mexico, but now she comes to realize that “the central look in the native eyes” is a “look of extraordinary arresting beauty” (PS, 79), not of life gone “widdershins” (PS, 66). Compared with the American Villiers who is glad only when he is doing something mechanical, the crippled boatman and the man who swims across to Kate’s boat have a sense of peace about them. They are not in the grip of the worldly tendencies. The gleaming look in their eyes, the expression of being far-away, of being “suspended between the realities” (PS, 79) reminds Kate of the “morning star.” These are men who want to be able to breathe the greater breath. Many people are sincere in their desire to improve the

situation in Mexico. However, most feel helpless, thwarted. Judge Burlap who is full of suppressed but excessive anger – “an irritation amounting almost to rabies” (PS, 27) – whenever he tries to talk seriously about Mexico, serves as an example. There are, then, those like Montes, the President of the Republic who see the American Indians “as the symbols in the weary script of socialism and anarchy” (PS, 42). Slogans proclaim Montes as the man who will regenerate the degenerate Mexico. The President, who wants to make his country progress, to save it from poverty and ignorance with the help of European ideas, is unconcerned about the craving of the Mexican soul. There is a real danger that Mexico will lose its distinct identity by a rapid process of Americanization. Already the village Sayula is in the grip of materialism: “One hope, one faith, one destiny; to ride in a *camion*, to own a car” (PS, 98). Yet, by and large, the Mexicans have retained a “strange, submerged desire” for “things beyond the world” (PS, 233). Juana and her family are indifferent to money, materialism and comfort. Can liberty and progress and socialism help the Indians who sit ever so patiently, selling a few *centavos* worth of tropical, fruits and wares? Have they been able to bring solace to the white races?

Don Ramon, the eminent scholar and historian, understands Mexico as no one else does. The Mexicans neither assert their righteousness nor are they in a mad rush to “get on”. Their souls still long for that which is beyond the ordinary day-to-day world. Though they may adopt a derisive tone towards anyone who dares to rise above “the grey, lava rock level” (PS, 189), their voices have not the modern, cynical, jeering note of disbelief. In all its uncouthness, the group that huddles around the floating wick-lamp outside Juana’s kitchen-hole, reading the hymns of Quetzalcoatl in the raging-storm, wants the wonder of myth and mystery in their lives. An alien religion has failed to touch them inwardly. Instead of helping a man collect his soul “into its own strength and integrity” (PS, 248), the Sunday church, with its cheap glitter, offers no more than a little “orgy of incense” (PS, 249), leaving the soul all the more slack.

Only Ramon can speak in a language that the Mexicans understand, “the tongue of their own blood” (PS, 221). As Jascha Kessler says, Ramon and Cipriano are men who believe that “Mexico can meet the future only by means of some kind of projection of its psyche.”<sup>14</sup> Having got a clue to his “own whole manhood” (PS, 187), Ramon now considers it his responsibility to show the Mexicans the way. And it is not socialism that holds a key to the Mexican soul, but a “living word” – Quetzalcoatl (PS, 187). Quetzalcoatl, the feathered snake, the revered deity of ancient Mexico is the centre of all Lawrence’s hope in

this novel. His significance is not for Mexico alone, but the white races can also take a cue from him. He is the symbol of the best a man may be and a restorer of pride in life. When Jesus arrived in Mexico, Quetzalcoatl left. Now, having slept the great healing sleep of regeneration, he is prepared to come back to his “bride between the seas” Mexico (PS, 104). He is not a god of “one fixed purport (PS, 48). Rather many meanings coalesce in him, defying one definition. He is the gleaming morning star and the mysterious, ever-evasive holy ghost. Indeed, Quetzalcoatl is asked to hold so much weight that often it becomes “tiresome, overdeveloped.”<sup>15</sup> However, as Kermodé says, the Quetzalcoatl religion “clearly has its place, being, in relation to the main purpose of the novel, much what Lawrence’s mythological and psychological systems are to his fiction.”<sup>16</sup>

The elements in Mexico are tremendous. Here one can feel their influence even more powerfully – an illustration of Lawrence’s belief that “the pristine spirit of the universe still beat closer to the surface in America than anywhere else.”<sup>17</sup> Ramon believes that people will perish if they make the forces of nature angry, if they fail to renew their lost connection with the elements. Many have forgotten that the earth is alive like a huge serpent sleeping. In one hymn, Quetzalcoatl sees, as he looks down on Mexico, that sun and earth and stars are getting “weary of tossing and rolling the substance of life” to the lips of the people. (PS, 216) People have displeased the cosmic dragons who are shaking with rage and are ready to strike back. The ancient religion of Mexico is the religion of living in peace with the sun and the winds, the waters and the earth.

