

Université de Montréal

The Toxic Morsel: T.E. Lawrence and The Mint

par

Andrew Williams

Département d'études anglaises  
Faculté des arts et des sciences

Thèse présentée à la Faculté des études supérieures  
en vue de l'obtention du grade de  
Philosophiæ Doctor (PhD)  
en études anglaises

Novembre 2004

©Andrew Williams 2004

Université de Montréal



PR  
14  
U54  
2005  
V.012

Direction des bibliothèques

## AVIS

L'auteur a autorisé l'Université de Montréal à reproduire et diffuser, en totalité ou en partie, par quelque moyen que ce soit et sur quelque support que ce soit, et exclusivement à des fins non lucratives d'enseignement et de recherche, des copies de ce mémoire ou de cette thèse.

L'auteur et les coauteurs le cas échéant conservent la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent ce document. Ni la thèse ou le mémoire, ni des extraits substantiels de ce document, ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans l'autorisation de l'auteur.

Afin de se conformer à la Loi canadienne sur la protection des renseignements personnels, quelques formulaires secondaires, coordonnées ou signatures intégrées au texte ont pu être enlevés de ce document. Bien que cela ait pu affecter la pagination, il n'y a aucun contenu manquant.

## NOTICE

The author of this thesis or dissertation has granted a nonexclusive license allowing Université de Montréal to reproduce and publish the document, in part or in whole, and in any format, solely for noncommercial educational and research purposes.

The author and co-authors if applicable retain copyright ownership and moral rights in this document. Neither the whole thesis or dissertation, nor substantial extracts from it, may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms, contact information or signatures may have been removed from the document. While this may affect the document page count, it does not represent any loss of content from the document.

Université de Montreal  
Faculté des études supérieures

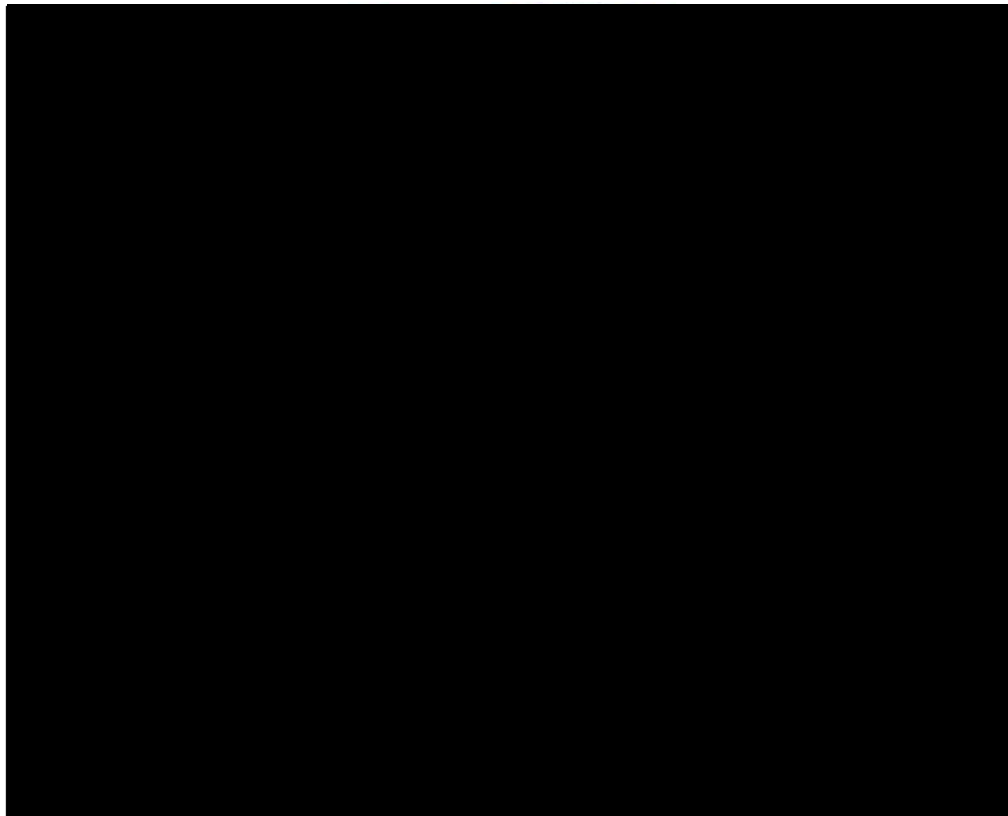
Cette thèse intitulée

The Toxic Morsel: T.E. Lawrence and The Mint

présentée par

Andrew Williams

A été évaluée par un jury composé des personnes suivantes:



Thèse acceptée le: 7/1/05

## Abstract

Thomas Edward Lawrence is a figure that still stirs the imagination more than 60 years after his death. What is his appeal? Some critics have stated that Lawrence's character held something for everyone. This would seem to be the case, but whether this is due to Lawrence himself or the media manipulation that created the myth is hard to say. There is no doubt that Lawrence was held in rock star reverence by the people who read of his fame or saw Lowell Thomas's slide presentation concerning his desert career. There is also no doubt that Lawrence himself was personally captivating. Friends and casual acquaintances have all attested to his personal magnetism. Some of these people included Churchill, Lady Astor and a variety of public figures not easily fooled by charlatans or glory seekers.

Most recently, Lawrence has been fixed in the public eye by David Lean's film, Lawrence of Arabia. Based on the events described in The Seven Pillars of Wisdom, Lawrence of Arabia produced a Lawrence that was not recognizable to many of his friends or family members. However, it is the sight of Peter O'Toole dancing on the top of a smashed Turkish troop train that most people associate with Lawrence. This was the case for myself. A viewing of the restored version of the film sparked my interest in Lawrence and induced me to examine the life of the man for myself, rather than relying on a cinematic production that has increasingly come under fire in the last few years for its lack of accuracy and static cinematography.

Rather than concentrate on the Seven Pillars period of his life, I was drawn to Lawrence's postwar activities. The time span covered by The Mint is one of the most interesting periods of Lawrence's life. Abandoning opportunities that grew from his fame, he submerged himself in his life in the ranks of the Royal Air Force. Lawrence never accepted a commission, although offered one several times, and was content to serve as an ordinary enlisted man. As is often the case with Lawrence, this was misleading. What ordinary private received visits from the head of the air force, politicians and writers? The answer lies in the fact that Lawrence was not an ordinary soldier. Lawrence enlisted in the Air Force in order to provide himself with material to write a book on the force. This stated purpose was misleading. The act of writing The Mint was to result in Lawrence building a new sense of self. I believe that this was in fact the major motivation for his enlistment. The building process was carried out by stripping himself to the most basic level of society and, like a mollusk recreating a new shell, clothing himself in a new form.

The shedding of his old shell was painful, and the recording of it even more so. The act of breaking down, of destroying the old personality via the roughness of the barrack-room finds its parallel in the writing of The Mint. What conclusions can we draw concerning the power of the autobiographical genre to redefine the writer? The distance between 'truth' and "fiction" or at least interpretation is the space within which the writer seeks to reinvent himself. The precise manner in which this is achieved shall be explored within this dissertation.

The events described in The Mint occupied a short time in Lawrence's air force career, yet they throw much light onto the character of the man. Surprisingly

little has been written concerning The Mint, surprising because this is the most fascinating period of the life of a man who helped to form the geo-political outline of much of today's Middle East. It is my hope that this study will help to open up this most fascinating glimpse of a man striving to reinvent himself.

Key words: Literary criticism, biography, autobiography, textual sexuality, imperialism, allusion, English literature 1900 - 1999.

## Résumé

Thomas Edward Lawrence est une des grandes figures, qui, presque soixante six ans après sa mort, remue encore l'imaginaire. Quel est donc son charme? Quelques critiques ont statué que le personnage de Feu Lawrence tient de chacun d'entre nous. Il semblerait que ce soit le cas, néanmoins il est difficile de faire la part des choses car que cela soit dû à Lawrence lui-même ou à la manipulation médiatique, un mythe est né. Il ne fait aucun doute que Lawrence a été vénéré comme une "Rock Star" par les gens qui ont fait sa gloire ou qui ont vu les diapositives de Lowell Thomas sur sa carrière. Par ailleurs Lawrence était personnellement captivant. Amis et connaissances ont tous admis son magnétisme, parmi ces personnalités vous avez. Winston Churchill et Lady Astor ainsi que d'autres éminentes personnes qui sont loin d'être facilement trompées par des charlatans en mal de gloire.

Plus récemment, Lawrence a été le point de mire du public dans le film Lawrence d'Arabie de David Lean. Basé sur des événements décrits dans Les Sept Piliers de la Sagesse Lawrence d'Arabie a été performé avec une telle dextérité que Lawrence était méconnaissable pour plusieurs membres de sa famille et nombre de ses amis. Toujours est-il que la vision de Peter O'Toole dansant sur le toit d'un train militaire à la dérive, est l'image la plus couramment associée à Lawrence d'Arabie. Ce qui est indubitablement mon cas.

C'est en regardant une version du film que j'ai été subjugué par Lawrence, je me suis mis alors, à m'y intéresser de plus près d'abord pour moi-même, au lieu de me fier béatement à une production cinématographique aussi fidèle soit-elle d'autant plus qu'elle a été dévoyée ces dernières années pour, paraît-il, un manque de précision et de



pérennité. Au lieu de me pencher sur ses années des Sept Piliers de Sagesse j'ai été plutôt voir du côté de ses activités d'après guerre. Dans le laps de temps couvert par La Matrice elles sont évoquées magnifiquement. Délaissant les opportunités dues à sa gloire, il s'est investi, mais alors complètement, dans les Forces Aériennes Royales . Il n'a jamais accepté de commission même si cela lui a été offert à plusieurs occasions parce qu'il était heureux de servir comme un simple engagé ordinaire. Bien entendu, entre vous et moi, cela donnait une vision erronée de la réalité car a-t-on souvent vu un engagé ordinaire recevoir des visites aussi prestigieuses que celles de certains grands dirigeants des Forces Armées, des politiciens ou des écrivains.

Plutôt que de me concentrer sur l'époque de sa vie des Sept Piliers de la Sagesse, j'ai été vers les activités d'après-guerre de Lawrence. La durée couverte par La Matrice est l'une des périodes les plus intéressante de sa vie. Abandonnant les opportunités dues à sa célébrité, il s'est immergé dans sa vie dans les rangs de la "Royal Air Force". Lawrence n'a jamais accepté de grade, quoique cela lui soit offert plus d'une fois, il était content de servir comme un simple soldat, un soldat ordinaire. Comme il est souvent arrivé avec Lawrence, ceci était trompeur. Car quel était le soldat ordinaire qui recevait la visite des gradés de l'armée de l'air, des politiciens et des écrivains? La réponse réside dans le fait que Lawrence n'était pas un soldat ordinaire. Lawrence s'est engagé dans l'armée de l'air pour pouvoir avoir du matériel afin d'écrire un livre sur l'armée de l'air. Ce but déclaré était aussi trompeur ! L'action d'écrire La Matrice devait aboutir, pour Lawrence, à la reconstruction de lui-même, à savoir d'avoir un nouveau soi. En fait, je crois que c'est la motivation majeure de son enrôlement dans l'armée de l'air. Il a commencé sa démarche de reconstruction d'abord en arrachant tout, jusqu'à l'expression

la plus simple de socialisation puis comme un mollusque, se reconstruire une nouvelle carapace en s'habillant autrement. L'abri de son ancienne coquille était douloureux et l'expression de cette douleur l'était encore plus. Le fait de se laisser écrouler et de détruire sa vieille personnalité à travers la rudesse des casernes trouvent un parallèle dans l'écriture de La Matrice.

Quelles conclusions peut-on tirer du pouvoir que pourrait avoir le genre autobiographique pour redéfinir un écrivain? La distance entre "vérité" et "fiction" ou du moins son interprétation est un espace dans lequel l'écrivain cherche à se réinventer. La manière précise dans laquelle ceci s'est fait, sera explorée dans le cadre de cette dissertation. Les situations décrites dans La Matrice ne parlent que d'une petite partie de sa vie même si cela a jeté un éclairage formidable sur le personnage qu'il était. Et la surprise n'en fût que plus grandiose, puisque cette période de sa vie fut cruciale étant donné que Lawrence a eu un impact, oh combien majeur sur la géopolitique du futur Moyen-Orient.

Mots clés : Critique littéraire, biographie, autobiographie, sexuality textuel, l'impérialisme, allusion, littérature anglaises 1900–1999.

## Acknowledgements

Many people have had a hand in the writing of this dissertation and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their help.

Professor William Kinsley has provided invaluable guidance, encouragement and a keen eye for detail in reading my text. Ms. Johanne Simard provided welcome comments on the stylistic requirements of the Université. Nadia and Thorya Wahab deserve my thanks for their insight into the politics of the Middle East. Mr. Doug Gardhouse of Concordia University suggested the title and Ms. Kenza Aït Youssi-Noufsi of Concordia rendered my Resumé readable. Mr. David McDerby and the staff of the Nicholas Hoare Bookshop are commended for their patience in dealing with my obsession with everything Lawrence.

My deepest thanks are reserved for my parents, Beryl and John Williams. Without their continual support and encouragement this dissertation would not have been attempted and it is to them that this text is dedicated.

## Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Résumé	vi
Acknowledgements	x
Table of Contents	xi
Appendix: T.E. Lawrence Time Line	1
Chapter One: Lawrence Revisited	19
<u>The Mint</u>	23
Defining <u>The Mint</u>	24
Lawrence's Impact	28
Chapter Two: <u>The Mint</u> as Autobiography	32
<u>The Mint</u> as Autobiography	33
The Myth	34
The Hidden Word	37
<u>The Mint</u> and Autobiography	39
Chapter Three: Earlier Work	50
<u>Seven Pillars of Wisdom</u>	51
Literary Output	55
Translations from the French	56
<u>The Odyssey</u> and Letters	58
Chapter Four: This is my Truth	60
Fact and Fiction	61
Writing <u>The Mint</u>	67
What is <u>The Mint</u>	67
Chapter Five: Appetizers	74
The Consumable <u>Mint</u>	75
The Crazy Pelican	77
Mind Suicide and Mixed Identities	79

Chapter Six: Lawrence and Textual Sexuality	85
Violating the Self	86
Early Self	89
Growing Fame and the Wish to Escape	93
Incident at Deraa	99
Persuasion	100
Pen Lash Page	103
Chapter Seven: Casting the Die	107
Ambition	108
Textual History	114
Pilgrim's Progress	117
Chapter Eight: Allusion in <u>The Mint</u>	124
The Paper Chase	125
Big Books	129
Targeting Text	131
Religious Shakespearean and Miltonic Allusion	140
Lady of Shallot	152
Democratic Allusion	155
Chapter Nine: Confession of Faith	164
Future Plans	165
Chapter Ten: The Empty Nourishment of "Unworking"	171
Lawrence and Food	172
The Autobiographical Meal	174
Preserving the Meal	177
Consuming Autobiography	182
Concluding the Meal	185
Chapter Eleven: Lawrence's Imperialism of the Self	187
Lawrence's Imperial Tools	188
Military and political Views and Conquest	191
Lawrence's Honour	198
Chapter Twelve: Conclusion	203
The Family	204

Identity and Truth	206
Drawing on the Past	210

Works Cited	212
-------------	-----

**T.E. Lawrence Time Line**

In the production of this timeline, I have utilized a number of sources to confirm my own knowledge of Lawrence activities and whereabouts. These include letters and biographical works. In the early and later years of his life, I have left a number of months unaccounted for. The reason for this is a lack of activity on Lawrence's part. The lack of activity during his early years is of course understandable. The fallow times during his last years are simply due to the quietening of his life. Safe in the R.A.F. Lawrence had at last started to find the peace that he had sought. His life was more or less confined to his R.A.F. duties. These were so time consuming that little was left for writing or socializing. There were certainly rumours and plans that suggested that this quiet time might not last, but this we shall never know for sure. The timeline does not pretend to pin down Lawrence's whereabouts or activities for every day of his life; rather I have attempted to provide an idea of Lawrence's location in order to provide a quick reference to his many and varied activities.

## 1888

August

T.E. Lawrence born on the 16<sup>th</sup> at Tremadoc, Wales. He is the second of five boys born to Sarah Junner and Sir Thomas Chapman. Two of the brothers, Will and Frank were killed during the First World War. The oldest, Robert, became a medical doctor and served with the army. The youngest, Arnold, was too young to serve and later became a professor of archeology. Lawrence's father had left his wife and daughters to elope with Junner, who was the family governess and with whom he had been carrying on an affair.



**1889**

- September The Lawrence family moves to Kirkcudbright in Scotland. At some time before T.E.'s third birthday the family moved to the Isle of Man and then to Jersey.
- December The Lawrence family moves to Dinard, France

**1894**

- March In the spring of this year the family moves back to England, settling on the edge of the New Forest.

**1896**

- June During the summer the Lawrence's move to Oxford, in order to allow the boys to attend school. Until this point, they had been educated by a series of governesses. The family settled at number 2 Polstead Road in Oxford.

**1905**

- January At some point in 1905 (some biographers claim 1906) Lawrence ran away from home and enlisted in the army -- possibly the artillery. He was found, bought out and returned home.

**1906**

- August Lawrence on cycling trip to France.

**1907**

- April Lawrence travels to Wales to continue his tour of medieval castles.
- July Lawrence graduates from Oxford High School.
- August Lawrence in France to continue his BA research.
- October Lawrence attending Jesus College Oxford. Due to his Welsh birthplace, Lawrence was provided with a scholarship that partially covered the cost of attending Jesus College

### 1908

August Lawrence in France researching Crusader Castles.

### 1909

June Lawrence leaves England for the Middle East

August Lawrence in Tripoli, Latakia.

September Lawrence in Aleppo.

### 1910

June Travels to France.

July Lawrence received First Class Honours for his thesis from the School of Modern History.

September Travels in France with his brother Frank.

November Lawrence is studying medieval pottery in Rouen.

December Leaves for the Middle East.  
Ship stops in Athens, Constantinople.  
December 31<sup>st</sup>, in Jebail.

### 1911

January In Jebail.

February Lawrence travels to Haifa with Hogarth.

March Lawrence arrived at the archeological site in Carchemish. (Jerablus)

April - July In Carchemish.

August Lawrence in Beirut on return journey to England.

September -  
November In England.  
In England. Lawrence begins his return journey to the Middle East at the end of November.

December Travels to Aleppo at the end of the month.

### 1912

January Lawrence was loaned to Flinders Petrie, the Egyptologist, to carry out work in Egypt. In January, he was at Kafr Ammar, in the desert some 40 miles south of Cairo.

February - Lawrence in Aleppo.  
June

July - Lawrence in Carchemish.  
December

### 1913

January Lawrence leaves England to return to the Middle East on January 9<sup>th</sup>.

February - Lawrence in Carchemish.  
June

July Lawrence leaves Carchemish on July 14 to return to England.

August Lawrence in Oxford. During the summer, Lawrence returned to Oxford in the company of Dahoum, his photographic assistant at Carchemish. Lawrence had instructed Dahoum in photographic procedures and the two formed a close rapport.

September Lawrence staying in Aleppo.

December Lawrence back in Carchemish. Later that month Lawrence and Leonard Woolley joined an expedition in the Sinai. Their purpose was to assist in map-making and intelligence gathering in the area.

### 1914

January Lawrence and Woolley with Captain Stuart Newcombe of the British Army engaged in intelligence work in Sinai.  
Returning by sea to England

In El Auja, on the Egyptian-Syrian border.

February

In Syria.

August

First World War begins on August 4<sup>th</sup>. On the advice of S.F. Newcombe, Lawrence decides to post-pone his joining up until his specialist knowledge will be required.

October

Lawrence in London at the War Office. Commissioned as Second Lieutenant on October 26<sup>th</sup>. Duties include map-making of the Middle East. During this time, Lawrence and Woolley wrote a report based on their Sinai surveys. This was published as The Wilderness of Zin.

November

In the War office, London.

December

In the War Office, London. Lawrence leaves for Egypt on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December

### 1915

January

In the Intelligence Department of the War Office in Cairo. Lawrence's duties will include map-making, intelligence analysis, prisoner interrogation and intelligence bulletin writing.

February

In Cairo.

March

In Cairo. Lawrence begins writing material that would be incorporated in Seven Pillars as yet unforeseen Seven Pillars.

April - July

In Cairo. Frank Lawrence killed in action on the Western Front in May.

August

In Cairo and Athens on inter-service liaison.

September -  
February 1916

In Cairo.  
Will Lawrence killed in France during his first week flying as an observer in September.

### 1916

March	Lawrence sent to Mesopotamia. Lawrence and Aubrey Herbert were to negotiate with corrupt Turkish army officials in an effort to buy the release of a surrounded British Army. This was unsuccessful. However, Lawrence was able to further form his opinion of the state of Arab enthusiasm for independence.
April	In Mesopotamia.
May	In Mesopotamia.
June	Launch by Grand Sherif Hussein of the Arab Revolt in Mecca, June 3 <sup>rd</sup> . June 6 <sup>th</sup> , first appearance of <u>The Arab Bulletin</u> , the intelligence newsletter for which Lawrence wrote many articles.
July - September	In Cairo.
October	In Cairo. Later in the month, Lawrence journeyed to Arabia, traveling with Sir Ronald Storrs. His role was to meet with the sons of Hussein in order to gauge their commitment to the Arab Nationalist movement and revolt, and to the Allied cause.
November	In Cairo. Later in the month, Lawrence returns to the Hejaz as the liaison officer attached to Feisal and his troops.
December	In the Hejaz.

### 1917

January	During 1917 and possibly earlier, Lawrence and his comrades came to suspect that the promise of Arab independence, which had been communicated to the Arabs, was not to be. Lawrence and his fellows found this very disturbing, to the point where Lawrence became foolhardy and exposed himself to many personal risks. In Yenbo, Umm Leji and Cairo.
February	In Wejh and Cairo.

March	In Wadi Ais. Lawrence met with Feisal's brother Abdula. Settles a dispute between two Arab clans by executing the man who had caused the dispute.
April	In Wejh
May	Lawrence begins the journey to Akaba.
June	On intelligence gathering missions.
July	In Jeddah Lawrence and the Arabs enter Akaba on the 6 <sup>th</sup> of July. Lawrence returns to Cairo to report on the Arab success.
August	In Cairo and Akaba
September	In Akaba. Lawrence begins to launch raids on the Hedjaz railway.
October	In Akaba. Raids on the railway.
November	In Azrak. Lawrence later enters Turkish held city of Deraa. On November 20 <sup>th</sup> , Lawrence was captured, beaten and raped. Lawrence escapes during the night. This experience was to mark Lawrence for the rest of his life.
December	In Jerusalem and Cairo.

### 1918

January	In Akaba and Tafileh.
February	In Tafileh and El Ghor el Safiye.
March	In Cairo and Akaba.
April	Attack on the railway at Tell Shaham.
May	After reconnaissance duties in the Hedjaz, Lawrence returns to Cairo.
June - July	In Cairo.

August	Preparations being made for an attack on Deraa.
September	At Um El Surab. Deraa captured.
October	In Damascus. After the capture of Damascus, Lawrence returned to England. There he began work in a more political area of action, arguing for Arab independence before the war cabinet, and later in the year attending the Paris Peace Conference with the Emir Feisal in his continuing efforts to assist the Arabs in achieving independence.
November - December	In London.

### 1919

January - March	In Paris.
April	In Paris and Oxford. On April 7 <sup>th</sup> , Lawrence's Father dies. Lawrence is forced to return home to Oxford twice during this period. Biographers claim this as a date for Lawrence's discovery of his illegitimacy. His own accounts place the discovery many years earlier.
May	In Paris. On the 19 <sup>th</sup> of May, Lawrence began a return journey to Egypt, apparently to collect his wartime notes. The bomber in which he was flying crashed in Rome and Lawrence suffered some injuries, including a broken rib, an injury mentioned in <u>The Mint</u> . After a short delay, he resumed his trip, continuing on to Cairo.
June	In Cairo.
July	In Cairo and Paris. The Arab cause is poorly supported by the British Government. Lawrence returns home to Oxford. He is elected a Fellow of All Souls, a position that provided him with food, lodging and a stipend. Ostensibly, this was to provide him with the means to begin work on what would become <u>Seven Pillars of Wisdom</u> . He seems to have divided his time between All Souls and the family home on Polstead Road.

- August Lowell Thomas begins presentation of his show With Allenby in Palestine and Lawrence in Arabia to massive audiences. The resulting fame was to cause Lawrence many difficulties over the coming years.
- September In Oxford. In a letter dated September 1<sup>st</sup> addressed to his school friend Vyvyan Richards, Lawrence mentions the purchase of a few acres of Land at Pole Hill in Essex. Lawrence and Richards had planned to set up a small printing press and produce books in the William Morris style.
- October In Oxford.
- November Lawrence loses the manuscript for Seven Pillars at the railway station in Reading.
- December Lawrence begins work on a new version of Seven Pillars in London.

#### 1920

- January In Oxford and London working on Seven Pillars.
- February In Oxford and London working on Seven Pillars. Considers producing an abridged version for the American market.
- March In Oxford and London working on Seven Pillars.
- April - February 1921 In Oxford.

#### 1921

- March In Cairo. Lawrence had been recruited by Winston Churchill to travel to the Middle East with him in an effort to settle the questions of statehood that were unresolved following the Paris Peace Conference.
- April In Cairo.
- May - July In Oxford.



August -  
September In Jeddah.

October In Cairo.

### 1922

January In a letter to Sir Hugh Trenchard, dated January 1922, Lawrence states that he will try to leave Churchill on March the first. He then states that he wishes to join the R.A.F. -- in the ranks -- and asks Trenchard's help to do so. In this letter, Lawrence claims that he wishes to write a book from the view of the enlisted man.

Lawrence begins sending chapters of Seven Pillars to The Oxford Times. He had decided to have the newspaper produce eight typeset copies for him to revise for proper publication.

February In London, working on Seven Pillars.

March Lawrence was delayed in leaving Churchill's employment. This eventually happened in July.

July In London. Lawrence leaves the Colonial Office in the first half of July.

August In London working on Seven Pillars. Lawrence joins the R.A.F. as 352087 Aircraftsman Ross on August 30. Lawrence beginning to negotiate with Edward Garnett at Cape for publication of Seven Pillars.

September Lawrence is stationed at Uxbridge. He begins to write the "Uxbridge Notes" that form the central part of The Mint

November Posted to the R.A.F. School of Photography at Farnborough. Nucleus of The Mint well underway.

December On the 27<sup>th</sup> a story about Lawrence's presence in the ranks is published in the Daily Express. Lawrence's presence had been leaked to the paper by an Air Force officer.

## 1923

- January Lawrence is dismissed from the R.A.F. on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Earlier in the month he begins to announce that he will change his name legally. Spends time in London. Lawrence raises the possibility of publishing a subscriber's edition of Seven Pillars.
- March Joins the Royal Tank Corps as a private, posted to Bovington camp in Dorset. Lawrence disliked the Tank Corps. As an Air Force recruit, he had come to be biased in the belief that R.A.F. recruits were superior to those in the army. During his time at Bovington, he forged a number of ties that were to be very important to Lawrence for the rest of his life. Lawrence found his future cottage, Clouds Hill, in the area of the camp. This provided him with a refuge from the rigorous service life. It has been claimed that Lawrence encouraged John Bruce to enlist with him to act in the role of bodyguard -- protecting him from the rough horseplay of his fellow rankers -- and administering birchings to Lawrence. Lawrence also met Thomas Hardy and his time spent with the Hardy's at their nearby home helped him in his writing, providing an immediate connection to the literary world.
- April At Bovington.
- May At Bovington.  
At the end of May or beginning of June Lawrence is asked by Cape to translate Adrien le Corbeau's book Le gigantesque. This tale of a very large tree was later called The Forest Giant.
- June -  
September At Bovington.  
Lawrence finishes the translation of The Forest Giant. He begins to consider his translation of Pierre Custot's Sturly.
- October -  
November At Bovington.  
Lawrence decides not to profit from Seven Pillars.
- December At Bovington. Christmas was spent at Clouds Hill.

## 1924

- January -  
March At Bovington.
- April At Bovington. E.M. Forster visits Clouds Hill. Forster and Lawrence maintained a correspondence over the years and Lawrence greatly valued Forster's comments regarding Seven Pillars and The Mint.
- May - June At Bovington.
- July At Bovington. Lawrence injured in a beating in camp administered by drunken troops.
- August At Bovington. Work on the subscriber's edition of Seven Pillars continues.
- September -  
December At Bovington.

## 1925

- January At Bovington. Lawrence decides that his version of Sturly is unsatisfactory. He burns the manuscript. Ironically, the translation was later undertaken by Richard Aldington who published a book that was highly critical of Lawrence.
- February At Bovington.
- March At Bovington. Lawrence visits Jonathan Cape in London to discuss producing an abridgement to Seven Pillars. This was later to be called Revolt in the Desert.
- April -  
June At Bovington.
- July At Bovington. Lawrence's continued efforts to rejoin the R.A.F. had been unrelenting. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of July Trenchard signed the order allowing Lawrence to put in for a transfer to the R.A.F. through official army/Air Force channels.

August At Bovington. Leaves Bovington on the 25<sup>th</sup> for R.A.F. West Drayton for processing, then on to Uxbridge and finally to the Air Force College at Cranwell. Lawrence became 338171 Aircraftsman Shaw.

September - November At Cranwell.

December At Cranwell. Work continues on subscriber's edition of Seven Pillars.

### 1926

January - February At Cranwell.

March At Cranwell. Proofs for subscriber's edition of Seven Pillars corrected.

November First few copies of Seven Pillars sent out to the subscribers.

December Transferred to R.A.F. Drigh Road, Karachi in what was then India.

### 1927

January - February In Karachi.

March In Karachi  
Revolt in the Desert published in England and America.

April - May In Karachi.

June From Karachi, Lawrence instructs his legal representative to change his name from Lawrence to Shaw. Comments in this letter make it clear that Lawrence intended to become Chapman at a later stage.  
At this point Lawrence undertakes to write literary reviews for The Spectator.  
Lawrence begins transcribing his Mint notes.

Lawrence writes to Robin Buxton – his banker and former colleague in the desert war - to halt publication of Revolt in the Desert, as his debts resulting from the production costs of Seven Pillars were now discharged.

July  
August -  
December

In Karachi. Working on Mint notes.  
In Karachi.

### 1928

January

Lawrence contacted by Bruce Rogers and Ralph Isham to produce a translation of The Odyssey. It is proposed that he will be paid £800.00 and a small royalty.  
In Karachi.

February

In Karachi.

March

Lawrence mails the completed manuscript of The Mint to Charlotte Shaw. A copy is also sent to David Garnett who produces a number of copies for very limited circulation to people such as Lord Trenchard, head of the Air Force  
In Karachi

April - May  
June

In Karachi.  
Transferred to Miranshah, near the Afghan boarder.

July -  
August

In Miranshah.

September

In Miranshah.  
Favourable comments on the translated sample of the Odyssey received from Isham.

October -  
December

In Miranshah.

### 1929

January

Lawrence's presence in what was then India had been the subject of much wild speculation in the British and Foreign press. As a result of this, it was decided to return him to England. After flying out of Miranshah,

he embarked on the S.S. Rajputana for England. Lawrence spent much of the time on board working on the Odyssey. In order to avoid any Press entanglements, he was taken off the ship via a small boat. Unfortunately, word of this leaked out and he and his soon to be commanding officer, Wing Commander Sydney Smith, were followed closely by journalists on their way to Smith's London accommodations.

February	In London.
March	Lawrence posted to R.A.F. Cattewater, near Plymouth.
April - July	At R.A.F. Cattewater.
August	Lawrence was posted to Calshot for a short time. He and his commanding officer, Sydney Smith, were to over see the Schneider Cup races. This international airspeed competition gave rise to the Supermarine Spitfire, one of the mainstays of the R.A.F. during the Battle of Britain. During the competition, Lawrence was exposed to a number of senior officers from several foreign Air Forces. Photographs taken of him conferring with these officers got Lawrence into hot water with the R.A.F. once again, who were upset at the notion of an enlisted man hob-nobbing with senior officers.
September	Calshot and Cattewater.
October	In London and at Cattewater. From October 1 <sup>st</sup> , R.A.F. Cattewater had been renamed R.A.F. Mount Batten, largely because of Lawrence's efforts.

### 1930

March	During the spring, Lawrence visits London on R.A.F. business and arranges to have twelve copies of <u>The Mint</u> printed. He begins to edit the text.
September	On holiday in Scotland, near Aberdeen with two others including Jock Bruce from the Tank Corps. During this period, Lawrence employed Bruce to put him through a variety of rigorous physical tests, such as swimming

in cold rough seas followed by birchings. These trials were on the orders of Lawrence's fictitious Uncle. Lawrence, writing to Bruce in the guise of the Uncle, demanded complete reports on Lawrence's reactions to these ordeals.

November Lawrence is asked by Bruce Rogers to speed up his Odyssey translation work.

December At R.A.F. Mount Batten.

### 1931

February On February 4<sup>th</sup>, Lawrence and his Commanding Officer's wife, Clare Sydney Smith witnessed the crash of an R.A.F. flying boat at Mount Batten. Lawrence was deeply affected by this crash, and the slowness of the rescue boats. It was no doubt this factor that led to his close involvement with the development of high-speed air sea rescue craft for the R.A.F., an improvement that he and others had been campaigning for two years.

March At Mount Batten.

April At Mount Batten, Lawrence begins work on the R.A.F. high-speed launch programme.

August Translation of The Odyssey finished August 15<sup>th</sup>.

December Stationed at Hythe, Southampton, working on rescue boats.

### 1932

September At Mount Batten and Hythe.  
For the rest of his R.A.F. career, Lawrence was involved with the design and construction of the 200 class R.A.F. seaplane tenders and high-speed rescue craft. These duties required him to travel extensively from harbour to builders inspecting progress on the craft. There was little in the way of literary projects, his main writing at this time took the form of technical manuals on the operating of the boats that he assisted in designing.

**1933**

- January Continuation of R.A.F. duties.
- November The British Legion Journal publishes three chapters from The Mint, without permission from Lawrence. This results in Lawrence almost being expelled from the R.A.F. Lawrence speaks of not publishing the text until 1950.

**1934**

- January Continuation of R.A.F. duties.
- March Basil Liddell Hart's biography of Lawrence appears. The use of the "Lawrence" name in brackets -- intended by Lawrence and Liddell Hart to de-emphasize his desert role -- raised questions as to Lawrence's real identity and Lawrence once again risked exposure of his family history. This matter was eventually died off.
- December Considers printing a copy of The Mint on a hand press to be installed at Clouds Hill.

**1935**

- February Lawrence retires from the R.A.F. and leaves Bridlington by bicycle on February 25<sup>th</sup>. He arrives at Clouds Hill to find it besieged by reporters. After a scuffle, he heads for London where he appeals to various newspaper heads to call of their reporters. He slowly makes his way back to Clouds Hill.
- May Lawrence fatally injured in a motorcycle accident on the 13<sup>th</sup> while returning from sending a telegram from Bovington to Henry Williamson.  
Lawrence dies on the 19<sup>th</sup>  
Burial on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

**1955**

Publication of The Mint



**Chapter One**  
**Lawrence Revisited**

### Thomas Edward Lawrence: An Overview

"Only people who are worried about something write".  
(T.E. Lawrence by his Friends 539)

In recent years the personality and character of T.E. Lawrence have come under close scrutiny. Lawrence's roles in warfare, political history and literature have been examined with a closeness given to few other figures. He has been the subject of several biographies, one of which, John Mack's T.E. Lawrence; A Prince of Our Disorder, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1976. Jeremy Wilson has produced a scholarly biography that totals some 1200 pages. Stephen Tabachnick has authored an encyclopedia dealing exclusively with Lawrence. Philip O'Brien of Whittier College has contributed a bibliography of more than 800 pages that is now in its second edition.

Denis McDonnell has noted that:

Several factors over those fifty-odd years [since Lawrence's death] have contributed to periodic surges of popularity. Each of these publications has sparked a corresponding renewed biographical interest - the ultimate result being more published books. (McDonnell, Home Page)

Lawrence has been portrayed in a stage play, Ross, by Terrance Rattigan and in David Lean's film Lawrence of Arabia. Returning to McDonnell, whose introduction to Lawrence material is a useful aid as a beginning point in Lawrence studies, we find that:

In 1962, Columbia Pictures released David Lean's Lawrence of Arabia. The film, though historically inaccurate in many ways, won seven Academy Awards and, of course, prompted several new biographies of Lawrence for adults and children. It also, believe it or not, caused the

publication of several comic books with Lawrence of Arabia themes. (McDonnell, [Home Page](#))

Lean's film is an inaccurate rendering of [Seven Pillars](#), pulling episodes from Lawrence's text and condensing them. Characters are merged, and a number of fictional events, such as Lawrence's confession that he has enjoyed executing Gasim are added to the mix. [Seven Pillars](#) is the description of a man losing himself – destroying himself. This is depicted in Lean's film; however, Lawrence is portrayed as being unstable from the start. Characterized by his un-military behaviour, a trait that was apparently correct, O'Toole's Lawrence is evidently self-destructive, burning himself with matches commenting that the trick is not minding that the burning hurts. ([Lawrence of Arabia](#)) Everything that we are expected to know of Lawrence is presented to us within the Arabian time frame. As Hart points out, we see Lawrence “*in media res*” and are given no idea of how he was formed (Hart [Waking Dream](#) 159). The film ends with an almost catatonic Lawrence being driven past a file of Arabs on his way back to England. While Lawrence of Arabia is a fascinating depiction of Lawrence, it is not the Lawrence of [Seven Pillars](#), rather, it is a fragmented piecing together of Lawrence's fears and concerns over his personality. Lawrence's inability to fit in with either Arabs or British and his lack of faith in his ability to control his passions forms the core of the film.

Apart from this epic effort, Lawrence has been the subject of a recent dramatic film, [A Dangerous Man](#), and several documentary films and numerous television programs, not to mention poetry and novels. He has become a part of our

culture, appearing in comics and advertisements.<sup>1</sup> Lawrence's fame arises principally from his actions during the Arab Revolt. The popular view of Lawrence, as demonstrated in David Lean's film, is that of a neurotic action figure, yet,

[t]he facts of Lawrence's life fit so easily into a work of complete fiction that we must be somewhat in awe of a man who really did play such a role in his own life. (Williams 3)

Of all the material produced little deals with Lawrence's life after Arabia. Perceval Graves' biography T.E. Lawrence and His World devoted eighteen pages to the years between 1921 and 1935. Many biographies are similar in their allocation of space. Michael Asher's 1998 Lawrence, The Uncrowned King of Arabia spends little time on post desert activities. M.D. Allen's study, The Medievalism of Lawrence of Arabia, states that of the years after Arabia "relatively little need be said" (Allen 11). This seems to be a shortsighted approach. Imagine ignoring Marlowe's extra-literary activities, or Whitman's later life in Camden? These years are the most interesting and revealing of Lawrence's life, chronicling the rejection of much of what he had worked for during the war years and before.

A great deal of contemporary critical work has been devoted to the study of Lawrence's larger literary effort, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, yet his second work, The Mint, a book dealing with life in the Royal Air Force, has received relatively little attention.<sup>2</sup>

Not as well known as Seven Pillars, The Mint is deserving of close examination. It is my contention that through the writing of The Mint and the

---

1 One Italian comic book casts him as "Emir Dynamite", for his train busting experiences in the desert.

circumstances of its composition, Lawrence sought to purify himself, to burn away the old Lawrence through penance and the writing of the resulting new self, Ross, which he created for himself through his immersion in the R.A.F. and his writing of The Mint. Stanley Weintraub comments on Lawrence's writing: "At its most extreme it involved a symbolic killing of the self, a taking up of a new life and a new name" (Weintraub Impulse xii). The success of this and the methods by which Lawrence carried out his cure will be examined in this dissertation.

### The Mint

The Mint and the events described within the text were a birth and a death, a penance and a salvation, a remedy and a poison, an occupation and liberation. Lawrence would seem to have been aware of all of the above and his choice of style, form and material pointed at a determined effort to break away from the William Morris, Charles Doughty influenced style of the previous century, introducing a new, modern style more in the line of realist writers such as D.H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. Lawrence was definitely aware of trends in literature through his contacts in the literary world and The Mint shows evidence of modernist influence. Lawrence subscribed to James Joyce's limited first edition of Ulysses announced by Shakespeare and Co. Lawrence's comment regarding his own Seven Pillars was that "...[t]o bring it out after Ulysses is an insult to modern letters" (Orlans 130). Among the critics, Leonard Woolf recognized Lawrence's Seven Pillars debt to Morris and Doughty. For The Mint Lawrence adopted a far more Modernist language and style. This was relatively new and is acknowledged as such by many literary and cultural scholars.

---

<sup>2</sup> Paola Daniele has written a tesi di laurea, "The Mint di T.E. Lawrence; Come Documento e Come

Edward Said, commenting on Seven Pillars of Wisdom, states that Lawrence wrote in a mold shared by other writers such as Conrad and Joyce.

[Lawrence]... take[s] narrative from the triumphalist experience of imperialism into the extremes of self-consciousness, discontinuity, self-referentiality, and corrosive irony, whose formal patterns we have come to recognize as the hallmarks of modernist culture... (Said 188)

Lawrence's developing style, particularly apparent in The Mint, used a linguistic and stylistic tactic that was both new and in some cases quite shocking for the time. Said comments that in order to confront the changing times and tastes:

...a new encyclopedic form became necessary, one that had three distinctive features. First was a circularity of structure, inclusive and open at the same time: Ulysses, Heart of Darkness, A la recherche, The Waste Land, Canots,[sic] To the Lighthouse. Second was a novelty based almost entirely on the reformulation of old, even outdated fragments drawn self-consciously from disparate locations, sources, cultures: the hallmark of modernist form is the strange juxtaposition of comic and tragic, high and low, commonplace and exotic, familiar and alien whose most ingenious resolution is Joyce's fusing of the Odyssey with the wandering Jew, advertising and Virgil (or Dante), perfect symmetry and the salesman's catalogue. Third is the irony of a form that draws attention to itself as substituting art and its creations for the once possible synthesis of world empires. (Said 189)

The mythologizing of Lawrence has tended to ignore the fact that he was a product of the same conditions that gave rise to the so-called lost generation. The popular notion of Lawrence of Arabia has no time for this, yet it is a fact that guided much of his life.

### **Defining The Mint**

Lawrence was a product of Empire and was an agent of Imperialism. Yet his disaffection with the trappings and morality of imperialism, while not total, did lead

him to renounce the fame that came to him through his actions as an agent of the empire.<sup>3</sup> These facts increase the impact of Lawrence's later actions, both literary and otherwise.

Second efforts, whether in music, visual arts or literature are often amongst the most difficult of things to bring to completion, a fact that Lawrence was well aware of, especially in the light of the fabulous success of Seven Pillars and its abridgment, Revolt in the Desert. Despite the commercial and artistic triumphs of the first book, Lawrence frequently commented that it was a failure in many ways. In The Mint, Lawrence embarked on a text of an altogether different style. The Mint was a forward looking work, owing more to James Joyce than William Morris. Lawrence specifically refers to Joyce's cut and paste technique and mentions his playing with time and events in his description of the writing of The Mint. To copy another writer's technique is complimentary for the source, and speaks of Lawrence's desire to progress in his development (Garnett Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 532).

The Mint is autobiography, but fictionalized autobiography. Lawrence did not make anything up; rather, he doctored fact. This is a process that has been used by many authors including several that were practicing during Lawrence's time, such as Conrad, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce. For these writers, writing was an occupation, and in some cases a passion. Lawrence desperately wanted to be recognized as a writer independent of any fame that he had achieved during the war. It was not an occupation for him; rather it was a state of being to which he aspired

---

3. Not total as he joined the Air Force despite the fact that this branch of the service was the newest, with no established traditions other than those won during the War.

with a sense of desperation apparent in his work. Writing was a lifeline, a form of therapy for Lawrence.

The progress, quest, pilgrimage, purification (or remedy) towards the new self eventually became not only painful, but permanently damaging because it was rendered so by politicians, the press and Lawrence himself.

The progress, quest or journey - term it what you will - is best observed in the pages of The Mint. Not only is the book an autobiographical snapshot of life in the fledgling Air Force, but it is also a picture of a different sort of bird attempting to recreate itself, phoenix-like, from ashes not completely of its own making. It is clear that Lawrence used the act of writing The Mint as a means to recreate his own sense of self. I shall demonstrate this through an analysis of The Mint, backed up by readings of Lawrence's letters and different biographies. The works of a number of literary theorists, as they relate to the genre of autobiography and the self will also be applied. Through these approaches, we will come to see that the writing of The Mint was both remedy and poison. Lawrence did achieve a degree of happiness through his Air Force life, yet at the same time, was well aware that in Nikolai Tolstoy's words, "the middle classes tended to regard poverty in one of their own as bearing the taint of sinfulness" (Tolstoy 400). In Lawrence's case, poverty does not only apply to his financial situation, but to matters of the spirit.

There are several thematic threads that weave throughout Lawrence's life and his writings. Some are self contradictory in nature; others are harmonious with what the critics and the public know of Lawrence's life. By examining, pulling apart The



Mint and contrasting it with known biographical fact, we can expose the process and the internalized place of the act of writing as a method of defining the self.

It is my intention to examine Lawrence's text from several viewpoints. Firstly, I shall look at the context of Lawrence's family background and the effect this had on his life and art. I shall also inspect the struggle that Lawrence underwent to produce The Mint, both as an antidote and a poison in the search for a proper sense of self-identity. I shall bring Lawrence's text into contact with several contemporary critics in order to produce a balanced view of Lawrence's work. Incidents and episodes from Lawrence's life will be examined, often from several different perspectives. This will occasion a repetition of facts, a necessary device when digging into Lawrence's life and a device that he himself often used.

The phrase "backing into the limelight" has been linked to Lawrence. (Yardley titlepage) This was not always the case; more often than not, life and the limelight got in Lawrence's way. As an example of this we can look at Lawrence's leaving of the R.A.F., which took place earlier than scheduled. Upon his arrival at his cottage, Clouds Hill, he was besieged by reporters, at one point literally having to fight his way out of his own house. To paraphrase many Lawrence biographers, Lawrence, having looked for fame, discovered that it was not to his liking and rejected it

There was a craving to be famous; and a horror of being known to like being known. Contempt for my passion for distinction made me refuse every offered honour. (Seven Pillars 563)

Unfortunately the fame that had been won at such a cost continued to take its toll and Lawrence was burdened and harassed by his unwanted persona for the remainder of his life.

This last period of Lawrence's life was one of great introspection and self-discovery, a form of journey that did not always yield happy results. Lawrence had within his grasp the ability to be anything he wanted. He refused posts such as the governorship of Egypt and a position on the Board of the Bank of England to serve as an enlisted man in the R.A.F. He was a complex and often unhappy man yet he had the ability to inspire great friendships that crossed all social barriers. Army privates often found themselves guests at Lawrence's Dorset cottage with E.M. Forster, the Shaws and other important figures. John Buchan, later Lord Tweedsmuir and Governor General of Canada, stated that he would have followed Lawrence "over the edge of the world" (Lawrence of Arabia 939).