While the white races need to make a conscious effort to pick up the “lost trail,”<sup>18</sup> regaining the lost link with the elements is not as difficult for the Mexicans. The natives of this dark land still are part of the “Tree of Life” (PS, 68). Their roots, going down to the “centre of the earth” are alive (PS, 68). The religion of Quetzalcoatl shows them the way of getting in touch again through a revival of ancient dances and morning and evening rituals. Opposed to the jazzing of “the organdie butterflies and the flannel-trouser *fifis*” in the market plaza (PS, 101), the Indian dance is seriously meaningful. The slow round dance, with “the ancient rhythm of the feet on the earth,” (PS, 232) “the dance of downward sinking absorption” (PS, 312) re-roots the people deep into the earth. The earth responds by restoring their youth, their manhood and womanhood. Fascinated, Kate also joins the dancers in the market plaza. The excess of “uplift”, the contempt of the body has been the doom of her race. Soon Kate begins to learn “to loosen the uplift of all her life, and let it pour slowly... in soft, rhythmic gushes from her feet into the dark body of the earth” (PS, 115).

Replenished, she rushes home with her secret. Later, as the religion of Quetzalcoatl is declared the national religion of the Republic, there is a revival of morning and evening rituals. A “twilit newness” slowly spreads (PS, 322) as people pause for brief prayers at dawn and sunset and are put in connection again, winning their “own creation” from “the nest of the cosmic dragons” (PS, 243).

In the eyes of so many white men, however, Kate detects “the look of nullity, and life moving in the reversed direction” (PS, 66). The eyes of the German manager at Orilla have gone hard, opaque, acknowledging his defeat before the cruel surroundings. The spirit of the place is definitely down-dragging towards the white people. The dark continent seems to spell only doom and destruction for them. Is Mexico, then, a “high plateau of death” (PS, 40), the “great melting-pot, where men from the creative continents were smelted back again, not to a new creation, but down into the homogeneity of death”? (PS, 65). The folly of the white invaders is that they did not stop to consider whether their religion advocating humility and gentleness suited this land of fierce sun and forceful storms. They failed to realize that not only the elements but also the blood of the natives revolted against the white man’s way of life. In attempting to save others, the white man lost his own soul. Now, thwarted, instead of moving forward, his life is going all backwards.

Nevertheless, achievement of balance and harmony is possible. Lawrence, worked under a belief that “the pristine life could still be recovered from the vestiges in today’s indigenous races and from the spirit of place.”<sup>19</sup> Living the powerful life of the earth, that can but be lived by the body, will correct the over-emphasis put on the intellect by the white races. The effort is to “re-unite body and soul,” to correct the “fatal division”<sup>20</sup> of being. The natives, who seem to go on “existing and persisting without hope or élan” (PS, 374) also need to revive the hope, the aspiration of the spirit. The morning star, that is Quetzalcoatl, is a symbol of that state of achieved balance, balance between the spirit and the blood, love and power. The dawn star is also the holy ghost. Just as the holy ghost “holds the light and the dark, the day and the night, the wet and the sunny, united in one little clue,”<sup>21</sup> the morning star “hanging perfect” (PS, 79) between the day and the night is “the gleaming clue to the two opposites” (PS 81).

Ramon has the power of bringing together the two great human impulses, “the breath of dawn and the deeps of the dark” (PS, 376), to a point of fusion. All others can strive to achieve this poise, this balance, which alone is “divinity” (PS, 377). In his letter to Mabel Dodge Sterne, Lawrence stresses: “one must somehow bring together the two ends of humanity, our

own thin end, and the last dark strand, from the previous, pre-white era.”<sup>22</sup> The new conception of human life that the novel envisions, rising out of “a new fusion of the white invader and the dark native”<sup>23</sup> emphasizes the need of balance between mind and blood for healthy, harmonious living. Quetzalcoatl, the iridescent god, gleams with many shades of meanings. He can teach the people to live beyond money and the things of the world. Just as Quetzalcoatl shines in the sky like the morning star, a tiny inward star can rise within a person. The desire is not to achieve worldly success but to pass “with transfiguration to the Morning Star” (PS, 225). It is the prompting of the holy ghost, man’s innermost soul, “the only stable centre”<sup>24</sup> inside one. In such a state, the dreams and urges trouble one not. The daytime selves and the externalities of the world are forgotten. Tomorrow, yesterday or today pass into oblivion and a man wants just to “Be”. It is a state where he is undivided, where at last he has his “wholeness, holiness” (PS, 226): “And the perfect sleep of the snake *I Am* is the plasm of a man, who is whole” (PS, 156).