### **Lawrence's Impact**

The impact he has had on our own culture has been immense. Denis McDonnell writes that:

I read somewhere that, with the exception of one or two years during World War II, not a year has passed since 1922 without a book by or about T.E. Lawrence being published. There were (and still are) years in which more than one such book has been published. No matter what the final tally, it's quite a lot of paper devoted to the recording of one man's life. (McDonnell Homepage)

This of course leads one to wonder why the interest? My own opinion is that Lawrence, particularly at this point in world history, holds something for everyone; warrior, politician, scholar, artist, and finally, the rejection of all of the above. There is an attraction for many people to the figure of the outsider. Milton's Satan, Shakespeare's Hamlet, by viewing the outsider, the marginalized one, we see something of ourselves by contrast.

The first promotional impetus would have been Lowell Thomas' slide lecture. McDonnell provides a fine synopsis of Lawrence related material, which I have reproduced at length:

The first impetus would have been Lowell Thomas' slide lecture, The Last Crusade-With Allenby in Palestine and Lawrence in Arabia, that he performed to packed London houses such as The Royal Albert Hall in the early 1920's.[...] In 1924 his book, With Lawrence in Arabia, was published and was followed by The Boy's Life of Colonel Lawrence in 1927. Other biographies began to appear such as Lawrence and the Arabs (1927) by Robert Graves and "T.E. Lawrence" in Arabia and After (1934) by Basil Liddell Hart. In 1927 Jonathan Cape and George H. Doran published Revolt in the Desert...an abridgment of Seven Pillars of Wisdom.[...] The sales of Revolt in the Desert astounded everyone; especially Jonathan Cape, who was able to move his small publishing house to much larger quarters and become recognized in London publishing circles. It was in no small part due to the success of Revolt in the Desert that he was able to do this.

[In 1935] Jonathan Cape and George H. Doran published [...] the first limited and trade editions of Seven Pillars of Wisdom. [...] Among other books published on both sides of the Atlantic in 1937/8 were The Letters of T.E. Lawrence (1938), the first collection of TE's letters; T.E. Lawrence by His Friends (1937), essays written by friends on TE's (sic) aspects of TE they felt they knew best; and T.E. Lawrence to His Biographers (1938) by Robert Graves and Basil H. Liddell Hart. (McDonnell Homepage)<sup>4</sup>

Part of this impact has come about in a more subtle and surprising manner. As a writer and patron of the arts Lawrence contributed much to the artistic world, first by commissioning a vast amount of visual art for Seven Pillars. Artists such as Augustus John, Eric Kennington and William Roberts executed this work. Lawrence often went on short commons in order to have the funds to pay for the artwork

---

<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Wilson's T.E. Lawrence website lists a number of typescript and manuscript copies of The Mint still in existence. The Houghton Library at Harvard has the manuscript copy that Lawrence presented to Edward Garnett. The British Library has typed copies presented to Charlotte Shaw. Major Lawrence collections are located at the Houghton, the Bodleian in Oxford, and The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Austin in Texas. ([www.telawrence.info](http://www.telawrence.info))

intended for Seven Pillars. This exposure to contemporary artists introduced Lawrence to styles and movements removed from his earlier influences and certainly influenced the composition of The Mint. Secondly and of greater immediate concern to us, he created two important books. The first mentioned, Seven Pillars, was a William Morris inspired treat, not only as a work of literature, but as an outstanding example of the bookmaker's art. Lawrence planned and worried over the look of his text, commissioning works of art and planning for each page to end in a full sentence.

To return to McDonnell:

The Subscriber's edition was an elaborate book whose every aspect - down to the minutest detail - was supervised by TE. He deliberately chose to use several binders, so that no two books would look alike. He did not number or identify any of them in any way so the total number of copies produced has always been a mystery. These copies, when they appear, command prices of tens of thousands of dollars. (McDonnell Home Site)<sup>5</sup>

Lawrence had originally thought to profit from his Arabian story. As time passed and his feelings towards his role in Arabia soured he decided to produce a subscription volume. Lawrence undertook to finance the project personally, to the tune of approximately £13,000.00. It was in order to clear this debt that he agreed to the publication of an abridged version of Seven Pillars, Revolt in the Desert, with the left over money diverted to a charitable trust.

As we shall see, Lawrence was also concerned with the appearance of The Mint. He planned to print a private edition himself, on a hand press to be installed at Clouds Hill after his retirement from the R.A.F. Lawrence went so far as to

---

<sup>5</sup> Recent figures indicate that there were 170 Subscriber copies and 32 "incomplete" editions which lacking some of the illustrations of the completed versions. Letter from Jeremy Wilson,

commission 100 collotypes of a sketch done by Augustus John as the frontispiece for this edition. These plans remained unfulfilled at his death resulting from a motorcycle accident in 1935. Even in death Lawrence was hounded. He lay in a coma at Bovington Camp -- site of his Tank Corps days -- for six days before his death. During that time it was reported that detectives sat at his bedside to record any delirious muttering that might have escaped him. They need not have bothered. Dr. Farquar Buzzard, a specialist sent to treat Lawrence, stated that had he lived, Lawrence would have been without the power of speech or of memory. The three witnesses to the accident, two errand boys whom Lawrence had come upon at the crest of a hill and whom he had swerved to avoid, and a Corporal Catchpole, out walking his dog, were reminded of the Official Secrets Act. The police visited Lawrence's near-by cottage and it was rumored that documents -- possibly including a diary -- may have been removed.

The coroner's inquest was unsatisfactory to some, as the cause of death was ruled accidental despite the words of Catchpole who claimed to have seen a black car leaving the scene. Conspiracy theories concerning Lawrence's death abound and to this day "witnesses" come forward with different explanations and theories concerning the incident. One theory contends that Lawrence was murdered because he was to aid in the modernization of Britain's Air Force. He had been asked to the home of Lady Astor, the prominent politician, to meet Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin with a view towards this job, but he declined, stating that "...there is something broken in the

works...". Lawrence felt that his will had broken and that wild horses would not drag him from his cottage (Brown Letters 537).

Lawrence had a complex and often unhappy life, punctuated by moments of pleasure. This life has continued to be a source of great interest to scholars and the lay public. His troubles were a montage of modern ills: Mack's title, A Prince of Our Disorder, fits well. In examining Lawrence and The Mint we gain insight into the harnessing of the creative force for the purpose of creating a new sense of self for the author, and insight into whether or not this exercise was a success.

**Chapter Two**

**The Mint as Autobiography**

## The Myth

The myth of T. E. Lawrence has been the subject of great scrutiny. Biographical works were popularly published during his lifetime and his Seven Pillars of Wisdom is autobiographical in nature, describing as it does Lawrence's role in the desert revolt, autobiographical in the common usage of the term. The romanticisation of Lawrence was responsible for the wild speculation in the press concerning his postwar activities. During his time in India, it was reported in the world press that Lawrence was engaged in espionage for the British Government. These rumours created difficulties for Lawrence because the man did not wish to live up to the myth that had been created around him. In failing to live up to the popular notion of himself, Lawrence created - perhaps inadvertently - a persona of intrigue and mystery. The biographies produced before and after his death largely failed to dispel this aura. The Mint was an attempt on Lawrence's part to take control of his own mythology and replace it with a personal history of his own creation for his own ends.

Modern technology is largely responsible for the spread of the Lawrence myth. Lawrence came to widespread public attention through a series of slide shows presented by Lowell Thomas in 1920. Originally titled With Allenby in Arabia they featured General Sir Edmund Allenby, the British Middle Eastern commander. Thomas soon realized that audiences were far more interested in the more romantic figure of Lawrence, the Englishman who went native; to paraphrase David Lean's motion picture Lawrence of Arabia. Sensing the possible increase in box office receipts, Thomas capitalized on this, changing the name of the presentation to With Allenby in Palestine and Lawrence in Arabia. As a result of this publicity, Lawrence



became a celebrated national and later worldwide figure of curiosity. Thomas' early, sensationalized portrayal of Lawrence set the tone for literally dozens of biographies that were to follow.

Lawrence remarked that after he was dead, the biographers would "rattle his bones about" (Lawrence and Arabia). This has proven to be an accurate prediction. The scope of Lawrence biographies has ranged from scholarly volumes to film to comic books. The range of material provides a difficulty for the Lawrence scholar. How does one separate fact from fiction, indeed, how does one prove what is fact or fiction? In this regard, modern Lawrence scholarship has devoted much time to examining the minutiae of Lawrence's exploits. This close examination, contrasting Lawrence's deeds as recorded in Seven Pillars of Wisdom with other contemporary accounts and official army documents, has provided one method of verification. In the case of Lawrence's later literary work, The Mint, we must rely more on the reminiscences of Lawrence's contemporaries and on his letters than service records. This is partly due to the backstairs approach that Lawrence took to enlisting in the Royal Air Force, pulling strings and bypassing official channels and official government suppression. In order to gain a degree of balance when discussing the events of Lawrence's life, it is useful to consider the scope of biographical technique available to the modern scholar.

At its most simple, a biography consists of the retelling of the events of a person's life. What separates a biography from a work of fiction is the ability to verify the facts being presented. For the purpose of the biography, fact, or truth, is something that can be confirmed independently by another source. Often the capacity

of verification is thwarted due to the ravages of time or the interference of the subject's friends or family. Nathaniel Hawthorne's widow took a pair of scissors to her late husband's letters in an effort to portray a Hawthorne that matched with her own views of what was proper. In The Home Letters of T E Lawrence, Lawrence's older brother Robert edited his brother's correspondence to produce a T.E. that was in line with Robert's own Christian missionary belief.

Is The Mint truly an autobiography? L.P. Hartley, in his review of The Mint, comments by linking The Mint to Richard Aldington's "Biographical Inquiry" and brings into question the notion of the ego in The Mint (Hartley 658–9). Stephen Tabachnick clearly places Lawrence's text within the autobiographical group. (Tabachnick 29)

Critics, in devising rules for the classification of texts within the autobiographical canon, disagree. It seems that there is no doubt that The Mint is autobiographical. In order to place the text within the genre it is worth examining the nature of biography and autobiography. In an attempt to better understand autobiography and The Mint I will bring a number of critics into contact with Lawrence's text, adding comments of my own.

Texts resist classification or quantification. The nature of language and writing is representational, an approximation of a concept. If we accept this, then any definition of autobiography can only exist in a vague form. A text does present a number of conventions that do place it within the autobiographical format. In his book On Autobiography, Philippe Lejeune comments on this, pointing out that the name of the author and the publication of the text establish the text's existence within

the “social institution” of the autobiographical family (Lejeune 21). In the case of The Mint further resistance to classification is provided through the book’s publishing history.

### **The Hidden Word**

The Mint had great impact in publishing circles. The most obvious was the heroic and financial appeal of Lawrence of Arabia. Seven Pillars and Revolt in the Desert had sold very well. The Mint cashed in on this fame. However, The Mint was not widely available for many years. A small number of manuscripts or typescripts circulated privately to Lawrence’s friends and confidants. The impact that the text held was hidden, disguised and distorted. This distortion was caused by Lawrence and his fame, but also by his refusal to publish the text for fear of harm it would do to the Air Force and to individuals still living. Portions were leaked to various magazines that published sections, or suppositions about the text.<sup>6</sup> The text remained hidden, yet paradoxically, known, a publishing cliffhanger.

What is the power of the hidden word and its relationship to the autobiography? It is the power that the reader, or in this case, the unreader grants. Tabachnick comments on how one type of autobiographer

... presents no answers to the many questions about life that he raises, and gives us no clear image of himself: in the end, it is the reader alone who must impose a shape and pattern on the autobiographer’s character, who must in fact *create* the autobiographer. (Tabachnick 29)

There is total involvement of the potential reader, who having no text with which to work, applies his own suppositions to the text. In effect, they create their

own text. It has often been commented that Lawrence was all things to all men. This being the case there were then hundreds of "different" versions of The Mint in existence. The act of autobiography is the creation of a modern myth, a mythologizing of the subject and an awareness of that creation.

The text does not and can never live up to expectations. The imposition of the reader's own values drowns or enhances the sensibilities with which the author has imbued the text. A structure has been created in which the work becomes a catalyst. In the case of The Mint, these expectations were damaging. The text went unreleased and eventually, was censored. Lawrence's brother and literary executor, Arnold, performed the act of censorship, providing an instance in which Lejeune's "social institution" represented by Arnold Lawrence, sought to negate his own function within the autobiographical structure through an emasculation of the text.

In addition to the depredations of friends and family, the scholar must face the wear and tear of everyday life on the materials at hand. Letters and manuscripts are lost or destroyed, styles and interests wane, with the resultant reduction in concern for some figures, and less funding for their study. Critical styles and approaches also change, resulting in the application of new approaches and techniques that might have been disapproved of at an earlier time becoming accepted and popular. The opposite is also true, with accepted schools of criticism becoming old fashioned and out of favour.

---

<sup>6</sup> The leaks would not seem to be directly due to Lawrence.

In some cases the situation is muddied further by the fallibility of memory and the subject's attempts to evade or fabricate his or her personal history; this is certainly the case with autobiography, as we shall see from our study of The Mint.

The attempt to corroborate events in a person's life is a hallmark of the biography, yet the autobiography is somewhat different. The questions of reliability are made more difficult due to the source of the information. There is a greater emphasis placed on intent and truthfulness due to the self-interest that the writer must hold for himself. Our concern in this examination of The Mint is the autobiographical content that the text displays. The concerns of the autobiographical genre are inherently complex; in this case they are multiplied because the text is also an auto/biography of the Royal Air Force at the time of Lawrence's enlistment as well as a study of the author's frame of mind. The author is supposedly one John Hume Ross, or 352087 A/c Ross. The reader is presented with a Russian doll figure, a shell within a shell within a shell. These shells are created by Lawrence's various adopted personas, as we shall later see, and the interpretation of the reader.

### **The Mint and Autobiography**

A number of critics have noted that Augustine's Confessions can be considered as the first true autobiography, basing this on the concept that the autobiography is concerned with memory and introspection. While The Mint is concerned with memory the concern lies with the subversion of memory, not the accurate preservation of it. This encouraged Lawrence/Ross' new self-awareness. Tabachnick places Seven Pillars within the traditional frame in discussing the differences between Seven Pillars and its abridged offspring, Revolt in the Desert.

He states that Revolt "...amounts to a memoir rather than an autobiography because all personal, introspective passages have been eliminated" (Tabachnick 62). There can be no doubt that the function of autobiography is to focus on the author's preoccupation with self-identity. The growth of the genre is therefore dependant on the growth of self-awareness. Laura Marcus comments that the difference between autobiography and memoir rests in their seriousness, which in turn is defined by the author's intent (Marcus 3). Extending this, can we suppose that intent is a mark of self-awareness? This is difficult, as an interpretation of intent depends greatly on the reader's own experience and receptiveness to the text.

In the case of The Mint it seems evident that Lawrence wanted to produce what he called a "worm's eye view" of life in the Air Force. There was also a continually stated wish to be known as a writer capable of producing work that would stand beside that of Melville or Dostoevsky. This is certainly a serious intent, but addresses only the outward issue of The Mint, saying little of the personal increase in leisure time and growth of literacy rates has provided the food for increased introspection.

The commitment to write what may be considered a serious autobiography is according to Marcus an "attempt to understand the self and to explain that self to others" (Marcus 3). This being the case, then the act of autobiography is an attempt at self-definition, a self-definition to be shared with the reader and a self-definition to be explored by the reader. Paul de Man comments on this:

Autobiography, then, is not a genre or a mode, but a figure of reading or of understanding that occurs, to some degree, in all texts. The autobiographical moment happens as an alignment between the

two subjects involved in the process of reading in which they determine each other by mutual reflexive substitution. (de Man 70)

A number of novelists could claim that there is a degree of de Man's figure of understanding arrived at between the two concerned subjects. The understanding, however, does not function at the primary autobiographical level; it is not the main objective of the work as presented to the reader. Neither does it possess "... the expectation of literal factual and historical truth that the reader of an autobiography brings to his text" (Tabachnick 62). de Man further states that "...just as we seem to assert that all texts are autobiographical, we should say that, by the same token, none of them is or can be" (de Man 70). It is the intent, the framing of the text within the vague delineations of the genre that sets the reader on the path marked autobiography and defines the alignment.

On the level of The Mint being a biography of the Royal Air Force this definition presents an obstacle. Lawrence had an arrangement with the head of the Air Force, Lord Trenchard, that would not allow the publication of The Mint until 1950. By this time it was supposed that the Force would be strong enough to withstand the adverse public reaction that the raw text would generate. The text therefore was to remain in limbo, unread except for a few copies that went out to selected readers. To write an autobiography that is unread by others is an exercise in self-referentiality, a pure attempt at self-definition. What is to be gained by this sharing? The answer might lie in the attempt by Lawrence to redefine himself through the text. Yet, how much of the intent can be judged? The signature of the author -- his name -- on an autobiography is meant to grant a form of truth or purity to the text.

This is one of the central tenants of Phillippe Lejeune's rules concerning autobiography.

Lejeune states that when trying to separate fiction from autobiography the text itself will offer proof of autobiographical purity beyond doubt. Autobiographical identity is

...based on two social institutions: vital statistics (agreement internalized by each of us from early childhood) and the publishing contract; there is, then, no reason to doubt identity. (Lejeune 21)

This presupposes that the author wishes to maintain his place in the social institute. Robert Smith points out difficulties with another Lejeune definition of autobiography:

DEFINITION: Retrospective prose story that a real person relates about his or her own existence, in which he or she gives emphasis to his or her individual life, and to the history of his or her personality in particular. ( 53)

Smith comments that as Lejeune has quoted from his own autobiography, he is confusing "... autobiography with the theory of it" (Smith 53).

A wish to place one's self outside the social institute through the autobiographical method would seem to be anathema to Lejeune's theory of contracts, institutions as defined by clearly constructed charts and graphs. Lawrence's rejection of place and privilege due (in part) to his stated wishes to write from the ranks defies Lejeune's formula. The genre of autobiography cannot be distilled to a concentrate of rules. The nature of autobiography defies this reduction. Rules that are based on anything other than that which can be consistently and predictably reproduced are not rules, they are attempts to impose a system of



classification on that which cannot be classified. As de Man comments "...[t]he difficulties of generic definition that affect the study of autobiography repeat an inherent instability that undoes the model as soon as it is established" (de Man 70). Lejeune's rules, like Lawrence's R.A.F. uniform, fit where they touch.

The vital statistics that Lejeune comments on are linked to the "proper name" acquired in childhood. If we turn to Derrida, however, we find that "[t]he concept of the proper name [...] is therefore far from being simple and manageable" (Derrida, Grammatology 111). The Mint and its autobiographical complexity is certainly evidence of this. To continue with Derrida:

To name, to give names that it will be on occasion be forbidden to pronounce, such is the originary violence of language which consists in inscribing within a difference, in classifying, in suspending the vocative absolute. (Derrida Grammatology 112)

In addition to this, Robert Smith distills Derrida, commenting that "[t]he proper name cannot be the property of the bearer; its bearer is only the name's borrower" (Smith 36).

In changing his name from Lawrence to Ross to Shaw, an embargo was placed upon the "proper name," the birth certificate name, the popular societal name. The violence of the barrack room obscures the popular name, just as the violence done by Lawrence's parents to the social contract had repercussions on T.E.

There is an essential compliance to Derrida's views within The Mint, yet this does not completely negate the validity of Lejeune's social contract.

Common sense, and much Anglo-American philosophy. Will insist that the self is more than a subject position in language and that the 'I' of Napoleon or T.S. Eliot (or even of Derrida) denotes some reality outside the self-sealed circularity of writing.... (Dennis Brown 8)

In this context there is a degree of overlap. In viewing these two contrasting views we arrive at what Derrida refers to as a binary opposition. This area, in which the two oppositions come into contact, is the perch from which the critic can view the slippage that occurs when Lawrence's text is sutured to these critical views.

The proper name, or the tag that attempts to anchor the tag that is the societal identifier no doubt contributes to an individual's sense of self, whether through what is referred to as displacement or acceptance. To disassociate one's self from the "proper name" is an act of rebellion and defiance of the social institution, but the act of disassociation is itself an act of recognition. Yet in the case of Lawrence this was a reflection on the breach of the social institution of marriage that had been committed by his parents. Does Lawrence's refusal to use his Lawrence name, and therefore his Lawrence identity, negate the validity of the autobiography that he seeks to write? If one follows Lejeune's theory then it certainly does. Value is added by an improper name appearing on the title page, but which name is proper? To add insult to injury, the publishing contract is twisted if not broken (more violence) by Lawrence's insistence that The Mint not be published until 1950, a time when most of the characters involved – borrowed characters themselves cloaked beneath the autobiographical impropriety of fictionalized names – would be dead.

[...] according to the structure of copyright, author and text can always be sectioned off from each other, then in the case of autobiography the author can become separated from the name (the author's own) which entitles the text. [...] Using one's name as a title is to use something that has already been lost[.] (Smith 71)

With Smith's remarks in mind, Lejeune's construct has little room for works such as The Mint. By the same token Lejeune seems to have little room for authorial intent. How is it possible for the author to legitimize the autobiography with a name that is not truly his but is of itself an artificial construct? To do so removes the text from Lejeune's definition and depends upon the reader making a leap to connect Ross to Lawrence.

The nature of language and writing in particular results in varying degrees of removal from the action described. By the time I write these words, they are already in the past and effectively are dead. Writing seeks to place a mask over death, to remember the past just as words attempt to contain the totality of that which they are representative of. The autobiography attempts to be representative not only of the author's life, but of his intents. While to be sure the placing of the authorial stamp on the title page is a confirmation of autobiography, the act of exhibition through which the author discovers his own identity is far more telling.

Writing is a form of reanimation for what is conveyed through words. These feelings are reborn and reevaluated by the author. In the case of Lawrence this is borne out by his condition during the rewrite of the lost Seven Pillars manuscript. Reactivating the memories of his wartime experiences assisted in placing Lawrence in a situation where the ranks of the R.A.F. seemed a haven where he could achieve a rebirth, a point of which was the writing of The Mint.

False leads, deliberate red herrings, often undermine this so called "truth." The popular historical novelist, Patrick O'Brian, styled himself an Irishman. In fact he was born in England, of German parentage, with the name of Patrick Richard Russ.

Like Lawrence, Russ/O'Brian changed his name by deed poll to escape an unhappy past (King 97-98). Intent then, is an undependable yardstick by which to measure a text yet it does provide a possibility within which to navigate.

Verifiable fact -- one of Lejeune's "social institutions" -- does play a role for the student of autobiography despite Laura Marcus's comments to the contrary:

Very few critics would demand that autobiographical truth should be literally verifiable, - this would, after all, undermine the idea that the truth of the self is more complex than "fact" (Marcus 3).

The truth of the self, as Marcus calls it, must be based in fact, if only the fact of the author's birth and the facts of the circumstances that drive one to write. In addition, the reader must have a base from which to work, otherwise the distinction between fiction and non-fiction is lost, at best blurred. If this is desirable then we need not respect the notion of the genre. However, by verifying fact with the text, the reader is able to establish, to some measure, the seriousness of the author. In his examination of Seven Pillars, Tabachnick finds that Lawrence is truthful.

What departures from strict truth occur in Seven Pillars stem either from Lawrence's concern with the immediate political situation in the Near East or, more often, from the fact that he was an autobiographical artist rather than an 'objective' historian, if such a species of being really exists. (Tabachnick 62)

Lawrence follows the same artistic inclination in The Mint, juggling events and scenes to fit his purpose. (Garnett Letters 532) If checking reveals that a text has little relation to fact, then we can suppose that the reader is being misled for a reason. The reader must dig deeper into the text to see what the author intended in an attempt to achieve a form of closure.

Every autobiographical author lives with the past, is recording events that have already occurred. They are clothing the bones of the past with the flesh of the present. All auto/biography depends on a refiguring of the past, a use of history. This use is twofold. The author uses his own personal history as a narrative stream. This stream carries his impressions, ideas, thought and versions of events. The second use of history fixes the figure within a certain time frame and provides a frame within which the reader can place the work. From this historical fixing certain estimates regarding the text are made by the reader. Some of these estimates are outside of the author's control.

A divorcing of the text from its historical context deprives the work of a dimension and reduces the textual sensation delivered to the reader. In an inverse manner, the reader does not live in a vacuum and must bring his own sensibilities to the text. These sensibilities are made up of life experience (personal history) and inferred history, or the influence of the culture in which the reader lives. The text cannot be divorced from its historical context, in either direction.

Within the two historical contexts the reader and the author enter into an often-uneasy bargain. The author, by granting the text the label of authenticity, by affixing the term autobiography to the text, represents a figure of himself to the reader. The reader, bringing his or her own sense of self to the text, seeks to interpret the author's words. By filtering the text through her own values, experiences, personal history, the reader reanimates the text by providing her own vital spark.

Every text is a Frankenstein creation. The text is dead, a depiction of events past, of moments that have been left behind. The act of writing is a representation of

these events, sealed in their wood pulp, linen rag tomb until exhumed by the reader. As events for the cinemagraphic Frankenstein creature prove, the danger in autobiographical texts is the realization of the otherness of the author. Autobiography is an act of setting one's self apart from others, and one's self. Just as there is a distance between the reader and the author, there is a distance between the author and the mirror of the page. The distance between the author and the reader is what establishes the otherness or outsider quality of the writer. This distance between the author and the page/mirror is created not by the act of writing, but by the will to write. The need to refigure one's self is an extension of a sense of inadequacy that makes itself known in a need for exposure. An autobiography is an extreme cry for attention. This need not take the form of mass circulation, in fact the serious autobiography is more self inwardly directed than the frivolous study. The will to write establishes a need for self-referentiality, a need to fix one's being in a personal historical context.

Disagreement between an autobiographical text and history often reflects an author's discontent with the writer's own sense of personal worth. This may result in a deliberate attempt to delude the reader. The end result is an increase in the quality of self-referential material that is available to bolster the writer's identity. A reader's impressions, false or otherwise, are simply collateral damage to the writer.

Questions of intent, degrees of seriousness, the role of history in autobiographies, all of these points have marked the study of the autobiographical genre. The adoption of the above points has defined autobiographical works as a genre by granting it scholarly appraisal. The act of examination moves the subject

from a marginalized position to center stage; the subject is legitimized, granted a degree of self worth through a cultural reaction. Such an embrace serves to recognize the space within the equation. This recognition is power.

I have commented earlier that the growth of serious autobiography can be traced to a rise in the number of literate individuals. The history of the autobiographical form is a history of the growth of self-awareness, the authorial moment, and the wish to establish a distinct identity as presented to the reading public and to one's self within a common cultural context. Let us turn our own awareness to The Mint.

**Chapter Three**

**Earlier Work**



### Seven Pillars of Wisdom

During his work on The Mint, Lawrence tackled several other literary projects, which helped him to form an awareness of his talents and limitations. This awareness was expressed in his many letters and certainly influenced his desire to become a writer of quality. With regards to The Mint, there is a certain monkish quality that surrounds the text. The decision to retire to the “monastic” life of the Air Force provided Lawrence with a change of lifestyle, a form of penance or purification with which to heal himself of his wartime experiences. The penance and the salvation were attempted at the same time. Lawrence was working on his Seven Pillars text while Ross compiled notes for The Mint. In order to better understand The Mint, we need Lawrence’s other texts

The first and most obvious of the other works was Seven Pillars of Wisdom, which existed in several stages during the earlier portions of Lawrence's R.A.F. career. It has been remarked that Seven Pillars is the depiction of a man in the midst of a progressive breakdown of who he is, while The Mint explores the efforts to regain that sense (Hull 341). While the texts are different in many ways, there are a number of links between them. Common sense tells us that despite Lawrence’s efforts at creating a new self through the Air Force, the writer of Seven Pillars is the same person as the author of The Mint. Textually speaking one of these links occurs in the second paragraph of The Mint. Lawrence comments: “One reason that taught me I wasn’t a man of action was this routine melting of the bowels before a crisis” (Mint Cape 13). This statement has a twin in chapter 103 of Seven Pillars, the “Myself” section, in which Lawrence states that he was “...not a man of action...”

(Seven Pillars 562).<sup>7</sup> I would like to briefly discuss this chapter, as it sets the tone for the spirit that we find in The Mint.

“Myself” is a summing up of Lawrence’s opinion of himself, an opinion that is not very high, he tells us he “...did not like the ‘myself’ [he] could see and hear” (Seven Pillars 566). This low opinion was generated by a number of factors. Lawrence feels that he has been cured of his ambitions to be a knighted General by the “falsity of the Arab position”, the acting out the lie of Arab independence after the war. Lawrence believed that his successful carrying out of the lie made him “suspect his truthfulness to himself” (Seven Pillars 562). Lawrence often felt, wonderingly, that he was wearing a mask. This duality of self alarmed him, as there were moments when the mask slipped and his “appetite burst out and frightened “ him. (Seven Pillars 563). In addition to what he saw as this moral shortcoming, Lawrence was ashamed of both his clumsiness and his body and touching or being touched by another living thing was repulsive to him. Most telling for the feelings expressed in The Mint, is Lawrence’s expression of his always being “out of depth” with other men (Seven Pillars 562). We see this in The Mint when Lawrence writes of his inability to join in the horseplay of his hutmates. The Lawrence of Seven Pillars considers living with the Arabs to be “beastly” and turns in on himself. His

note-books were full of states of mind, the reveries and self-questioning induced or educed by our situations, expressed in abstract words to the dotted rhythm of the camels’ marching. (Seven Pillars 563)

---

<sup>7</sup> Obviously Lawrence was a man of action, as his deeds confirm. I believe that he means that his natural inclination was not that of a man of action, just as he felt that fiction was more “solid than activity” (Seven Pillars 564).

The method of composition used for The Mint is the same, notes jotted down and then expanded into book form, like the “beads on a string” as recommended for the next book after Seven Pillars by Edward Garnett (Lawrence Letters to T.E. 95). The note taking was abandoned and Lawrence wrote Part III off the top of his head feeling he could not regain the rhythm that had been interrupted by his dismissal from the R.A.F.. The note taking was abandoned in part due to other literary projects and because the cure of enlistment had started to work; Lawrence had found a measure of happiness within the R.A.F. (Brown Letters 442).

The seeds for Lawrence’s enlistment are to be found stated plainly in Seven Pillars.

I liked the things underneath me and took my pleasures and adventures downward. There seemed a certainty in degradation, a final safety. Man could rise to any height, but there was an animal level beneath which he could not fall. It was a satisfaction on which to rest. The force of things, years and an artificial dignity, denied it me more and more; but there endured the after-taste of liberty from one youthful submerged fortnight in Port Said, coaling steamers by day with other outcasts of three continents and curling up night to sleep on the breakwater by De Lesseps, where the sea surged past. (Seven Pillars 564)

Lawrence further comments that in “working, I had tried to serve, for the scrutiny of leading was too prominent” (Seven Pillars 565). The security of the ranks, inhabited by “other” failures in life, seems to be ideal, in the context of these remarks.

The culmination of the hardships of the desert, trying to fit in with both the British and the Arabs, trying to deal with the aspects of his own character that the situation exacerbated drove Lawrence ultimately to what he called mind suicide” (Seven Pillars 564). This “mind suicide” took a form in which the longed for

“[s]ubjection to order achieved economy of thought, the painful, and was a cold-storage for character and Will, leading painlessly to the oblivion of activity” (Seven Pillars 565). These statements seem at odds with Lawrence’s aim to write great books. Yet his comment that Seven Pillars was a “mangy skin, dried, stuffed and set up squarely for men to stare at” is telling (Seven Pillars 564). This is an example of Lawrence’s Will bursting out. By setting up this textual scarecrow Lawrence attention is diverted from the ‘real’ Lawrence. Praise was anathema to Lawrence, the more he received, the less he tended to believe his worthiness. Praise of ‘Lawrence’ was false praise, a worshipping of all that Lawrence found despicable in his character and was worship of a false god. The only area left to Lawrence was the anonymity of a new name and the ability to indulge his “craving to be famous” without the “horror of being known to like being known” (Seven Pillars 563). What avenues were left to him? All employment offered was made to Colonel Lawrence. His archeological ambitions were closed to him, as the authorities would no have allowed him to return to the Middle East. For a man of Lawrence’s education, writing was one of the few trades open to him. As Ross, and later Shaw, Lawrence believed that his literary ambition would be self-supporting, without need to resort to the recommendations provided by Lawrence. Despite his insistence of anonymity in his later literary activity, he was unsuccessful, as the majority of opportunities that came his was derived from his wartime connections, even the facilitation of his enlistment. Lawrence was a man of uncommon intelligence, and there can be no doubt that he was aware of this fact. It was pointed out to him often enough by Bernard Shaw and friends such as Wavell and Trenchard, who persisted in addressing him as ‘Lawrence’

as well as Shaw.<sup>8</sup> The key to Lawrence's acceptance of this lies in the following paragraph from Seven Pillars.

The hearing other people praised made me despair jealously of myself, for I took it at its face value; whereas, had they spoken ten times as well of me, I would have discounted it to nothing. I was a standing court martial on myself, inevitably, because to me the inner springs of the action were bare with the knowledge of exploited chance. The creditable must have been thought out beforehand, foreseen, prepared, worked for. The self, knowing the detriment, was forced into depreciation by other's uncritical praise. It was a revenge of my trained historical faculty upon the evidence of public judgement, the lowest common denominator to those who knew, but from which there was no appeal because the world was wide. (Seven Pillars 565 – 66)

The evidence indicates that Lawrence accepted the use of his Lawrence name from those who were not “uncritical”, people for whom he had respect. Lawrence's use of “public judgement” must be seen as a commentary on his post-war fame as Lawrence of Arabia, which was then gaining momentum during the time that he was working on Seven Pillars. This, and the switch in tenses used in the chapter, serves to distance the reader and Lawrence from the time of his thirtieth birthday and places this section of text close to the moment of his enlistment in the R.A.F. providing a snap-shot of Lawrence's state of mind during this time.

### **Literary Output**

There were several other works published after Lawrence's fatal accident. These range from copies of Lawrence's B.A. thesis to collections of letters and translations of Arabic poetry. The argument can be made that Lawrence really wrote only two books, but the bulk of material that he was responsible for, and that was

---

<sup>8</sup> See Letters to T.E. Lawrence, pages 211, 206

eventually published is staggering, as is the amount of material his life generated indirectly, such as biographies and critical studies.

Denis McDonnell has commented on the output of Lawrenciana after T.E.'s death.

In the years following 1935 several of TE's lesser-known works were published in England. Crusader Castles: The influence of the Crusades on European military architecture - to the end of the XIIth Century (Golden Cockerel Press, 1936), his Oxford thesis; Diary of T.E. Lawrence MCMXI (Corvinus Press, 1937), the diary he kept while on a walking tour of Syria in 1911; Two Arabic Folk Tales (Corvinus Press, 1937), two Arabic children's stories he translated in 1911; An Essay on Flecker (Corvinus Press, 1937), an article on poet and friend James Elroy Flecker; Secret Dispatches from Arabia (Golden Cockerel Press, 1937), a compilation of TE's contributions to the Arab Bulletin, which was a British Intelligence circular for the Arab Bureau in Cairo during World War I; Oriental Assembly (Williams & Norgate, 1939), a compilation of his 1911 diary, the introductory chapter of Seven Pillars (which was suppressed in the 1935 as it was considered to (sic) controversial), several newspaper articles, and 129 photos taken by TE; and Men in Print (Golden Cockerel Press, 1940), a compilation of book reviews TE wrote, some under the pseudonym of C.D. (Colin Dale). (McDonnell [Home Site](#))

In addition to this there are other items that can be added to the Lawrence canon. Lawrence worked on some large literary projects during the time in which he was rewriting Seven Pillars and The Mint. There were several translations: two from French, and one from ancient Greek.

#### **Translations from the French**

The two French works were Sturly, the story of a sturgeon and his adventures, and The Forest Giant, the story of a redwood tree. Sturly was commissioned by Jonathan Cape, in response to Lawrence's appeal for work in order

to fill both his pockets and the vacuum caused by the near completion of Seven Pillars. Lawrence translated Sturly in 1923. It was, as Lawrence described it:

...a true tale of how fish live, very well told: but English people like hearing of fish that were caught, hardly of fish *qua* fish, minus humanity.... the author was not solid upon his own simplicity, and has chased off after rare words and images out of his nervousness. (Orlans 91)

In letters to Jonathan Cape, Lawrence chronicled the progress of this translation. "It will take a while to do well, for the wretched man catalogues innumerable French fishes and my French never extended into scientific ichthyology" (Friends 468). He later wrote to Cape stating that he "read through my Sturly, and I have burned it page by page. There is something about this book which I cannot get" (Friends 468).<sup>9</sup>

This form of destruction indicates the extent to which Lawrence sought perfection, an impossible task when dealing with language, which is only an approximation of the speaker's (or writer's) thoughts. Any text, translation or otherwise, is in part the distillation of the writer's own experiences and thoughts. In destroying a text Lawrence in effect destroyed, rejected his own vision of another writer's work. Because he could not "get" it, it must be destroyed. This theme, this action, the destruction of a text by fire occurred several times in Lawrence's writing career.

Lawrence had been more successful with the earlier translation for Cape, The Forest Giant, or Le Gigantesque. Cape wrote that Lawrence had been attracted by this book, the story of a giant tree in the west coast forests, but found the work hard going. He wrote to Cape:

This is how Le Gigantesque stands. I started gaily, did about twenty pages into direct, swinging English, then turned back and read it, and it was horrible. The bones of the poor thing show through. I did it again more floridly. The book is written very commonplace by a man of good imagination, and a bad mind, and unobservant. (Friends 467-8)

On September 13, 1923 he wrote again to Cape, advising him that the translation was complete. "At last this foul work, complete" (Friends 468). One wonders which work was foul, the translation or the original. Knowing Lawrence's attitude towards the quality of his own work, one can easily see that it might be his own work. However, he found during his translation work that the deeper into a text he moved the more he came to loathe it, textually and for the things it portrayed. This was certainly the case with his Greek translation, The Odyssey. Lawrence found that Odysseus was a "cold-blooded egoist." He wrote in the translator's note "It is sorrowful to believe that these were really Homer's heroes and exemplars" (Homer, translator's note).<sup>10</sup>

### **The Odyssey and Letters**

Bruce Rogers, an American who specialized in ornate examples of both the literary and printing arts, commissioned this work. Lawrence was to receive £800 for the three years that this text took to translate. It cost him much time and pain from 1928 to 1931, and he often worked, as Orlans notes, forty to forty-five hours per week at the book in addition to his Air Force duties. (Orlans 94). This extended effort brought his perfectionist aspects to the fore. Lawrence did not like the finished product, calling it "Wardour Street Greek", a reference to an over-elaborate form of

---

<sup>9</sup> It is ironic that strident Lawrence critic Richard Aldington later translated Sturly.

<sup>10</sup> For more on Lawrence's Odyssey translation, see Maren Cohn's "Reflective Heroes: Self Integration in T.E. Lawrence and Homer's Odyssey", and Stephanie Nelson and Maren Cohn's



English. During his posting to India, Lawrence had opportunities to work on the text but he eventually tired of the work, causing what some critics have noted as a falling off of the text. (Orlans 95). Lawrence's brother Arnold wrote:

With his Odyssey...he took immense care, sacrificing correct wording to correct feeling...some who profess complete knowledge of the dead language assure us that he was blatantly inaccurate, but slips would have rarely passed his checking of his version by previous translations...(Orlans 95)

Lawrence's developing literary voice is displayed in this translation work. The reader senses his unhappiness with the inadequacies of written language and language in general as expressed frequently in his letters regarding his work, as we shall see. His close attention to detail and the mechanics of other writers directly influenced the style in which he created The Mint. As such it is important to consider these works, as it is important to consider Lawrence's critical work.

These provide us with further insight into the psychology of Lawrence's literary mannerisms.

Lawrence's letters provide the best guide to his attitude towards his work and are by far the most numerous of his works. It is estimated that Lawrence wrote approximately 10,000 letters in his lifetime, many of which are unpublished. Each letter was treated with regard; sometimes many drafts were written in Lawrence's effort to achieve written perfection. This search for perfection reached a high with The Mint.

---

"Lawrence's Odyssey: A "Prosaic" Approach to Greatness". Both essays are in The Waking Dream of T. E. Lawrence: Essays on His Life, Literature, and Legacy, edited by Charles M. Stang.

**Chapter Four**

**This is My Truth**

### **Fact and Fiction**

I have already stated that Lawrence blurred the line between fiction and fact in his writing of The Mint through his manipulation of fact. There were no doubt a number of reasons for this, but foremost was the ability to play with fact and the autobiographical genre to serve Lawrence in the recasting of his life. Keeping this in mind we must question every "fact" in the text. We must also consider the truth of the actual blurring within our own interpretation of reality. The act of writing an autobiography is a recycling; a reinventing of the sense of self that differentiates those around us from one another. In the act of reinventing, the author examines his actions and the events that shape his life. This examination or unraveling may bring to light aspects that are unsavory or inexplicable to the writer, and indeed to the reader. While the author may choose to ignore his own biographical facts, such a choice is more difficult for the reader. Difficult because questions are raised concerning the reader's estimate of the author's reliability. This reliability results from the confirmation of the autobiographical moment through the reader's agreement with the information supplied. In this situation the reader enters into a contract with the writer in which there is little room for disbelief. The line between autobiography and fiction becomes blurred when the belief in the validity of the contract is in doubt. Any question of doubt on either side forces the reader and the author to reevaluate the information being processed.

Paul de Man writes of "the distinction between autobiography and fiction" and the problems experienced with the literal and the figurative, the non-literal. The sign

of the author's name on the autobiographical work supposedly guarantees accuracy.

To quote de Man once again,

The autobiographical moment happens as an alignment between the two subjects involved in the process of reading in which they determine each other by mutual reflexive substitution. (de Man 70)

The space between the two subjects is the space within which reading and digestion of the received material takes place, both for the author and for the reader.

It is within this space that most of the action of The Mint is synthesized.

We must again turn to the fact that throughout much of his life Thomas Edward Lawrence was consumed with the wish to be a writer whose talents were recognized on their own merits and not from the fame that came to him as a result of his exploits in Arabia. Lawrence's wish to be a writer and the obsessive quest for perfection that he put himself through contributed to feelings of literary inadequacy that he expressed to several friends. Coupled with this was a life long quest to find a self; a persona with which he was comfortable.

Lawrence believed that one way to further help his ambition was to drop out of sight. He chose to join the Royal Air Force as an enlisted man and changed his name. On September 15, 1922, Lawrence wrote to Colonel S.F. Newcombe about his life in the R.A.F.

It's a plan in my mind since 1919, [joining the R.A.F.] but first my book on Arabia, & then Winston delayed me, till I was almost too old. However my health is bucking up, and I hope to come through the training period intact. (Brown Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 170)

Name and identity changes were not unknown to Lawrence. Already by this time he had been an archaeologist, intelligence officer, and guerilla fighter acting as a British

liaison officer to the Arab forces in the Arab Revolt. During the Paris Peace conference of 1919 he was a political advisor to Prince Feisal. After the conference he became political advisor on Middle Eastern Affairs to Winston Churchill. As such Lawrence, Churchill and others had a hand in the creation of several new states and alterations to old ones. After these efforts Lawrence retired from public life as he felt that his obligation to the Arab cause had been discharged. He had no further use for any positions of responsibility, publicly and privately disdaining them. However, the argument can be made that the production of a text that has never been out of print is certainly a position of responsibility.

Lawrence's name changed almost as often as his occupations did. By 1921 he had been known already as Thomas Edward Lawrence, Edward Lawrence, Edward Chapman, and El Auren. With the discovery that he was illegitimate and that neither of his parents were in fact really called Lawrence, he became increasingly ambivalent towards his name and began to search even more for an identity and a name that he felt was truly his own. In 1927 he wrote to Edward Eliot, his solicitor:

Yes, I want to change my name formally. Will you try and do it as quietly and inexpensively as it can be done? I'd better be Thomas Edward Shaw in future." (Brown Letters 333)

In 1923, Lawrence wrote to George Bernard Shaw: "I'm going to wash out that old name, which has too many war associations to please me: and which isn't my real name, any more than Ross" (Brown Letters, 218).

As late as 1923, Lawrence was still signing himself as Lawrence in letters to friends and new acquaintances (Brown Letters 232). On at least one occasion he

signed himself as Brough, a name based on his Tank Corps nickname of Brougie, after the make of motorcycle he owned.

Many critics state that Lawrence's discovery of his illegitimacy came at a formative time in his life. The exact date of this discovery is unsure and Lawrence himself has confused matters by various statements. One possible view put forth by Lawrence and echoed by his younger brother Arnold is that Lawrence overheard his father discussing various business matters relating to his Irish properties and so deduced the nature of his parents' relationship. Some stories place Lawrence's age at this time as four and some as late as Lawrence's mid-twenties. This formative discovery will be examined further in the text. There is no doubt that this discovery, no matter at what age it was made, was very influential in shaping Lawrence's path.

The psychological scarring that this damage produced was extensive and plagued Lawrence for the rest of his life. While he told several people of his illegitimacy he did not wish the situation broadcast to the world. When Basil Liddell Hart published his "Colonel Lawrence" biography the use of quotation marks around the name, suggested by Lawrence to place an emphasis on his new name of Shaw, raised questions both in the newspapers and Parliament as to his true identity and background and came perilously close to disclosing his secret. In an effort to defuse the situation, Lawrence visited the Members in question, spoke to them privately and disclosed some of his family history to them. This disclosure had the desired effect and in one case, Lawrence formed a friendship with one of the Members.

At the time of his enlistment Lawrence was both physically and emotionally exhausted by the efforts involved in working on Seven Pillars of Wisdom. The

picture that he paints in the first page of The Mint is that of a man down on his luck. His shoes are worn and he has very little money. He hoped that a sojourn in the ranks would help him to rebuild himself and provide material for a book on the Air Force. After overcoming initial problems at the recruiting station (problems that are not described in The Mint) Lawrence was allowed to enlist under the pseudonym of John Hume Ross.<sup>11</sup> The use of an assumed name for enlistment purposes was illegal and required the help of several very high-ranking R.A.F. officers, including its head, Hugh Trenchard. It was this obvious and illegal process that caused many of Lawrence's initial R.A.F. problems during his first enlistment attempt, a process that managed to involve one of the recruitment officers, Captain W.E. Johns, author of the Biggles stories for boys. Lawrence was only accepted after a direct order was issued commanding that he be accepted.

Unfortunately Lawrence's secret leaked out - partly because of his own careless handling of his new identity and occupation. Lawrence wrote to many of his friends explaining his position and asking them all to keep quiet about it. Naturally, it was not a secret for long. Terrence Rattigan's play Ross casts an ex-officer in the role of informant, selling Lawrence's story to the press. There is some evidence to support this version, mostly Lawrence's own retelling of the story. In telling this tale, Lawrence is supposed to have placed the value of the information at 30 guineas, as some Lawrence biographers have remarked, a rather Judas like sum. (Knightly 210)

The leak resulted in his expulsion from the R.A.F on the grounds that he might subvert discipline. This was devastating to Lawrence. Stripped of what he felt

---

<sup>11</sup> According to John Mack, Lawrence used this name for banking purposes throughout the rest

to be his place in life, he threatened suicide in a letter to Lord Trenchard, head of the R.A.F. Many of his friends, including Bernard Shaw and John Buchan, were concerned for his life and petitioned the government on his behalf for readmittance into the R.A.F. (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 760-61).