An individual alone, however, is incomplete, a fragment and needs a mate for joy and fulfilment: “And where thou fallest into my hand, fall I into thine, and jasmine flowers on the burning bush between us” (PS, 160). The morning star which rises between two or many is the “only whole thing” (PS, 350). Just as there is a strong urge to move into a vivid relation with the others, there is a need of maintaining one’s integrity. The gulf between the two persons remains unsurpassable forever. The point is the same as Birkin in *Women in Love* took great pains to elaborate as “star-equilibrium.” Cipriano and Ramon, the blood-brothers, embrace each other ever in joy, still honouring “each other’s eternal and abiding loneliness” (PS, 225).

The novel asserts that when a man and woman truly come together in marriage, respecting each other’s “abiding loneliness”, neither being possessed nor trying to possess, a star shines out of their union. However, at the same time, does the book ask Kate insidiously to give up her stakes, submerge her individuality in favour of the novel’s quest for the whole mankind? Within his limited range, Don Cipriano possesses a curious power. A “supremely vitalistic figure,”<sup>25</sup> he can cast a spell over Kate, making her think of the ancient Pan world where men strode along in immense power. Kate finds herself succumbing: “She could conceive now her marriage with Cipriano; the supreme passivity, like the earth below the twilight, consummate in living lifelessness, the sheer solid mystery of passivity. Ah, what an abandon...” (PS, 278). Kate Millet reads in such lines the political agenda of the author: “Kate Leslie is an exemplum, an object lesson placed so as to lead other

women ‘back to the twilight of the ancient Pan World, where the soul of woman was dumb, to be forever unspoken.’ Her vertiginous passivity is not only an admonition to her sex, but something the author appears to enjoy playing at himself.”<sup>26</sup> Millet pays no attention to the comfort, natural ease and relaxation of the will which Kate experiences for the first time in her relation with Cipriano. Such reductive reading involves a neglect of Lawrence’s strong urge to find a more complete way of existence by attempting to unite the white consciousness with the positives of the dark continent.

Later, when she marries Cipriano, she finds absolute rest for the first time in her life in what she now takes to be her mood of “positive passivity” (PS, 379) as the hardness of her will is dissolved. The novel neither depicts Cipriano-Kate relationship as ideal nor as a static, unchanging one, without potential to evolve into something new. The advocacy of the mood of passivity does not so much mean submission on the part of the white woman, as the need of giving up of shrill, insistent will. In any case, knowing Kate as one does, keeping in mind her independence, her scepticism, her moments of repudiation and revulsion, one can hardly take her mood of “positive passivity” as permanent. Underneath all its barbarity, Mexico has many saving graces that serve as pointers towards a saner life for the rest of the world. Unlike the modern world, the dark country has kept alive the flow of sex instinct as “a real flow of sympathy, generous and warm, and not a trick thing, or a moment’s excitement, or a mere bit of bullying.”<sup>27</sup> In their proud manhood, men are alive to the womanliness of a woman. Walking on the beach, as a “peon” laughs at her “with a soft, grateful flame,” Kate feels, “How wonderful sex can be, when men keep it powerful and sacred, and it fills the world! Like sunshine through and through one!” (PS, 392).

Jamiltepec, Ramon’s *hacienda*, is a picture of an ideal workers’ commune. There are men weaving *serapes*, making *huaraches*, artisans, sculptors and blacksmiths – working with their hands, deriving pleasure and satisfaction from their work. There is, then, Juana’s younger son Ezequiel, a sensitive upright youth who likes best to work on land, even though he can never hope to own any. Whereas the elder Jesus, who works a machine, is ugly in his jeering tone, Ezequiel has proud grace. These men seek neither land nor gold but life first of all. The morning star that shines in their eyes, the star that in Mexico was Quetzalcoatl, holds the promise of taking the world towards a better future.

Though Lawrence’s attempt to found a religion and invent the liturgy and rituals for it may be a part of his whimsical excesses, Kate’s spiritual odyssey falls into the quest pattern in Lawrence’s fiction. In a bid to

restore the manhood and womanhood of the jaded European culture, Lawrence selects the Mexican setting to test whether it is possible to re-root the rootless lives of the white races. In order to water the “tree of life”, Lawrence seems to acknowledge the importance of music, dance and ritual. Man must rediscover the lost connection with the elements and respect the spirit of the place. The novel poses the question: What is life? Lawrence seems to answer that life is not bull-fights or social gatherings and bickerings. Although revival and regeneration of civilization is needed for realizing the fullness of being, one must stop worrying over the externalities of the world in order to discover the wholeness and holiness of the life within.

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