Sometimes he carried the process [sticking pins in his own image] too far and would speak quite calmly and without self-pity of 'ending it all.' Yet the suicidal frame of mind rarely lasted in Trenchard's presence. It became a sort of private joke between them after the evening Lawrence threatened to take his life and Trenchard said quietly:

"All right, but please go into the garden. I don't want my carpets ruined. (Boyle 516)

When threats such as this proved ineffectual Lawrence finally turned to the Tank Corps, joining as a private under the name of T.E. Shaw in the hope that he would prove himself a good risk and be allowed to rejoin the R.A.F. It was this name that he later adopted by deed poll. Lawrence's time in the Tank Corps was not one that he enjoyed. Jeremy Wilson points out that during his initial R.A.F. enlistment Lawrence had been told how poor the quality of the army recruits were in comparison to these of the Air Force. The standard in the barracks was rough and Lawrence, suffering greatly from the effects of sexual abuse at the hands of the Turks in Deraa in 1917, could not easily stand the "carnality" of the soldier's life.

There have been claims by a one-time soldier by the name of John Bruce, that Bruce was hired by Lawrence as a bodyguard and quasi-servant. There is no question but that Bruce joined the Tank Corps with Lawrence. Bruce, amongst other tasks, claimed the he was charged with protecting Lawrence and on several occasions

---

of his life.



intervened physically between Lawrence and some of the rougher hut mates (Asher 369).

### **Writing The Mint**

During his R.A.F. career Lawrence worked on a series of notes describing life in the Air Force over the period of his first enlistment and after. These notes were referred to as the "Uxbridge notes" after the location of the camp and were to become The Mint.

In a letter to E.M. Forster, dated September 6, 1928, Lawrence provides a detailed account of the genesis of The Mint.

Every night in Uxbridge I used to sit in bed, with my knees drawn up under the blankets, and write on a pad the things of the day. I tried to put it all down, thinking that memory & time would sort them out, and enable me to select significant from insignificant. Time passed, five years and more (long enough, surely, for memory to settle down?) and at Karachi I took up the notes to make a book of them...and instead of selecting, I fitted into the book, somewhere & somehow, every single sentence I had written at Uxbridge. (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 170)

The letter goes on to describe the techniques of composition that Lawrence used in the various sections of the book. One method that Lawrence took to in an effort to fit the notes together was a Joycean cut and paste exercise. In effect, by approaching a text in this method, Lawrence attempted to "re-member" it literally, figuratively and metaphorically. This, in a deeper essence was the reason Lawrence felt driven to write. Instead of pasting together text, Lawrence pasted together occupations in the attempt to create a new identity that would define his personality for himself. Archaeologist, mapmaker, intelligence officer, guerilla fighter, airman and writer, these were more than occupations for Lawrence; they were who he was and who he

became. Robert Graves noticed this, observing that even Lawrence's use of language and accent changed according to whichever occupation, or identity he found himself in at the time, eventually becoming the sort of "garage English" that one associates with mechanics and truck drivers (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 870).

The Mint is a unique text; in order to provide some perspective on the work we should consider where it fits within the literary context of the time. William Morris and Charles Dougherty influenced the style of Seven Pillars. Lawrence's do it yourself interest in printing carried echoes of Morris, and his prose style, slightly archaic, carries echoes of the Victorian reinvention of the Middle Ages. The Mint was something different. During the writing of Seven Pillars Lawrence came to believe that the quality of his writing was poor, despite the editorial assistance of George Bernard Shaw and general applause for his work. His contact with artists and writers, obtained through his fame as Lawrence of Arabia and his commissioning of artwork for Seven Pillars, resulted in his forming strong professional bonds, and in some cases friendships, with a number of Modernist writers and artists. These people informed his writing to a large degree, informing his stylistic choices. Robert Graves in particular would visit Lawrence often when T.E. was resident at All Souls College, in Oxford, during which time he was working on his Seven Pillars text.

As a result of these acquaintances and friendships, Lawrence became aware that the prose of Seven Pillars was dated. His reading of James Joyce's Ulysses was a great influence on his writing of The Mint and Lawrence felt that his Seven Pillars was "an insult to modern letters" after Joyce's work (Orlans 130). Tabachnick comments on Seven Pillars:

It seems as that although Lawrence desired to accommodate himself to literary Modernism as represented by Eliot, Yeats, and James Joyce, he could not quite do so and remained loyal to the aestheticism of the 1890's. (Tabachnick Encyclopedia 53)

Lawrence began compiling the notes for his Air Force text at a time when he was reworking Seven Pillars, yet The Mint shows little Seven Pillars "contamination".

This was due to Lawrence's determination to produce a text that concentrated on the evolution of a new persona, rather than the destruction of the old.

### What is The Mint?

It has been remarked that Seven Pillars is the more significant of Lawrence's writing, yet The Mint is important to our understanding of Lawrence's mental state.

In several ways The Mint is the reverse of the earlier book; the action and exoticism of Seven Pillars are absent, and the focus on identity is sharper; Seven Pillars shows the progressive breakdown of Lawrence's grip on who he is, while the later book dramatizes the deliberate attempt to regain it. In Seven Pillars, Lawrence's personal difficulties are interwoven with the military, political and social problems of Arabia; in The Mint the characters are few and English, and the issues are simple, though the problems they involve are not necessarily easily overcome. (Hull 341)

Lawrence's attempt to "regain" is actually an attempt at rebirth. Matters of identity and introspection are characteristic of Modernism, which has been defined as "a movement that radically probed the nature of selfhood and problematized the means whereby 'self' could be expressed" (Dennis Brown 1). This describes The Mint, in which Lawrence seeks to recreate his personality through autobiography. Further Modernist hallmarks evident in Lawrence's text include a rejection of his immediate past, and the use of stream of consciousness prose techniques.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> One instance of the rejection of the immediate past is his burning of his picture taken from the wall of the mess and placed in the incinerator. The opening paragraphs of The Mint begins with a

Modernism was a diverse movement that was highly resistant to classification or definition. (Henderson 382) A short list of writers that fall under the Modernist shadow include Joyce, Pound, Eliot, Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, D.H. Lawrence, Sassoon, Graves and Wyndham Lewis. The associations formed between these writers were both widespread and diverse, reaching across subdivisions of Modernism. For example, Laura Riding lived with Graves and contributed material for Lewis' magazine The Enemy. What might be labeled subsections of Modernism include Futurism and Vorticism. Futurism was a primarily Italian aspect of Modernism that sought to break with the past and celebrate technology and power. This is in keeping with Lawrence's attitude towards the mechanical aspects of his R.A.F. time, particularly the polished technical writing describing small boat operations and the description of a futuristic autogiro that he wrote for Graves and Riding. (Graves 168) <sup>13</sup> The main aim of The Mint was not to celebrate technology -- although his motorcycle descriptions and mechanical interests do achieve this -- but was to rebuild his shattered persona.

Vorticism aimed to celebrate the violent and the mechanical through a combination of "...revolutions in technology, science, and art..." and had its chief British advocate in Wyndham Lewis, the writer and artist from whom Lawrence commissioned, but never received, artwork for Seven Pillars. (Henderson 799) As is the case with Futurism, Lawrence's aim, the recreation of his self, contains shadings

---

stream of consciousness internal debate, in which Lawrence, hesitating outside the recruiting office, nerves himself to take the step that will launch him into his new life and literature.

<sup>13</sup> Not to imply that technical writing is futuristic, rather it reflects Lawrence's commitment to polish even his service writing.

of Vorticism, in so far as Vorticism can be seen as a branch of Modernism.<sup>14</sup> It seems that Lawrence had little time for Vorticism, writing to Ezra Pound that he had no “wish to feel the existence of a vortex – if I had one I’d try to cut it out” (Brown Letters 178).<sup>15</sup> This is misleading, as Lawrence went out of his way to ensure that Seven Pillars featured a great deal of artwork by William Roberts and “Frank Dobson, whose work at times reflected vorticist leanings...” (Grosvenor 162). In a further letter to Pound, Lawrence sets out his literary tastes:

Joyce can write (and does, just occasionally): you can write (and do): T.S. Eliot...perhaps: but the people I like are so different, Hodgson; Sassoon; D.H. Lawrence: Manning: Conrad:[...] (Brown Letters 181)

Once again we have a case of the contrary Lawrence. It is safe to say that if Lawrence went out of his way to commission works by Roberts and Dobson, he saw merit in Vorticist art, even if he “could not understand Lewis’s philosophy” (Tabachnick Encyclopedia 114).

The attempt to rebuild one’s life through writing was a common denominator for a number of writers in the years following the First World War.

[J]ust as Sassoon, in his trench poems, could at times suspend his aristocratic irony to express genuine neurotic confusion...so Graves, in the twenties, explores psychic fragmentation in poems like “The Pier Glass”, “Down”, and “In Procession”. These poems drew directly on the ‘neurasthenia’ Graves acknowledged as his legacy from the war. In writing them he wanted to ‘help the recovery of the health of mind, as well as my own, by the writing of ‘therapeutic’ poems.... (Dennis Brown 46-7)’

---

<sup>14</sup> Lawrence wrote a “futuristic” description of an autogiro for Graves and Riding’s co written novel, published as No Decency Left, by Barbara Rich. Lawrence did not see this as anything more than “a rag”. (Brown Letters 453).

<sup>15</sup> This letter was in response a letter of Pound’s in which the possibility of writing for Pound had arisen. See Letters to T.E. Lawrence 149 –50.

In addition to his friendship and financial support for Graves and other writers and artists, Lawrence corresponded with Sassoon and lent him Seven Pillars to read. In a 1929 letter to a friend, Lawrence commented that Sassoon's work "touches nearer to my own train of mind than the work of anyone else publishing" (Garnett Letters 644).

Lawrence had a wide-ranging influence on other writers. In Lawrence of Arabia: The Literary Impulse, Weintraub devotes a chapter to the literary impact of Lawrence, mentioning the writers whose works Lawrence appeared in, either as himself, or thinly disguised.<sup>16</sup> This influence extended to giving new writers a helping hand by writing blurbs for them, speaking to publishers on their behalf, and providing them with money.<sup>17</sup> In addition to this use of influence and trading on his fame for the benefit of others, Lawrence engaged in a vast amount of correspondence with writers of note. In addition to this correspondence, which in several cases led to friendships, Lawrence and the other writers often exchanged gifts of books, and in some cases, as with Sassoon, and Forster, Lawrence lent them manuscripts that he was working on.<sup>1</sup> Conrad sent him a copy of The Mirror of the Sea, Noel Coward asked Lawrence to read a new play of his, stating that he would value Lawrence's opinion "very deeply" (Letters to T.E. Lawrence 28). C.D. Lewis and Lawrence

---

<sup>16</sup> Weintraub mentions: G.B. Shaw (Too True to Be Good), Rattigan (Ross), John Buchan (Courts of the Morning), Maurice Barrés (Un jardin sur l'oronte), D.H. Lawrence (Lady Chatterley's Lover), André Malraux (The Walnut Trees of Altenburg), James Aldridge (Heroes of the Empty View), Anthony West (David Ress Among Others), C.D. Lewis –as Nicholas Blake – (Shell of Death), and W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood (The Ascent of F6) (Weintraub Impulse 139–53). In addition, Lawrence copied out verse and quotes that appealed to him into a book later published as Minorities.

<sup>17</sup> For example; Bertram Thomas' Arabia Felix, and Doughty's Travels in Arabia Deserta.

carried out a correspondence in which they discussed Day's poetry (Letters to T.E. Lawrence 32 – 43).

Lawrence also wrote to Ezra Pound to discuss writing. There are a large number of such examples. There is no doubt that through these letters and friendships Lawrence kept himself abreast of current literary trends and gave and received critical opinions of each other's work. There can also be no doubt that his fellow writers valued his opinions.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Appetizers**



### **The Consumable Mint**

Anyone who reads The Mint cannot help but be struck by the amount of attention that Lawrence pays to food. Food had figured in Lawrence's writing and lifestyle long before the war. Vyvyan Richards, an Oxford friend and later a Lawrence biographer, wrote that Lawrence would

go without food for days together, replenishing fully, like a Bedouin, when chance offered... all this was no more than a good workman keeping his kit of tools keen and ready." (Allen 173)

When living at home during his university days, Lawrence had developed the habit of eating by himself in a small bungalow built for him in the back garden of the family home. Malcolm Allen provides a passage by Robert Graves in which the italicized words are those supplied by Lawrence.

He avoids eating with other people. Regular mealtimes are not to his liking. *He hates waiting more than two minutes for a meal or spending more than five minutes on a meal. That is why he lives mainly on bread and butter. And he likes water better than any other drink.* It is his opinion that feeding is a very intimate performance and *should be done in a small room behind locked doors.* (Allen 175)

Allen makes the point that Lawrence, in behaving this way, was following the practices of monkish self denial, a practice that continued throughout Lawrence's life and involved activities other than eating. This is totally in keeping with Lawrence's decision to join the R.A.F. as a form of penance while at the same time seeking to burn off his old personality. Lawrence, as we shall see, drew a parallel between food and writing in this recreating.

It seems quite certain that Lawrence regarded food as a form of indulgence. Friends such as Richards remarked that over the course of his undergraduate years

Lawrence often went for long periods of time without food or sleep. As a teenager during his cycling tours of France he would often astound people with his powers of endurance. Later guests at his home, Clouds Hill, would speak of meals eaten off their knees, tinned chickens, bread, cheese and the like. In the cottage, preserved by the National Trust, there is to this day a pair of glass domes: one for bread, one for cheese. As a thing to be enjoyed food was not high on Lawrence's list, but it does play an important role in The Mint because Lawrence's attitude to this most basic of human activities mirrored the writing that he did. Eating in a small room by one's self does not seem far removed from writing down notes of the day's activities under one's blankets. In a letter home before the First World War Lawrence wrote that "[t]o escape the humiliation of loading in food, would bring one very near the angels" (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 124). The act of eating was a secret one, as was the writing of The Mint, with all its attendant ceremony.

More often than not Lawrence is disgusted by the meals, breakfast and dinner are "sickening" and kitchen fatigues are associated with maggots and rotting meat (Mint Penguin 43). Eating has become a very public activity. In the second page of the book Lawrence comments that it is now six years before he need think of "winning" a meal. This is not an arbitrary series of comments on Lawrence's behalf. In his mind writing, stability, identity and food are closely linked.

In his essay "The Reader's Supper: A Piece of Hegel," Werner Hamacher comments on the metaphorization of food into text. The tropological substitution offered is the Host. At one point during the ceremony the wafer becomes the body of

Christ. When we read, we bite off chunks of the text, devour and digest them. In the same sense, Lawrence, trying to live the life of a writer, read his life.

### **The Crazy Pelican**

Lawrence's two major works, Seven Pillars and The Mint, are attempts to describe the past, often in a form that was not true to "real" events. This is less the case for Seven Pillars than The Mint. Seven Pillars was the telling of a great adventure; The Mint was the rebuilding of a life. In converting his memory, perception and feeling of events into concrete representations, Lawrence was forced to reconsider, reevaluate and relive events and therefore reexamine himself. This re-evaluation was largely responsible for the state of near mental collapse that he was in at the time of his initial enlistment. In a letter to Charlotte Shaw, wife of George Bernard Shaw, Lawrence wrote that there was a time when he saw himself as a sort of "crazy pelican" feeding not his young, but his artistic spirit by plunging his pen, beaklike, into his breast (Brown, Letters 498).

Jeremy Wilson has written that

Lawrence's life at Barton Street was deliberately frugal: he believed that his creative power was intensified by hunger and lack of sleep, and preferred to work at night, wearing a flying suit to keep warm. The attic room contained little furniture and no cooking facilities. He lived off sandwiches bought from refreshment stands in nearby stations, and washed at the local public baths. He later wrote; 'I thought that the mind I had, (and I've matched it competitively often against other fellows, and have an opinion of it), if joined to a revival of the war-passion, would sweep over the ordinary rocks of technique. So I got into my garret, and...excited myself with hunger and cold and sleeplessness more than did de Quincey with his opium.'

Lawrence found the effort of composing Seven Pillars so draining that both his physical and mental well being suffered terribly. In the beginning of The Mint we

see that Lawrence's shoes and trousers are ragged and that he is hungry. It would seem that he had no reason for this poverty, despite the mounting production costs of Seven Pillars. Lawrence was at this time a member of Winston Churchill's staff in the Middle Eastern bureau bent on settling the post war situation in the Middle East and as such earned a good salary. He was also a Fellow of All Souls College in Oxford, a position that carried room and board as well as a stipend. The stipend was enough to provide for basic needs. Factored into this income was money that Lawrence had received, through his Father, from a deceased Uncle. The sum of £15,000.00 was divided between the three surviving Lawrence boys. Before his death, Will Lawrence had communicated a wish to have his share given to Janet Laurie, a woman that both he and T.E. had been fond of and to whom T.E. had once proposed marriage. Janet had laughed off T.E.'s proposal (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 67). After the war T.E. found that Janet, now married, was experiencing financial problems and in 1920 he decided to follow his brother's wishes by giving Will's share of the money to her (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 637-38). This was not Lawrence's sole act of generosity. Throughout his life he was generous to a large number of people who found themselves in financial difficulties.

Lawrence lost the manuscript of Seven Pillars while changing trains at Reading station. The energy that the rewrite took from him was never replaced, yet there was a strange sense of relief. "I've lost the damned thing" said Lawrence to a friend (Lawrence and Arabia). In his introduction to the 1955 version of The Mint, Lawrence's brother Arnold uses the word "theft" to describe the loss of the Seven Pillars manuscript (Mint Cape 9). It does seem difficult to believe that something that

had occupied Lawrence's life to such an extent could just be lost. It is possible that Lawrence, dissatisfied with the original manuscript, destroyed it. He frequently referred to the work as “rotten,” “not very good,” or a “boy-scout book” (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 635). The final version of Seven Pillars was not the first work of Lawrence's to carry this title. He had written a travel/historical work before the war, detailing visits to several Middle Eastern cities and had called this work Seven Pillars of Wisdom also. This manuscript, which Lawrence felt was a poor effort, was destroyed.

This literary effort was Lawrence's pretense for his presence in the ranks. Even at this point he had a book about life in the Air Force in mind. As is the case with a great deal of Lawrence's comments, things were seldom so simple and statements often must be taken with a grain of salt. Lawrence stated that he joined to write about the Air Force, yet, as Wilson points out, Lawrence felt that he had to let his mind lie “fallow” for a time in order to let his literary ambitions regenerate. (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 665)

### **Mind Suicide and Mixed Identities**

A reader coming cold to the text would be hard put to notice many of the discrepancies apparent to someone familiar with Lawrence's biography. One that is blatantly apparent, however, occurs when Lawrence, tired of the repellant food in the mess, goes to the canteen for something to eat. He describes the pictures that hang on the walls.

Round the walls hung tinted photographs of King George, Trenchard, Beatty, Haig, some land-girls, a destroyer at speed. Even there was a

small picture of me, a thing later conveyed slyly to the ever-open incinerator. (Mint 71-72)

An act to avoid recognition -- certainly, but an act with other implications. In consigning the image of his former self to the flames Lawrence stages a form of suicide, killing off his old state and attempting to consolidate his present one by breaking the space between his old self and his new self. Such abrupt or grand changes, a quest for "space," were familiar to Lawrence. His Middle Eastern tours in 1909 as well as his earlier bicycle tours of France were outside the ordinary voyage of self-discovery. They seem, like dumping his picture in the flames, a form of escape. These acts of consolidation extended to his writing. Lawrence merged two or three events of the same nature when he wanted to "monotonise" matters and compressed others for speed.

The form of the book took a lot of settling. I worked pretty hard at the arrangements of the sections, and their order. Mainly, of course, it follows the course of our training, which was a course: but where I wanted monotony or emphasis, I ran two or three experiences together, and when I wanted variety I joggled 'em up and down. I got all the material out into a skeleton order, and placed it, so near as I could: then I fixed in my own mind the main curves of idea which seemed to arise out of the notes: and re-wrote them with this intention in the back of my mind. (Garnett Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 597)

By doing this Lawrence was able to place a certain amount of distance between what he experienced and what he wrote. Space was also created between the text of what would become The Mint and his earlier work. Lawrence had written a great deal in the time between Seven Pillars and The Mint. When he began to revise Seven Pillars for the subscriber's edition, Lawrence came to the realization that his writing had changed. Jeremy Wilson comments that

[b]y 1924 Lawrence's views about style had changed radically, and the epic manner he had once striven for seemed overwrought and false. Translation work had taught him to see instantly through literary pretension. Moreover, his mind had become attuned to a far simpler form of English through daily contact with men in the ranks. He saw that Seven Pillars was written in a style very unlike that of the contemporary literature he now admired. (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 734)<sup>18</sup>

Just as Lawrence's earlier reading had helped to shape his style, the space that he placed between his old self and his new surroundings shaped his literary views and his vision of himself. Within this space he could define himself. The conflation of facts in The Mint did not disturb him, yet the act of rearranging the Uxbridge notes was something that he compared to "eating yesterday's vomit." Even so he kept at it in an effort to achieve what he considered to be literary excellence despite commenting in the same letter that he could not write "for toffee."

Lawrence's writing, which he likens to stale vomit, is reconsumed and offered for the consumption of others. The nutritional qualities of yesterday's vomit are slight, and in redigestion are completely exhausted. This form of "autoconsumation" initiates a cycle of self-referential productivity ultimately ending in non-productivity or the creation of a void.

With this in mind it may be well to explore the letter to David Garnett, in which Lawrence speaks of vomit in further depth.

This is a reply to your letter of June 27, which ended up with a well-introduced remark about my Uxbridge notes. I write this on the back of one, to show you that the not sending them as they are is only a kindness to you. I wrote them pell-mell, as the spirit took me, on one piece of paper or another. Then I cut them into their sections, and

---

<sup>18</sup> Lawrence had high-powered help in the revising of Seven Pillars. George Bernard Shaw and his wife, Charlotte, were extensive in their critical suggestions and E.M. Forster made the journey to Clouds Hill in order to spend time with Lawrence and assist in the revisions.

shuffled them, as Joyce is supposed to have shuffled Ulysses, with the idea of curing you of any delusion you might be persuaded by the chorus of critical England to entertain of me as a person of literary promise or capacity - where was I? - Ah yes: - to show you that I can't write for toffee, I decided to send them to you. You would have thought them the raw material of a paper-chase. So I began at Clouds Hill to stick each class in some sort of order onto sheets of paper, meaning to have them stitched for you. But that did not work, for the sections were too intertwined. So I am copying them seriatim into a notebook, as a Christmas (which Christmas?) gift for you. It is a posh manuscript, in my most copper-plated hand. It will be bound, and gilt edged. Can I do more? (or less.) Please regard it as an expensive gift. Copying my old notes is like eating yesterday's vomit. I add nothing but take away repetitions, where vain. I "did" three Church parades for example: and I believe they can be boiled to two: or even to one, which would be the quint-essence and exemplar of all my church parades. (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 532]

However, Lawrence does violate the textual framework in rearranging the vomit. He alters fact and slyly replaces it with figurization, with non-literality, with a digested truth, with deceit.<sup>19</sup> The alteration of fact, rendering it impotent, forces the reader to question each "truth" that is recognized in the text. For the purpose of this text, truth is defined as the agreement of binary opposites. If we treat the text as a world of its own the self referential productivity engendered within the text results in the appearance of a complete picture - a "true" one. Conflation within and by outside sources, exposing the self-referential nature of The Mint, negates the binary

---

19 Supplementary to the notion of castrating is the publishing history of The Mint. It was decided by Lawrence himself, at the urging of the head of the RAF, that The Mint would not be published until 1950. It was felt, by both parties, that the material would have been damaging to the RAF. There had been a long and bitter struggle for the Air Force to gain autonomy from both the army and the navy. This was finally achieved on April 1, 1918. The service, which The Mint portrayed, it was felt, would not have appealed either to the politicians or the public. Upon his retirement from the Air Force, Lawrence planned to publish a limited edition (100 copies) of The Mint. Lawrence's death in a motorcycle accident (the accident itself wrapped in suspicion and not a little mystery) prevented this. The Mint, edited by A.W. Lawrence appeared in 1955 in two editions. The popular version was expurgated. The limited (2000 copies) edition was complete. In the context of this essay, the thought of an expurgated text is, to say the least, intriguing.



agreement and brings two (or more) perceived realities or truths into contact. This forces the reader to draw on his own frames of reference or perceptions of truth. The space between the reader and the text, and the space between the text and the author, allows a kaleidoscope of meanings to be brought into play complicating the interaction between the reader and the author.

Lawrence intended his letter to be a cure for the deceit that Garnett suffered from, the deceit that Lawrence is a writer. Yet there is a further deceit at work. A deceit that tells us that fact has not been rendered impotent. This deceit is dished up throughout The Mint. There is a constant interchange of fact and fiction. By intending not to put an authorial name to the text (as Lawrence had intended) further manipulation of textual reliability occurs.

Those familiar with the biographical details of Lawrence's career are able to pass over the deceit, knowing of this propensity for chiasmus. Those to whom the work is served up cold are poisoned by the text.

The constant revising and alteration of events began to poison Lawrence's everyday life. At this time he was still known as Lawrence to many friends, and as Ross and soon, Shaw to others. Correspondents would receive letters written by their Lawrence, but signed by the unknown Shaw or Ross. At one point Lawrence made out a cheque to himself under the wrong name. In an inscribed copy of The Dynasts presented to Lawrence by Thomas Hardy there exists a further inscription it reads: "To T.E. Shaw, for his comfort in camp." It is signed Lawrence. Paul Tunbridge quotes a letter from Bernard Shaw in which Shaw states "...at Thomas Hardy's he is introduced solemnly as Mr. Shaw, and addressed as Colonel Lawrence"

(Tunbridge 34). The photographer Howard spotted Lawrence on the embankment, in London and asked if he was Colonel Lawrence. "Used to be" was the answer (Wilson, T.E. Lawrence 219). Yet Lawrence often referred to himself pottering about Clouds Hill, his cottage in Dorset, like any other "retired colonel" (Brown Letters 478).

Our knowledge of Lawrence's confused sense of identity is represented to us in his writing. In this case, writing acts as a preservative for Lawrence's experiences. Yet what Lawrence has preserved is not strictly "true." By altering event sequences, Lawrence poisoned his own reliability as a narrator, rendering the distinction between fiction and autobiography undecidable. The framework within which the reader is induced to place the text is shattered and the text is rendered unpalatable - toxic. No more are we to deal with the memoirs of a "simple" enlisted man. The undermining of the text, through the heterogeneous nature of Lawrence and the narrator forces the reader to recall the career of the representational incinerated photograph. We are caught in a trap of endless referential productivity, as is the narrator.

This trap is the space between autobiography and fiction, the self and the self perceived, the meal and the end product, it is the space in which alterations take place, in which things go bad and toxins form. In the case of Lawrence, this was the space in which The Mint was written.

**Chapter Five**

**Lawrence and Textual Sexuality**

### Violating the Self

Lawrence's experience in the war and particularly in Deraa had a severe effect on his life and sexuality. When considering The Mint and its role as a mirror in which to redefine himself, we must consider the question of penitent like birching, his sexuality and the formation of the text. When examining Lawrence's sense of identity there are several tools available. In keeping with Lawrence's attitude towards writing, textual/critical analysis seems well suited. Modern critical methods can often be applied to obtain a further understanding of Lawrence and his texts, as writers such as Paul Adam have demonstrated. Lawrence's sexuality has long been a matter of public speculation. Sexuality and self are two heavily intertwined subjects. Often, one's identity is defined by one's sexual orientation. In her book, The Daughter's Seduction, Jane Gallop presents an essay entitled "Impertinent Questions." The essay deals with Freud, Lacan and Luce Irigaray in light of feminist attitudes towards psychoanalytic theory and asks "impertinent questions" that "disrupt...mastery" (Gallop 83). Gallop's treatment of Irigaray's text allows for a calculated degree of confusion over who is saying what. This confusion allows for a further exploration of the question of Self. It can also serve to muddy the waters for the critic. Often one finds one's self disagreeing with Gallop only to discover that it is really Irigaray that one does not side with.

The built-in confusion of Gallop's text intensifies the power of individual phrases by forcing the reader to dig deep for meaning. In reading this text several of these potent phrases struck a particular chord within me. These phrases, applies to literary theory and sutured to Richard Coe's writing, provide the tools to investigate

the notion of what might be termed textually defined identity. This title appeals particularly to Lawrence, who sought to define himself as a writer and through his writing. This identity is intertwined with sexuality. Lawrence has been labeled as a “mechanical monk” by several biographers. Like a medieval saint, Lawrence frequently had himself beaten or birched, no doubt to relieve or sublimate sexual tension. (Lawrence and Arabia) Lawrence's sexual impulses also found relief in rough, often humiliating and debasing, treatment and by extension, in the recounting of the events as portrayed in The Mint. For a man obsessed with “self degradation” and desired to live a "worm's eye view" there must have been a comfort in emptying pig sties and washing filthy dishes, sleeping on uncomfortable mattresses.<sup>20</sup>

Writing about Luce Irigaray's collection of essays, Ce sexe qui n'en pas un, Gallop states that the essay "continually works to dig out of debt" (Gallop 81). This digging, Gallop concludes, is unsuccessful; Irigaray is transformed, becoming "a man in relation to Lacan" (Gallop 91). The debt is owed to Freud, through Lacan and includes Lévi-Strauss's "exchange of women." Gallop cites this distinction: “any gift of debt alienates the individual into the circuit of exchanges, compromises one's integrity and autonomy” (Gallop 91). But assertion of one's uncontaminated selfhood is no practical way out of the circuit. It reinforces, acknowledges the possibility of contamination. Gallop has confirmed the textual power to alter sexuality.

---

<sup>20</sup> Tabachnick and Matheson speak of Lawrence's “obsession with self-degradation” (Tabachnick 164).

The two pivotal words in the above paragraph are "uncontaminated selfhood." Gallop links these words, as Irigaray has done, to notions of virginity and a phallic economy.

Alienation is the necessary obverse of the self's integrity. Violation would lose its meaning and its attraction were the body no longer represented as "virginal-solid-closed, to be opened with violence" (Ce sexe, p. 199) (Gallop 81)

Violence is penetration. There is no way out of the circuit because recognition of such a condition reaffirms the *status quo*, reinforcing the already powerful phallic economy. However, the use of "alienates" and "into" supposes that the individual can exist outside of this circuit. That is the thrust of both Gallop's and Irigaray's writing, which Gallop sums up with one sentence. "Let him take possession of you, let him have orgasm from you, but without subjugating you to his law" (Gallop 91). This situation, Hegelian in argument, finds a parallel in Lawrence's later R.A.F. career. We find Aircraftsman Shaw, hobnobbing with very senior officers and ultimately directing their actions, while at the same time refusing to be promoted to the rank of officer. Lawrence's literary output and personality, both products of what John Mack regards as modern neuroses, are ideal for the examination that Gallop's treatment of the self and identity offers as possible explanations for much of Lawrence's motivations.<sup>21</sup>

Gallop has prepared us for the topic of selfhood by arousing our interest in Lacan who in turn arouses our interest in Freud; a psychoanalytic *menage à trois* is formed. Gallop plays with this triangle, explaining that Lacan sees the mirror stage

"as the moment when the infant proleptically takes on a totalizing/totalized shape - a cohesive identity..." (Gallop 81).

The construct that Gallop presents in the first two pages of her essay expresses a tangle of sexuality and selfhood, integrity and violation. This economy is kineticised by the notion of woman as property, or allowing for textual power, person as property.

In buying into this open/broken gynotrope Gallop is in danger of lending credibility to biological destiny-gender determined roles. This is the same trap that she accuses Irigaray of falling into. By recognizing these conditions, these laws, she legitimizes them. This is unavoidable to some degree; like Irigaray, Gallop is attempting to dig out from debt. Payment of debt is simply a metaphorization of debt.

The debt that is discussed in Gallop is a phallic one. The "phallotrope" played with so often by Lacan is a dangerous one. Confusion exists between phallus and penis, just who is in charge here? The notion of sexuality and selfhood extends beyond the corporeal; it reaches into textuality; which is the realm of the phallus. It is at this point that I should like to break into Lawrence.

### **Early Self**

Lawrence was born in Tremadoc, Wales in 1888. Yet as is so often the case with facts relating to Lawrence, this date is open to question. Some claim that his birth date was August 15, some claim August 16 - perhaps an example of somewhat wishful thinking as this was also Napoleon's birthday.

---

<sup>21</sup> In 1922 Lawrence wrote to Air Vice - Marshal Sir Oliver Swann from Uxbridge. The salutation began "Dear Swann". Despite his low Air Force rank, Lawrence remained familiar with many senior officers and people of high standing.

In many aspects his was a normal childhood. Lawrence was one of five children, all sons, born to Thomas and Sarah Lawrence. The elder Lawrence did not have to work as he had an independent income. This allowed him the freedom to cultivate several interests, among them photography and bicycling. These interests he passed onto his son T.E., or Ned, as the family knew him.

The family moved around, with stops in Wales, Scotland, and France. They eventually settled in Oxford for the sake of the boys' schooling. Ned attended the Oxford High School and gained a scholarship at Jesus College on the basis of his Welsh birth. While at the High School, several contemporaries remarked on Lawrence's physical toughness. Lawrence often subjected himself to marathon bicycle trips and went without food or sleep over long periods. Physical pain seemed to have little affect on him, broken bones were ignored and physical danger was often sought out as a form of test.<sup>22</sup>

Critics have suggested that this conscious cultivation of danger was in part a product of Lawrence's reading. As a youth Lawrence devoted much time to reading medieval romances and in later life remarked that the medieval period had always been his area. Allen writes:

the young Lawrence had rubbed brasses assiduously and had studied the military architecture of the Middle Ages, upon which he had written a thesis that earned him a First .... Statements of his identification with knightly ideals and the literature that is their expression are scattered throughout his letters and the memoirs of those who knew him. Robert Graves says that Lawrence is better understood when the influence of the troubadours upon him and his devotion to the ideals of chivalry are considered. (*Poetic Craft*, 191-92)... But Lawrence's attempt to live, in some ways, as though the last

---

22. See *T.E. Lawrence by his Friends*, a collection of reminiscences by family and friends of Lawrence, edited by his brother.



four hundred years had not taken place, and the manner in which *Seven Pillars* manifests this medievalism, has attracted almost no serious critical attention. (Allen 2-3)

Allen is correct in contending that this Medievalism lasted throughout Lawrence's life, although he devotes little space to events not covered in Seven Pillars. This is unfortunate, as The Mint continues to build upon this latent Medievalism.

In keeping with this many of Lawrence's journeys, including the one embarked upon at the termination of his R.A.F. career, took the form of quests or pilgrimages.<sup>23</sup> One such example was a cycling trip that Lawrence and a friend undertook to the house of William Morris to see the Kelmscott Chaucer. Much of Lawrence's life was built upon the debt owed to this early reading.

The reading of medieval literature was not the only strong influence exerted on Lawrence during his youth. His mother Sarah was devoutly religious and often held prayer meetings that included not only the family, but the servants as well. Lawrence himself was a member of the local Church Lads brigade.

During his studies at Oxford Lawrence concentrated on medieval literature and history. His B.A. thesis was concerned with architectural aspects of crusader castles in Britain, France and the Middle East. During his research he walked through much of the Middle East, a feat that Europeans seldom attempted due to danger, hardship and social stigma attached to the possibility of a member of European society going native. In David Lean's film Lawrence of Arabia, the character of General Allenby, Lawrence's commander in Arabia, asks an aide if he feels that

Lawrence had gone native. The reply is in the negative, with the comment that he would if he could. In one aspect this is true; there is the possibility, hinted at directly by biographers and by Lawrence himself in letters, that this was a crusade of sorts. The location, the setting and Lawrence's medieval and religious background must have weighed heavily upon him. It is worth noting that one of the books that he carried with him was Malory's Morte d'Arthur, a text concerned with the Grail legend (Garnett Letters 512).<sup>24</sup> It is as a crusader that Eric Kennington portrayed him in a sculpture at St. Martin's church at Wareham in Dorset.

On his return to Oxford Lawrence was offered a position on an archaeological dig at Carchemish, near the Syrian town of Jerablus. At this point Lawrence occasionally affected native dress and formed a strong attachment with at least two of his native staff who returned to England with him on holiday.

Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, he and his superior at Carchemish, Leonard Woolley, were asked to conduct an archaeological survey of the desert south of Beersheba, then Palestine, which was to serve as cover for a military topological survey conducted at the same time by then-Captain Stewart Newcombe and his team. The information that they gathered was to be used for military map-making purposes.

---

23 Lawrence rode off from his last R.A.F. posting on a bicycle, in order to travel around England and so arrive home at Cloud's Hill refreshed.

<sup>24</sup> In addition to the Malory, Lawrence carried a copy of the Oxford Book of English Verse, works by Aristophanes and a "commonplace book" in which he copied out a number of poems

### **Growing Fame and the Wish to Escape**

The events of the war brought fame to Lawrence. Brought to public attention by Lowell Thomas' show Lawrence soon tired of the public scrutiny. Publicity hampered his movements, interfered with his enlistment in the R.A.F. and his privacy and generally seemed to make his life more difficult. At the same time it did allow him access to the influential people who assisted him in his writing and Air Force ambitions. This is certainly evident in his wide-ranging series of occupations. After the war he became: a negotiator at the Paris Peace conference, a Fellow of All Souls College at Oxford, a Colonial Office official, a Royal Air Force mechanic, a writer, a Tank Corps private, and an Air Force mechanic again, this time working with speed boats.

I stress these changes in occupation over and over again because they formed the background not only for Lawrence's life but for his writing as well. Like Jane Austen in her family sitting room, Lawrence wrote surrounded by the hubbub of daily life, in this case the un-Austen like setting of the barrack room. It was his time in the Tank Corps that brought him to the Clouds Hill area, where he was able at last set up a sort of home or refuge for himself to rest and work in.

This biographical information is an unseemly breaking of my text. In providing such information I hope to suture together a dialectic that will bring Lawrencian textual concepts and Gallop's views into contact.

The childhood that I have presented for Lawrence seems a normal one, differing from the ordinary only in that it was well traveled and displayed Lawrence's

---

that appealed to him. The manuscript of this collection, later published as Minorities, was

inclination towards physical hardship. Some critics have identified this physical aspect of Lawrence's character with a predisposition towards Nietzschean philosophy. In the broadest of senses such a statement is warranted. Lawrence spent his life in an attempt to improve himself. This involved not only a varied number of occupations; archaeologist, intelligence officer, mapmaker, guerilla leader, politician, civil servant, airman and most important of all, writer, but several name changes. Lawrence was known as Ned, Ted, Thomas Edward Lawrence, E. Smith, Colonel Lawrence, Edward Lawrence, Edward Chapman, John Hume Ross, and T.E. Shaw. He signed himself "Brough" (after the make of motorcycle he rode) on at least one occasion. At one point he wrote to three different people using three different names, managing to confuse himself as to which name he was to write under.

The almost schizophrenic name and occupation changing has been defined by critics, amongst them Andre Malraux, Paul Adam, and Jean Béraud-Villars as Lawrence's search for the "absolute."

The name, occupation changes, and attempts to hide away from the world after the War were in part an effort to escape from the mounting publicity that worsened his "shell shock." More importantly they were also designed to create a new identity, a new self for Lawrence. Richard Coe comments on the Absolute.

The only way, however, in which the being who is-what-Others-make-him can, in any Absolute sense, be himself, is to abstract himself from the importunate gaze and knowledge of Others, and to confine himself for ever in solitude - in "singularity." (Coe 6)

There is no doubt that Lawrence was the being who is what others make him. The war placed him in an Arab context; the post war events as created by Lowell Thomas placed him in a position of great celebrity, famous throughout the world. Lawrence has related that he received offers of work, offers of marriage, offers of sex, and was troubled and inconvenienced by people posing as him in various business dealings throughout his life.

What Coe advocates is enclosure, an unbroken, unentered area of self-possession. Unfortunately, this too has its drawbacks, the result being an "insensitive, unknowing, unperceiving object" (Coe 6).

I believe that the trigger for this search for the absolute can be definitely traced to the time immediately following the death of Lawrence's father, during the Paris Peace Conference. It was then that Lawrence might have confirmed to his mother that he knew his father's name was not Lawrence, but Chapman. Lawrence was illegitimate. There has been speculation suggesting that Lawrence began to have doubts about his parents' relationship well before the First World War. One such notion has Lawrence overhearing his father discussing business arrangements with the manager of his Irish estate.

Lawrence's father was Sir Thomas Chapman, a minor member of the Irish aristocracy who had left his wife and children to run off with the family governess. Despite Chapman's efforts, or possibly because of them, Lady Chapman refused to grant him a divorce. The discovery of the truth of his parents' relationship must have placed the religiousness of the family in a completely new and hypocritical light for

Lawrence. It also rendered Lawrence, in his own opinion more than anyone else's, socially unacceptable, contaminated in his own eyes.

This is a situation similar to that described by Richard Coe. Jean Genet was an illegitimate child, although raised under different circumstances than Lawrence. Genet enlisted in the army at the age of nineteen and also found that

[t]he dignity which a uniform confers, the isolation from the world which it imposes, and the very business of being a soldier granted me a lot of peace ... At last I knew the sweetness of being welcomed among other men. (T.E. Notes 2.4)<sup>25</sup>

Genet also experienced life in the Middle East and espoused the Palestinian cause in a manner that reflected Lawrence's feelings towards the Arabs.<sup>26</sup> However, Coe's comments can be applied equally to Lawrence as they describe a state of mind rather than a particular person.

Coe writes that Genet "had to reject *everything* that he learned about himself from others" (Coe 4). Like Genet, Lawrence is a "...classic case of existentialist schizophrenia." He possesses two [or more in Lawrence's case] distinct personalities" (Coe 5). Coe continues:

he invariably looks at himself with the eyes of others: he sees and judges himself as others see and judge him - and yet, at the same time, he is dissatisfied. He is obscurely aware that this Self, observed in such a manner from an alien point of view, is *not* himself. It is an appearance, an illusion, a reflection, nothing more or less, of something else, something that *is* himself, yet which precisely because it *is* the perceiver, cannot be perceived. (Coe 5)

Not only is the above quote applicable to Lawrence; it is applicable to his father. In throwing over his family for their governess Chapman flew in the face of

---

25 T.E. Notes 8.1, Robert Franks

26 T.E. Notes 8.1 Robert Franks.

acceptable society. What are the ramifications for the phallic economy we see in Gallop? The "sexual commerce is obstructed and is difficult" (Gallop 82). It is difficult because the commerce does not take place on licensed premises. This difficulty spread to Lawrence, who often expressed his dislike of what he called carnality and who, by his own admission, remained a virgin.

Chapman was unconventional in more ways than his marital affairs would suggest. His fondness for bicycling and photography was not in keeping with his station. John Carey, in The Intellectuals and the Masses, comments on the "art" of photography at this time.

For many intellectuals, the camera epitomized mass man's lack of imagination. Baudelaire condemned photography as a "sacrilege" which allowed the "vile multitude" to "contemplate its own trivial image".... The camera was early identified as the art substitute favoured by clerks, suburban dwellers and similar philistine types. (Carey 31-32)

The bicycle is similarly dealt with. In adopting such pastimes, and encouraging his sons to do the same, Chapman broke out of the circuit of society that condemned his relationship with Sarah Junner (Lawrence's mother and herself illegitimate) and adopted the customs of the lower classes that were searching for their own selves.

It is possible that some notion of the abnormal relationship between his parents influenced Lawrence unknowingly as a youth. For Lawrence, the mirror had a flaw in it, a debt to be dug out of. To quote Gallop on Lacan:

In one of the earliest of his writings ("Le Stade du miroir" in *Écrits*), Lacan explains the mirror-stage as the moment when the infant proleptically takes on a totalizing/totalized shape - a cohesive identity - through the mediation of a mirror, and, more importantly, the Other (embodied, for example, by the mother). This alienation in the

constitution of the self, Lacan and Irigaray agree will later serve as the basis for the alienation of the secular self in the social self. (Gallop 80)

Put simply, Lacan's theory turns on the notion that the image that the child sees in the mirror is a misrepresentation; therefore the child's notion of self is warped and inaccurate. As Terry Eagleton puts it:

For Lacan, the ego is just this narcissistic process whereby we bolster up a fictive sense of unitary selfhood by finding something in the world with which we can identify. (Eagleton 165)

The sense may well have been fictive, yet, as we have seen, truth is simply a well-worn metaphor. In the case of Lawrence, the father metaphor lost its power. The Oedipal father returns, on a bicycle, and castrates (shows himself as being an outsider, disempowered by society and convention by his own actions) himself in front of the son, not to put too fine a Freudian point on things. No wonder Lawrence sought out the company of older literary men such as Shaw and Hardy when seeking approval for his writing. In some respects, the place of his father was taken by these two men, and by an "uncle" known to several of Lawrence's friends. The uncle was close to Lawrence, and wrote to his friends about "Ted's" welfare.

During this period in his life, Lawrence acquired his cottage, Clouds Hill, where he planned to retire after his R.A.F. service was over. Curiously enough relatives of Lawrence's father owned the land on which the cottage stood. The site also featured in Hardy's Return of the Native, a double connection to Lawrence's search for the father figure (Knowles 4) (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 742 - 743).<sup>27</sup>



### Incident at Deraa

The discovery of his illegitimacy was not the only ghost that Lawrence had to deal with. During November 1917, while on a reconnaissance mission to Deraa, he was captured by Turkish troops, brought before their commanding officer, and raped. In a letter to Charlotte Shaw Lawrence confesses that:

For fear of being hurt, or rather to earn five minutes respite from a pain which drove me mad, I gave away the only possession we are born into the world with -- our bodily integrity. (Lawrence of Arabia 739)

Lawrence's body was "opened with violence." "The dry anus suffers pain; the penetrated is a humiliated man" (Gallop 84). Gallop speaks in physical terms here, comparing female anatomical receptiveness to that of the male. In a letter to Charlotte Shaw, dated 1924, Lawrence commented in much the same terms as Gallop referring to the "...unbearable humiliation to the woman: for I presume it's unbearable, with my own ache coming to life again" (Brown, Letters 268). The question is, what pain, what ache, drove Lawrence mad? Was it the pain of the torture that he underwent before being forced to submit to the rape, or was it the "delicious warmth, probably sexual" that flooded through him during the experience? (Seven Pillars 445) Was this an expression of repressed homosexual or masochistic tendencies? In the 1922 text of Seven Pillars, Lawrence "...confessed that the flogging at Deraa left him with a masochistic longing "...like the striving of a moth towards its flame" (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 668). This may well be the case, although throughout later life,

---

<sup>27</sup> E.M. Forster commented on the Hardy connection. Wilson cites him stating that Clouds Hill was a "...charming place in a hollow of the "Egdon Heath" described by Hardy at the

Lawrence expressed disgust at the thought of carnality and denied any wish to experience any form of sexual activity. This tendency had been present since his early youth and the Deraa incident only increased these feelings. This disgust extended to the extreme in Lawrence's reluctance to even shake hands. This attitude proved to be something of a difficulty for Lawrence during his barrack room time. The rough horseplay and occasionally violent actions of his hutmates were at best upsetting. Due to his small stature it seems that Lawrence was often singled out for abuse, particularly in the Tank Corps, where he is supposed to have engaged a fellow soldier, who had joined with him, to act as a bodyguard. This sort of treatment at the hands of his fellow recruits would seem to have died out during the time of Lawrence's second enlistment in the R.A.F.

### **Persuasion**

A part of the torture that Lawrence suffered at the hands of the Turks was a whipping that left marks that he described in The Mint as "persuasion" (Mint 35). Once again, however, as is often the case with Lawrence, we find a division of opinions concerning this punishment. Lawrence James, in his work The Golden Warrior, claims that this whipping and rape never occurred or, if it did, it occurred in a different time and place than at Deraa.

This incident, whether real or imagined, has sent critics scurrying to pronounce upon Lawrence's sexuality. The important aspect of this event is not so much Lawrence's sexuality, but the impact that the incident had upon his life. Terence Rattigan's play, Ross, presents us with a Lawrence on the eve of his dismissal from

---

opening of The Return of the Native." (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 737)

the R.A.F. in the early 1920's. Through a series of dream flashbacks, we return to the Deraa incident. Rattigan presents the theory that it is the revelation to Lawrence of his homosexuality by the Turks that breaks his spirit for responsibility. There is no doubt that the incident left him mentally scarred, or "unclean," as he put it. The facts that Lawrence presents are as follows. While attempting a reconnaissance of Deraa to gather intelligence information, he was arrested and brought before the Governor who attempted to have his way with him. Lawrence was uncooperative and was thrown to the guards who beat and raped him. James claims that this incident did not occur because Lawrence was not in the Deraa area at the time that the rape occurred. These contrary opinions have prompted a lively and ongoing debate in at least one publication devoted to Lawrence studies. Despite James's claims, there seems little doubt that Lawrence did experience the events described in Seven Pillars. James's main concern is with Lawrence's whereabouts at the time of the Deraa incident. Lawrence's version of the event is supported by the various diaries of other British officers serving in the area.

Persuasion was something that Lawrence was well acquainted with despite his claims regarding carnality. During the 1920s and the 1930s, he persuaded several service comrades to beat him severely. In the words of Lawrence biographer John Mack, the beatings had to be severe enough to produce a "seminal emission" (Mack 443). In addition to the beatings, a course of strenuous physical exercise was conducted, including boxing and swimming. The servicemen who administered the beatings did so on the instructions of Lawrence's uncle. This uncle was a fictional creation on Lawrence's part and was referred to as "the Old Man." In writing to and

receiving word from "the Old Man," Lawrence's beaters were in fact communicating with yet another alter ego of Lawrence's.

The textual power of this is obvious. At a stroke Lawrence created a father figure who was capable of administering punishment for transgressions that supposedly included a matter of stolen money and, specifically, Lawrence's illegitimacy. The fact that the father figure and Lawrence were rolled up in one provides a field day for those who are attracted to the Oedipal theme in literature.

The fictional father was created through the medium of writing. Ultimately it was this medium that Lawrence turned to in order to recreate his sense of self. Lawrence constantly stated that he had a wish to be a great writer. To this end he constantly sought out the company of writers, particularly older ones, possibly in order to provide himself with a mantle of fatherly legitimacy.

T.E.'s younger brother Arnold was asked about the beatings. His explanation centered on the comment that Lawrence hated sex, and had read any number of saints' lives (Lawrence and Arabia). The implication is that the beatings took the place of sexual activity. Note the involvement of textuality. Beating is linked to reading, and writing was a mirror in which Lawrence tried to recreate himself. This recreative process -- a form of "remasculation"-- takes the form of altering biographical facts and events that are described by Lawrence in his writings and particularly in The Mint.

### Pen Lash Page

Writing has often been linked to the sexual act. The phallic attributes of the pen have been noted by many critics, amongst them Jacques Derrida.<sup>28</sup>

Carolyn Dinshaw comments on the female qualities of the page.<sup>29</sup> Gallop follows the same lines, speaking of Irigaray who states, "...in "Quand nos lèvres se parlent" that men consider women indifferent receptacles, sexual blank pages that merely bear the imprint of men [...]" (Gallop 88).<sup>30</sup>

The marks that the pen leaves upon the page disfigure (break) the whiteness of the sheet. "The white virgin [page] is necessarily sullied from without" (Gallop 83). As Dinshaw and Gallop have illuminated, the female body can be read as a text. The violence of this argument links directly to Lawrence. The violence of the barrack room, the beatings in the name of the fictional Uncle, the scars that Lawrence carries all attest the imposition of will, his own or another's on the text of his body. Lawrence's teenage exercises — pushing himself to the limits of endurance -- speak of the overlaying of his will on the physical aspects of his existence.<sup>31</sup> That Lawrence disregarded his body is evident through his behaviour. The attitude towards his body did not go unnoticed by others. Noel Coward, who had met Lawrence and was one

---

28. As an aside, Lawrence wrote much of Seven Pillars of Wisdom with one particular pen, a special sort used for map making, a pen he used to re-map himself.

29 Carolyn Dinshaw's book Chaucer's Sexual Poetics examines the "textuality" of women in both medieval and modern critical thinking.

<sup>31</sup> Seven Pillars describes an incident of bodily marking. "...the ancient and curious nomadic penance of striking the head sharply with the edge of a weighty dagger again and again till the issuing blood had run down to the waist belt. It caused painful but not dangerous scalp wounds, whose ache at first and whose scars later were supposed to remind the would-be defaulter of the bond he had given". (Seven Pillars 416)

of those selected by Lawrence to read The Mint in typescript form, commented in his diary that

[o]bviously he had a strong streak of masochism, despised his own body, and subconsciously, or perhaps consciously, loved the better bodies of the younger men close to him and his vision. (Coward 540)

Just as myth would have it, the ancients drew colour into a reed and began to mark, so Lawrence used the birch to mark his own body. Lawrence's choice of situation was a subversive subservience, a traditional aspect of feminine life at his time in that the authority that he wielded was hidden behind his aircraftsman's uniform.

We arrive at a point within which we may bring questions of textuality, sexuality and the self into contact. As I have remarked, both Dinshaw and Gallop have likened the page, and later the text, to a female body.

The final step for Lawrence in recreating his self textually and in the real world was to have his own body act as a page and the lash as a pen. If we follow Gallop's phallic economy, lash as phallus, body as page, then Lawrence is defined as woman; what is more, he has defined himself, using phallic power constructs to subvert those structures. It is Lawrence who loses his virginity, first in Deraa and then, once again at his own hands.

Having led up to the point where the male body can also be seen as text, and can have the same value placed on it as the female body, I should like to bring Gallop's text into closer contact with Lawrence.

This concern with various interpretations of phallic Lacanian economy and Luce Irigaray's interpretations of this economy assigns stereotypical male/female roles to aspects of the text. In The Mint the overly aggressive camp commanders are cast

in strong male roles, while the recruits are placed in the subservient "female" role of the master/slave dichotomy. Rather than male or female, which are subject to textual shifts, the participants are better considered as giver and receiver.

Gallop's own Irigarayan economy fails on the assumption of gender designated roles within the economy. As we have seen with Lawrence, the role of "woman" within Gallop's essay is not designated by the penis, but by the phallus, terms that become confused in the shifts from one source to the other.

Gallop claims that the *will* to decry the phallocracy, to revolt against the father figure, is the thing. If will is the key, then why is the penetrated man humiliated? Is this statement, true only in a phallic economy that allows a one-way flow only, made by Irigaray or Gallop? In either case, Gallop fence sits.

Penetration is humiliating because "he" is on the subservient receiving end, "he" is "woman." Humiliating because it brings about a reorientation of one's sense of identity, breaks the unity of a sense of self. Yet will and the ability to exercise it is the sign of the phallus. The combination of both, as in the case of Lawrence, serves to muddy the issue. How are feminist attitudes satisfied when we have to deal with an identity that is textually, not genitally defined? The difference lies, as Gallop comments, in will. But is this not an easy way out of the problem?

Use of will in the manner prescribed by Gallop results in a change in the classic Hegelian master/slave relationship. In not being subjugated to male law, the woman turns the man, and the phallic economy, into something to be used for her pleasure.

It is important to realize that the overturning of the master/slave relationship does not need to hold to lines determined only by gender. Lawrence, deciding to adopt the role of recipient as defined in the textual coming together in Gallop's text, plays with the Hegelian notion even more. The slave in this case becomes the complete master, Aircraftsman Shaw, dictating his wishes to the head of the Air Force, and getting his way.

Gallop constructs an elaborate system, in which she too attempts to dig out of debt. She mentions the names of the Fathers and so is guilty by association. She implicitly justifies the use of their names by claiming that they were used for her own purposes; this is "autarky," a term used by Irigaray. Gallop has demonstrated that, as she says, assertion of uncontaminated selfhood is no way out. The Lawrence/Ross of The Mint is equally guilty. Ross's presence in the Air Force is thanks to Lawrence, yet Ross is bent on the effacement of Lawrence. There is, however, a constant shifting between the dominance of Ross and Lawrence. No Ross without Lawrence to nurture and give birth to the persona of Ross, yet Ross seeks to destroy Lawrence. Due to the constantly changing nature of the relations between man and woman, reader and text, Lawrence and Ross there is always cross contamination, always a disruption and questioning of mastery. These disruptions arise from and produce impertinent questions. These questions in turn raise the problem of the self, a painful and disruptive problem. Lawrence demonstrates both figuratively and performatively that selfhood can only be defined by involvement in the master/slave roundabout.



**Chapter 6**

**Casting the Die**

### Ambition

Throughout much of his life Lawrence was consumed with the wish to be a writer whose talents were recognized on their own merits and not the fame that came to him as a result of his exploits in Arabia. The wish to be a writer was fulfilled with Seven Pillars; yet Lawrence, disappointed with the text, failed to fully exploit the opportunities that were subsequently presented to him. Instead, he felt that he had to completely change his circumstances in order to write himself a new life

Lawrence believed that one way to further help his ambition was to drop out of sight. He chose to join the R.A.F. as an enlisted man and changed his name. At the time of his enlistment Lawrence was both physically and emotionally exhausted by the efforts involved in finishing Seven Pillars. He hoped that a sojourn in the ranks would help him to rebuild himself and provide material for a book on the Air Force. However, as was often the case for Lawrence, the secret of his new identity did not remain secret for long.<sup>32</sup> After overcoming initial problems at the recruiting station (problems that are not described in The Mint) Lawrence was allowed to enlist under the pseudonym of John Hume Ross.<sup>33</sup> The use of an assumed name was illegal and required the help of several very high-ranking R.A.F. officers, including its head, Hugh Trenchard. Unfortunately Lawrence's secret leaked out -- partly because of his own careless handling of his new identity and occupation. The leak resulted in his expulsion from the R.A.F. on the grounds that he might subvert discipline. Lawrence

---

<sup>32</sup> Lawrence later made no secret of his identity and spoke of his connections in letters to those he remained friendly with. In one letter, for example, he mentions his connections to Churchill. (Brown Letters 313)

<sup>33</sup> According to John Mack, Lawrence used this name for banking purposes throughout the rest of his life. (Mack 332)

turned to the Tank Corps, joining as a private under the name T.E. Shaw in the hope, later realized, that he might be allowed to rejoin the R.A.F. It was this name that he later adopted by deed poll; an act that mirrored his parents' name changes. In a letter to Edward Garnett dated September 7, 1922, Lawrence speaks of the embryonic Mint. "I've been thinking for the last week of writing a study of man in the ranks of the R.A.F." No doubt this had been in Lawrence's mind from an earlier time. This is partly confirmed by a statement in the same letter of his being offered the editorship of a periodical called Belles-Lettres. Lawrence comments that the offer seemed "far from my swill-stinking overalls." It is clear from this reference to events described in The Mint, section 19, "Shit Cart" -- that Lawrence was already at work on the book. The notion of the project may have been in place as early as 1919. Lawrence himself comments that the idea of joining the Air Force was nebulously in place in 1917. (Mack 320) On September 15, 1922, Lawrence wrote to Colonel S.F. Newcombe about his life in the R.A.F.

It's a plan in my mind since 1919, [joining the R.A.F.] but first my book on Arabia, & then Winston delayed me, till I was almost too old. However my health is bucking up, and I hope to come through the training period intact. The reasons why, & the purpose of it, may keep till it's all over. (Garnett Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 170)

During his R.A.F. career Lawrence worked on a series of notes describing life in the Air Force over the period of his first enlistment. These notes, referred to as the "Uxbridge notes" after the location of the camp, were to become The Mint. The work was originally conceived by Lawrence as a daybook of the R.A.F between

August and December of 1922.<sup>34</sup> As the title page states, later notes also were used. The time span of The Mint is just over three years. The title page in fact is a hint of what is to come. All is not initially what it seems to be in Lawrence's world.

Lawrence overtly uses the text to describe the experiences of an aircraftsman serving in the Air Force. The text does more than this, however. What is revealed is a portrait of Lawrence that is both horrifying and staggering in its completeness. Just as that which is left unsaid reveals as much or more than that which is spoken, Lawrence's attitude towards himself speaks volumes. He wrote to Robert Graves in 1928 that

Seven Pillars was a historical necessity: I don't call it an option: but The Mint was a pure wantonness. I went to Uxbridge with the deliberate intention of writing something about service life [...] (T.E. Lawrence to his Biographers 155)

He hoped that the book would help to establish his place as a writer of "big books." This term was Lawrence's own for works that he felt were the best that literature had to offer. These he cited as being, amongst others: Whitman's Leaves of Grass, Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov, and Melville's Moby Dick. There was something about these works that spurred Lawrence on in an attempt to achieve high literary standards of his own. He hoped that he would one day produce something equal to the standards of a Melville or a Dostoevsky. Of course Lawrence is known

---

34 Walt Whitman, one of the authors that Lawrence held in high esteem, also kept what he called a daybook. It may well be that Lawrence had this and the "big book" idea in mind when he decided on this as a subtitle for his work in progress. That his interest in Whitman was on going is indicated by the presence of two copies of Whitman's work in the Clouds Hill library at the time of Lawrence's death. The more recent of the two was Whitman's Complete Prose Works of 1908. The bookplate bears the inscription T.E.S., evidence of the book's being acquired after the events described in The Mint and Lawrence's name change. It is interesting to note that Lawrence was using the name Lawrence as well as Shaw as late as October 1924. The earlier of Whitman's works present in the

primarily for Seven Pillars of Wisdom, yet The Mint is an important book, for it provides important insight into the creative process.

In his review of The Mint E.M. Forster remarked that the text was the skeleton of a work.<sup>35</sup> This is a perceptive remark on Forster's part and is a term used by Lawrence himself in describing his text. Lawrence saw The Mint as a rough piece of work, a warm-up to something greater that was yet to come; a "big book" that Lawrence eventually came to believe he might never write. Towards the end of his life Lawrence claimed that he was written out, yet continued to write of other projects that he still had in mind.

The proposed greater book was, like The Mint, to be a book of the Air Force. It was to be called Confession of Faith, a line taken from Seven Pillars, although another later title under consideration was Leaves in the Wind, echoing Whitman. Lawrence died before this bigger book could be more than sketched out. The notes that remain are in some cases amplifications of scenes described in The Mint, possibly original drafts of material that found their way into The Mint. The Uxbridge notes, which form the first two parts of The Mint as we have it today, were as Lawrence stated, intended to be an introduction to the "big book."

While suffering through the same regime as the rest of the recruits, Lawrence did have an escape clause at his disposal. He was able to leave the ranks whenever he might choose, unlike the others who were stuck. This clouded his perception of the situation, a cloud he was aware of.

---

Clouds Hill library is the 1867 American edition of Leaves of Grass. As we shall see in a following chapter, Lawrence was well aware of the influence of other writers on an author's work.

35 Is it possible that Forster just repeated Lawrence's own words?

In a letter dated September 15, 1922 Lawrence remarked to Edward Garnett that: "...if the oddity of my standing produces a fresh-feeling book, I suppose I shouldn't grouse about my luck" (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 169).

As one of Lawrence's chief literary advisors, Garnett received much information dealing with The Mint. Lawrence wrote out The Mint as a Christmas present for Garnett. It was this manuscript and its derivatives that were dished up to several of Lawrence's friends, amongst them E.M. Forster, Robert Graves, Noel Coward, John Buchan and George Bernard and Charlotte Shaw. The manuscript had already passed through four revisions when Garnett received it.

The manuscript and the book have had an unusual history. The Mint began as a series of notes scribbled under blankets before lights out or any other time that Lawrence had to himself. Such conditions were not conducive to ease of composition, as the author discovered. This made copying and recopying a necessity if only to keep the notes physically together. In a letter to E.M. Forster, dated September 6, 1928, Lawrence goes into a long account of the genesis of The Mint.

Every night in Uxbridge I used to sit in bed, with my knees drawn up under the blankets, and write on a pad the things of the day. I tried to put it all down, thinking that memory & time would sort them out, and enable me to select significant from insignificant. Time passed, five years and more (long enough, surely, for memory to settle down?) and at Karachi I took up the notes to make a book of them...and instead of selecting, I fitted into the book, somewhere & somehow, every single sentence I had written at Uxbridge. (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 364)

The letter goes on to describe the techniques of composition that Lawrence used in the various sections of the book. One method that Lawrence took to in an effort to fit the notes together was a Joycean cut and paste exercise. In effect, by approaching

a text in this method, Lawrence attempted to "re-member" it literally, figuratively and metaphorically. This, in a deeper essence was the reason Lawrence felt driven to write. His two major works, Seven Pillars and The Mint, are attempts to describe the past, often in a form that was not true to "real" events, particularly in the case of the latter. In converting his memory, perception and feeling of events into concrete representations, Lawrence was forced to reconsider, reevaluate the same events over and over again, and therefore himself. This re-evaluation was largely responsible for the state of near mental collapse the he was in at the time of his initial enlistment. Lawrence lost the manuscript of Seven Pillars while changing trains at Reading station. The stress of reliving the experiences over for the purposes of the rewrite deeply marked him. The notion of "losing" a work that had been so central a point in Lawrence's life is rather difficult to imagine. His comment on the loss was "I've lost the damned thing." (Lawrence and Arabia) What is not difficult to imagine is a Lawrence, pressed for time and unhappy with the quality of his work, providing himself with both a reason to start over and a further opportunity to re-examine himself, to the point of masochism, once again. The energy that the rewrite took from him was never replaced, not only because of the physical effort, although Lawrence's habit of trying to do ten or twenty thousand words at a sitting was certainly that, but due to the mental stress.

In his later writing, Lawrence continually attempted to embrace the concrete, that which was tangible and could not be denied. This embrace took many forms, chief amongst them being the R.A.F. The ardour with which he pursued writing and commissioned other artworks speaks of a wish to place the abstract within the realm

of the concrete, a wish to possess not only words, but meanings, to pin them down to one absolute indisputable meaning. This indisputable meaning could then be used by Lawrence to orient himself, place himself within some form of context in which he would be able to function in the world. Unfortunately for Lawrence this proved to be impossible; language is far too ambiguous a tool for such a function, yet Lawrence persisted in his efforts to make his text, and therefore himself, perfect.

### **Textual History**

The Mint was not written entirely first hand. The depot sections that made up the bulk of the text were made up from the scribbled notes while the Cranwell section was composed from memory and experience. Lawrence included this section to offset what he felt was a negative atmosphere generated by the harshness of the depot section. Of these notes, only a few samples survive. Lawrence "wrote The Mint at the rate of about four chapters a week, copying each chapter four or five times, to get it into final shape" (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 364).

The figure of four "manuscripts" is misleading. Lawrence reworked his text on a typewriter while serving in Karachi. The original notes were taken out into the desert and -- echoes of the photograph of Lawrence in the mess -- burned (Mint 72). A handwritten version of the typescript was sent to David Garnett.

In a letter to Edward Garnett - the father of David - Lawrence supplied some background to the fair copy of what was to become The Mint.

[E]very word has been four times written: the original (bed -made) note: the pencil draft: a typed copy, to give me a clearer view: and then this inked version. So even if you do not like it, you will know that it is not because I have spared the pains to make it worth your acceptance. (Essential 288)



We have this number from Lawrence himself, but Garnett had several typescripts made up from the manuscript that Lawrence sent to him. One of these was the basis for an American edition of The Mint that was published in 1936 by Doubleday Doran and company in order to safeguard the American copyright. Fifty were printed of which ten were priced at \$500,000, a price so high so as to prevent their sale.<sup>36</sup> According to Lawrence bibliographer Philip O'Brien, this is not the edition that has been popularly published.

The manuscript used for the American edition was not the last state of the text. A revised manuscript was found later and formed the basis for the text which was set by Cape in 1948. (O'Brien 1988 edition 144)

When The Mint did finally become available to the public in 1955 it appeared in two versions, an expurgated, general release edition and a more expensive limited edition. For example, the complete British text was priced at £3 14s and the expurgated one at 17s. 6d, less than a third of the price of the complete text. The complete American issue was priced at \$20.00. Noel Perrin, in his book Dr. Bowdler's Legacy, states that:

With us [Americans] the limited edition is more likely to be a sales gimmick than a cultural divider. T.E. Lawrence's The Mint is a case in point. When it finally appeared in 1955 [...] it stepped demurely out as an expensive limited edition, both in London and New York. But whereas in London this was accompanied by a much cheaper expurgated edition, in New York, after a suitable interval, the entire text appeared as a paperback for \$1.25. (Perrin 253)

This statement is contradicted by Harold Orlans, who states that "...the obscenities in The Mint were not widely published until 1973" (Orlans 129).

Perrin leaves out the fact that the books differed markedly. The expurgated British text was no different from the complete work, save that potential "offending" words were simply lifted out, leaving blank spaces. Yet the binding of the more expensive complete text reflected Lawrence's expressed views and wishes on book production, hence the higher price. The book was bound in leather and cloth, both of them Air Force blue in colour. In addition to this, the complete version features edge gilding, a gold dressing on the outside top of the upper pages. The book is a fine example of a moderately mass produced (2,000 copies were printed) specimen of the bookmaker's art.

As to the act of expurgation itself, Lawrence was disturbed by the vulgar language of the text and apologized to those who read it. Yet he felt it important to retain the language in an attempt to come as close to rendering the text as "truthful" as anything dealing with such a conceptual notion as language can be. John Buchan commented in his autobiography on the nature of The Mint.

The Mint is a *tour de force*, and [sic] astonishing achievement in exact photography; no rhetoric here, but everything hard, cold, metallic and cruel. His power of depicting squalor is uncanny, though there is nothing in The Mint, I think, which equals a later passage describing a troop-ship on its way to India; that fairly takes the breath away by its sheer brutality. In The Mint he weaves words and phrases from the gutter - *les gros mots* - into a most artful pattern. (Buchan 217)<sup>37</sup>

Despite the polishing that Lawrence gave his text he was still dissatisfied with the final product. He spoke contrarily of having it published. On one hand he

---

<sup>36</sup> Lawrence had been also been concerned with the status of copyright for Seven Pillars. Fear of a pirate American edition had prompted him to write to F.N. Doubleday suggesting that a few copies be printed in a manner that would make them totally unreadable. (Mack 350)

<sup>37</sup> It would seem that Buchan is referring to a section of text not included in the published version of The Mint. This passage is to be found in The Essential T.E. Lawrence.

claimed that there was so little of himself in the work that he would not hesitate to have it published. One the other he did not wish to upset the people or the service depicted, as he had retained real names throughout the manuscript and the typescripts; presumably there was too much of them in the text. George Bernard Shaw's advice on libel and Seven Pillars echoed in Lawrence's mind. On the "amount of himself" present in the book, Lawrence commented that "...The Mint gives nothing of myself away: personally, I shouldn't mind its appearing to-morrow " (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 359).

This is patently untrue because Lawrence was forced to re-examine and re-invent himself in the text. This confirmed through Lawrence's comment in a letter to John Buchan; "...I have a fear that in it [The Mint] I have given away my limitations more bluntly than I would wish" (Lownie 236).

### **Pilgrim's Progress**

The Mint is not only about the Air Force; it is equally about the pilgrim Lawrence/Shaw/Ross's progress through the Air Force. The amount of Lawrence that we see is not only the amount that is shown to us at the beginning and the end of the text but is the *difference* between the two. In a letter to E.M. Forster dated 28 September 1928 Lawrence speaks of both Seven Pillars and The Mint.

Of course The Seven Pillars is bigger than The Mint. I let myself go in The S.P. and gave away all the entrails I had in me. It was an orgy of exhibitionism. Never again. Yet for its restraint, & dignity, and form, & and craftsmanship, The Mint may well be better. By that I don't mean that The Mint has *no* emotion, or The Seven Pillars *no* balance: only comparatively it's so. E. Garnett, curiously enough, calls The S.P. reticent, and The Mint a giving away of myself. (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 365)

During the time of the composition of The Mint Lawrence was dealing with the revising and production of Seven Pillars. The seeds of The Mint are to be found in Seven Pillars. However, it is worth remembering that Seven Pillars was not the only literary work that Lawrence was busy with while work was progressing on The Mint. Amongst these projects were translations of The Odyssey for Bruce Rogers, as well as The Forest Giant. There was a translation of a book on fish (Sturly) and a small amount of literary criticism for The Spectator, a London-based periodical. This last took the form of articles signed "C.D.". These initials provided a further R.A.F. tie as they stood for Colindale, the name of the tube station that Lawrence descended from when he arrived at the R.A.F. enlistment center.

Despite his comments to Buchan, Lawrence at times felt there was little of him in The Mint, possibly because he altered or overhanded events and their spacing; indeed, Lawrence himself uses the term "overdone" in describing his effort to portray service life (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 365). Lawrence's need to produce a text so worked over is proof of there being more of the author present in the work than Lawrence would have liked to admit or may even have been aware of. This is characteristic of the Lawrence who attempted to have each page of the subscriber's Seven Pillars end in a complete sentence.

The experiences that Lawrence underwent in the writing of Seven Pillars and the transitions are proof that Lawrence felt himself too much the craftsman to do anything less than what he considered a perfect job. Lawrence destroyed the ichthyologic translation because he felt that it was not good enough for publication.

This quest for perfection is a chimera and is no doubt a reason for Lawrence's increased feelings of inadequacy over his writing, for example, his statements that he couldn't write "for toffee." With The Mint Lawrence merged two of three events of the same nature when he wanted to "monotonise" matters and compressed others for speed.

The form of the book took a lot of settling. I worked pretty hard at the arrangements of the sections, and their order. Mainly, of course, it follows the course of our training, which was a course: but where I wanted monotony or emphasis, I ran two or three experiences together, and when I wanted variety I juggled 'em up and down. I got all the material out into a skeleton order, and placed it, so near as I could: then I fixed in my own mind the main curves of idea which seemed to arise out of the notes: and re-wrote them with this intention in the back of my mind. (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 353)

By doing this Lawrence was able to place a certain amount of distance between what he experienced and what he wrote. The conflation of facts did not disturb him. What did worry him and proved a block to publication was his notion that the book's harsh barrack room language and depiction of conditions would prove harmful to the R.A.F. With this in mind he stipulated that The Mint should not be published until at least 1950, when those concerned would be safely dead and society altered (advanced?) enough to accept the language of the text.

I have told him [Trenchard] that in my life-time nothing of The Mint will be published: and that I have asked my brother (who is my heir) to with-hold it till at least 1950. That should see us all off the stage. (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 361)

He also stated that The Mint should be published without a single word being excised. This was in part, as he stated, to attempt to release him from his publishing with

Cape. Not, as he pointed out that he was upset with Cape, but rather because he did not want to publish anything more.

Dear Cape, Garnett has my second book The Mint, an agony of the Royal Air Force, which he will offer you for publication, *as it stands*, soon. This is in accordance with the terms of our Revolt in the Desert contract. I am not offering it to any other publisher, if you refuse my terms, since I do not, really, want it published at all. So don't get huffed that I'm changing my publisher. I'm not: I'm just proposing to live without one, in future. (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 361)

Lawrence asked for £1,000,000.00 in cash as an advance for the work in order to drive his point home.

The fact was that the language of The Mint rendered it almost unprintable in its original form at the time of its writing. Lawrence himself labeled the book as "very obscene" (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 355). This was before the trial of the other Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover and the adoption of social standards that allowed for such a publication

In order to prevent the book's wide circulation, Lawrence destroyed the other draft, as he mentions in letters to Garnett and Sir Hugh Trenchard

This note-book it was which I posted yesterday. Last night I made a lovely bonfire of the originals. Up came the orderly sergeant, and asked silly questions: wanted to know what I was burning. "My past" said I. (Brown Letters 369)

The destruction of this draft, the actual Uxbridge notes, one imagines, is a sad loss for Lawrence scholars, the more so because it was a useless attempt to defy scholars, collectors and bibliographers who had added to Lawrence's difficulties in living his life.

As I have stated, Lawrence sent Garnett a true manuscript in the defeated hope that something handwritten would be more of a letter and less of a publication, thus something more private. In this case as in many of his actions, Lawrence displayed a contrary streak in dealings concerning The Mint. John Buchan commented on Lawrence's character:

It is simplest to say that he was a mixture of contradictions which never were -- perhaps never could have been -- harmonized. His qualities lacked integration. He had moods of vanity and moods of abasement; immense self-confidence and immense diffidence. He had a fastidious taste which was often faulty. The gentlest and most lovable of beings with his chivalry and considerateness, he could also be ruthless. I can imagine him, though the possessor of an austere conscience, crashing through all minor moralities to win his end. That is to say, he was a great man of action with some "sedition in his powers. (Buchan 214)

What of the known versions? Lawrence did circulate the typescript to various people, Lord Trenchard, Bernard Shaw, E.M. Forster, Noel Coward and others. For the most part their reactions were favourable, with Noel Coward later calling the book "...really glorious writing" (Coward 540).

Upon the release of The Mint several prominent critics and reviewers produced reactions. One of these was Forster. It may well be that Forster allowed his friendship with Lawrence to affect his view of the text, but this is doubtful. Many years had passed since Lawrence's death and Forster had grown in reputation.

In his review of the book, Forster described it as a skeleton of a thing. If The Mint was indeed a skeleton of a thing, then it was intended to be so. Lawrence reworked the text so often, rattled its bones around so much, that there could be no other goal.

A continual referral to the concrete form of the text was a hallmark of Lawrence's critical work. Not only was Lawrence possessed by the ambition to be a great writer, but also he was also keenly interested in the form of a text. This is evident in his letters to Bruce Rogers, for whom he produced a translation of Homer's Odyssey, which remains in print to this day.

The first edition of The Mint reflects Lawrence's concern for book production. Though long dead by the time of its publication, Lawrence left indications of how he would like to see the book produced. In a letter to Edward Garnett, Lawrence speaks of posting the manuscript of the R.A.F. notes (The Mint) to him. He comments on the appearance, stating that he has written them out by hand. In other letters, he comments on typing his work.

In an unpublished review of The Works of Walter Savage Landor, as in other reviews he had written, Lawrence begins with the outward appearance of the text, with the notion of book as work of art. As befits someone who as a youth cycled miles to see the Kelmscott Chaucer, Lawrence was concerned with the form of a text. Into the aesthetic considerations creeps the workman's pride at a well-made article. Lawrence found the edition of Landor to be;

[...] magnificently printed, in a type of excellence, on good paper, in a size which is imposing, as Landor should be, without being unwieldy. I have carried its various volumes about with me, lately, trying to think out a review of them, and have not suffered from their weight or size. The binding is apparently strong. A car wheel passed over Volume three, without its disintegrating. I think they fit their little book very tightly and well. I imagined the final size of them, from the draft, and had deCoverley bind me up the book, in the simplest blue morocco. It is the blue we wear and you can imagine the tooling is our brass buttons. If I'd thought of it I'd have had six buttons down the front, like me. (Essential 287 - 88)



In this form The Mint is a handsome volume. Quarter bound in leather and cloth, the cover reflects the blue of an R.A.F. uniform from Lawrence time in the ranks. This text was produced as a limited edition of 2000 copies.

At the time of his death Lawrence had planned to set up a small printing press at Clouds Hill and produce a limited number of copies of The Mint. (Garnett Letters 844) He had arrived at the stage of commissioning artwork, in the plan of Seven Pillars. Even at this stage of his life, Lawrence was reaching back to the works of William Morris and his recent efforts with Bruce Rogers. This harkening back was not a regression, but a fusion of new and old. It is evident that any work of art cannot spring fully-grown from the forehead of the artist, but must be forged and tempered with the fire of the artist's education and environment. It is evident, to paraphrase T.S.Eliot's Tradition and the Individual Talent, that there is no today or tomorrow without a yesterday. Lawrence's "new" literary style merged with that which he found attractive in the old. This use of older techniques and symbols was not limited to artwork and printing, but extended to the actual text also.

This had long been a thought which Lawrence toyed with; some years previously he had actually purchased land with a view towards setting up his own printing press, very arts and craft like, with a fellow student. Nothing came of the plan, yet that act of purchasing the site showed Lawrence's commitment to producing fine work.

**Chapter Seven**

**Allusion in The Mint**

### The Paper Chase

Lawrence's submersion in the R.A.F., his attempt at recreating a new life through his own life could not help but involve a high degree of self-referentiality. This took the form of direct references to the Lawrence persona. In order to burn away the past, it must be acknowledged. The self-referentiality took the form of direct allusion to Lawrence's literary experiences. Ross, a new being, had no frame of reference other than Lawrence. No matter what his wishes he could not wipe out his past completely, as we see through his use of allusion.

Lawrence's use of literary allusion -- which in its most familiar guise is the direct or indirect invocation of parallel texts -- has not garnered the type of critical examination that it deserves. This is primarily due to its function and nature as an underlying stratum in the levels of literary techniques. Allusion, conscious or otherwise, speaks to the reader of the author's investment of himself within the text. The use of allusion also activates the reader's experiences through the linking of the reader and author through shared textual experiences. Broadly speaking, critics from one camp or another have attempted to fit allusion into their theories without realizing that such maneuvering and philosophizing is in large part useless because of the truly basic nature and meaning of allusion. This is particularly the case when dealing with Lawrence's work because the sources from which he drew his allusions played an important role in how he conducted his life.

The concept of allusion lies at the heart of all literature, indeed at the heart of all script, which is nothing more than a representation of language, which in turn is a representation of perceptions. To confine allusion to one system of interpretation is

to deny the very essence of its function, which on its broadest and most basic level is to expand the reader's knowledge of the text, the author and ultimately the reader himself through a joint author/reader examination of the text alluded to. Often in the course of this journey, the author experiences a degree of self-revelation that is also communicated to the reader. With this in mind I should like to explore the use that T.E. Lawrence makes of allusion in The Mint and draw some conclusions as to why and how Lawrence makes use of allusion.

The pattern of allusions that Lawrence makes use of is widely scattered, as are the allusions themselves within the text. While the opening of The Mint is rich with allusion Lawrence allows this to fade, having created interconnecting allusionary blocks that act as a form of literary hurricane mooring. With his scholastic and literary background Lawrence could not have been unaware of the function of allusion. In fact, as Lawrence revealed in a letter to his biographer Basil Liddell Hart, he was quite conscious of the place of allusion within his life: "You are one of the few living Englishmen who can see the allusions and quotations, the conscious analogies, in all I say and do, militarily" (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 908). This quote states emphatically the essential role of allusion in Lawrence's writing, a writing that is bound to his military careers.

His scarce (scarce in quantity, not in import) yet precise invocation of this tool indicates that this scarcity was deliberate and that Lawrence had a specific purpose in mind for the allusions that he did make. This is born out by Lawrence's comments on the composition of The Mint in a letter to Edward Garnett.

This is a reply to your letter of June 27, which ended up with a well-introduced remark about my Uxbridge notes. [...] I wrote them pell-mell, as the spirit took me, on one piece of paper or the other. Then I cut them into their sections, and shuffled them, as Joyce is supposed to have shuffled *Ulysses*. [...] You would have thought them the raw material of a paper-chase. So I began at Clouds Hill to stick each class in some sort of order onto sheets of paper, meaning to have them stitched for you. But that did not work, for the sections were too intertwined. [...] Copying my old notes is like eating yesterday's vomit. I add nothing but take away repetitions, where vain. I "did" three Church parades for example: and I believe they can be boiled to two: or even to one, which would be the quint-essence and exemplar of all my church parades. (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 352)

Lawrence held Joyce in high regard and said so. "[T]o bring it [*Seven Pillars*] out after *Ulysses* is an insult to modern letters" he commented (Orlans 130). The polishing that the manuscript underwent resulted in the deliberate positioning of specific and meaningful allusions.

These allusionary blocks are touchstones by which the reader (and Lawrence) is able to expand his or her appreciation of a text that reaches beyond a written representation. Lawrence used allusion as a tool in his search for self-definition. The work therefore has a two-fold function, that of a reader activated journey, and as a voyage of self-discovery for the

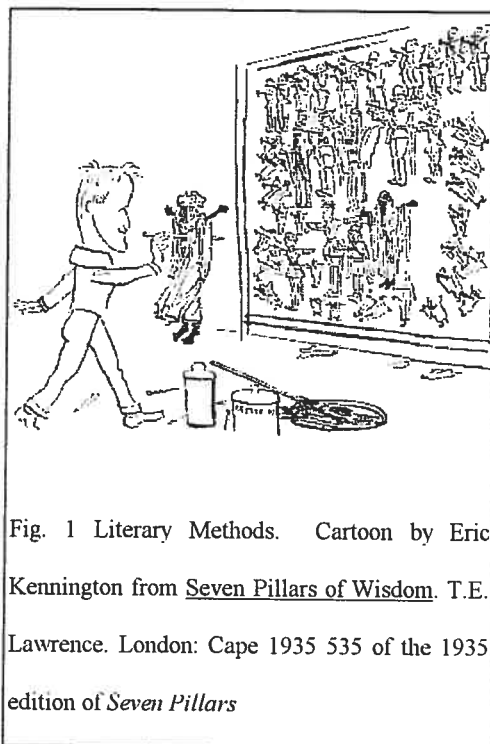


Fig. 1 Literary Methods. Cartoon by Eric Kennington from Seven Pillars of Wisdom. T.E. Lawrence. London: Cape 1935 535 of the 1935 edition of *Seven Pillars*

<<http://www.telawrecne.info>>.

Yardley, Michael. Backing into the Limelight. London: Harrap, 1986.

author. These two functions place The Mint outside the realm of most soldierly autobiographies, the primary aim of which is to communicate the author's experiences to a reader who may or may not share the same type of experiences. The author's growth or self-realization is often secondary, sometimes due to stylistic failings or various other motivations.<sup>38</sup> It is largely for this reason that Seven Pillars of Wisdom, Lawrence's most widely known work, is different from The Mint, which was conceived by the Colonel Lawrence of Seven Pillars and written by John Hume Ross and T.E. Shaw, Lawrence's R.A.F./literary alter egos.<sup>39</sup> This is not to say that Seven Pillars is a lesser or inferior work. The author had the benefit of his experiences with Seven Pillars, both as literature and event to draw upon in casting about for a sense of who or what he was. Therefore any subsequent literature is that much more mature or richer.

This search was not without humour on Lawrence's part, suggesting that he was well aware of the oddness of his search. In Lawrence's copy of Thomas Hardy's The Dynasts, inscribed by Hardy to Colonel Lawrence, Lawrence re-inscribed the following,

To T.E. Shaw for his comfort in camp

from

Lawrence (National Portrait Gallery Catalogue  
Item 265)

---

<sup>38</sup> The notion of The Mint being a tool of self-definition is born out by Lawrence's view of it as being a "day book of the R.A.F." as he claims on the title page.

<sup>39</sup> Lawrence also referred to himself as Mr. E. Lawrence, Urens Bey and a host of other names. See Malcolm Brown and Julia Cave, A Touch of Genius (London: Dent, 1988), and Jeremy Wilson's Lawrence of Arabia.

### Big Books

"Call me Ishmael," the opening line of Moby Dick (one of several works that Lawrence regarded as great literature), may well have its echo in Lawrence's many name changes and the search for his real self, a denial of the mythological persona that grew up about him one that ironically, he helped to foster through actions that Michael Yardley has described as "backing into the limelight."<sup>40</sup> The word legendary was being used about Lawrence during his lifetime, popularized by Lowell Thomas's lectures in London. These had originally begun under the title of With Allenby in Palestine. Lawrence was but a small figure in this, but Thomas, always ready to spot a sure moneymaker, realized that with Lawrence lay an opportunity to create a character with a romantic allure. The lecture was retitled With Allenby in Palestine and Lawrence in Arabia. Phrases that spoke of the "White Prince of Mecca," and the "White leader of the wild sons of Ishmael" were used and soon Lawrence became the romantic figure that Thomas had hoped to create, much to the chagrin and discomfort of Lawrence. Initially amused and most likely flattered, Lawrence came to find the attention unbearable as he was deluged with letters and requests from the financial to the carnal and everything in between. Yet, while the attention was unwelcome, there were incidents in which Lawrence surely did seem to fall into notoriety in his rush to escape fame.

---

40 Thomas J. O'Donnell agrees with this point in a similar statement: "[The] search for deliverance from self, the subject of the first two sections of The Mint, is original, daring and courageous in its bareness and simplicity.

Thomas J. O'Donnell, "Romantic Will in Seven Pillars of Wisdom and The Mint," The T.E. Lawrence Puzzle, ed. Stephen Tabachnick Athens, Georgia: U of G Press, 1984) 87.



A prime example of this "backing" is present in the photograph taken of Lawrence's hut mates at graduation from basic training. While he refused to be included in the photo, Lawrence can be seen peeking out through the backdrop of the hut window.<sup>41</sup>

A manifestation of the search for self was Lawrence's Bedivere-like retreat into the refuge of the R.A.F. as an act of contrition for having failed to carry out his own plans and promises and the orders of deceitful leaders that he was subject to during the desert campaign. The later realization of the deceit of the allied leaders and his own naivety in their political machinations added to the necessity for this escape. Lawrence himself acknowledges this to some degree in a letter to Robert Graves:

You remember my writing to you when I first went into the R.A.F. that it was the nearest modern equivalent of going into a monastery in the Middle Ages. That was right in more than one sense.<sup>42</sup> (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 923)

The self-expressed need for a simple non-intellectual environment was fulfilled within the R.A.F. As an admirer of William Morris Lawrence was aware of the Arts and Crafts attitude towards the dignity of work. A further powerful motive was Lawrence's true wish to write, Whitman or Melville-like, of a life "before the mast," from what he frequently termed a "worm's eye view."<sup>43</sup> A curious metaphor for an

---

41 See item 256 in The National Portrait Gallery's catalogue of the Lawrence exhibit.

42. Is this possibly a coy aside to the flogging that Lawrence underwent, during his Air Force spell?

43 Lawrence revised Seven Pillars while he was in the RAF. The revisions were done in the same manner in which The Mint was written. That is to say, one or two hours per evening. Many critics feel that the change in tone that Seven Pillars displays towards its end forms a kind of melting into the style that Lawrence used in The Mint. As Lawrence mentions in both The Mint and his letters, the stress of the composition of Seven Pillars, especially after losing the bulk of the MS. at Reading station was a factor in his joining the R.A.F.

airman considering the implications that "worm" carries with it, implications that come readily to mind when one considers the medieval scholar's (as Lawrence was a medieval scholar during his undergraduate days) attitude concerning the order of things in medieval philosophy.

### Targeting Text

Lawrence's near schizophrenic name and personality changes and contradictory notions towards notoriety as well as a consuming desire to write what others would consider great literature provides ripe grounds for the use of allusion, the planting of pointers that hitch Lawrence's text to well known and well thought of works. Combined with his dread of physical contact and his self-confessed problems of expression, all of the above make allusion not just a handy literary tool for Lawrence, but also a necessary and integral means of allowing others to speak what he cannot.<sup>44</sup> As Jeffrey Meyers comments, a letter from Lawrence to Garnett states that Lawrence's views on self-expression or revelation in Seven Pillars:

...might describe the "Odd Man Out" chapter of The Mint as well: "The personal revelations should be the key of the thing: and the personal chapter actually is the key, I fancy: only it's written in cipher....on no account is it possible for me to think of giving myself quite away." (Meyers 27)

While allusion hunting does have its attraction, a list of Lawrence's allusions to whoever or whatever is rather unprofitable. Instead I wish to concentrate more on Lawrence's specific choice of target text than on producing a catalogue of allusions

---

44 Lawrence's fear of being touched was accented by, or possibly originated by the homosexual rape that he suffered at Deraa during his Arabian experiences. Towards the end of his life, several of Lawrence's friends found that his accent had changed from a pleasant Oxford to what Robert Graves called "garage English" due to his time associating with his comrades in the R.A.F. (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 870)

used; to singling out the class of allusion that he uses and examine their symbiotic importance relative to Lawrence's sense of place and self.

Any analysis of Lawrence's use of allusion calls first for an examination of what allusion is within the context of Lawrence's text. The bedrock nature of allusion would seem to have had a blinding effect on many critics. Beckson and Ganz, in their book Literary Terms; A Dictionary, define allusion as:

A reference, usually brief, to a presumably familiar person or thing. For example, the poem below contains, and depends upon, a reference to the phrase "in Abraham's bosom."

Mary Ann has gone to rest  
Safe at last on Abraham's breast,  
Which may be nuts for Mary Ann,  
But is certainly rough on Abraham. (Beckson, Ganz  
"Allusion")

This is fine as far as it goes, but it doesn't go very far at all. We are told in a general way what allusion is, but not really how it works. The original meaning of allusion, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, was illusion. The familiar meaning of this word effectively sums up the manner in which allusion does function. We are tricked into recalling something that is not completely represented. This is how all language functions. Allusion is simply a deepening or extension of the manner in which language works. The Beckson-Ganz definition supplied presumes several things. The first is that all allusions are direct; the second is that all authors consciously use allusion, and the third, of course, is that an allusion must be recognized by the reader in order to be an allusion.<sup>45</sup> A slight distinction can be

---

<sup>45</sup> The OED does not do much better than Beckson and Ganz or indeed any other definitions that I am aware of. Most definitions seem to say what allusion is, but not what it does or why it does it.

drawn between allusion and influence. Influence informs allusion on a less specific level, influence is often the pool from which allusion is drawn

According to Beckson and Ganz an allusion is the result of collaboration by both the reader and the author because it falls to the reader to recognize an allusion and to the author to provide one. The illusion is penetrated, the act of penetration being that which constitutes the recognition of allusion. This is the general view of allusion. The intent of the author in providing an allusion becomes a direct and clear author to reader message. Sometimes, as is the case with Lawrence, the personal contact between the two collaborators is strengthened not only by a mutual understanding of what the reader is to gain from the target text, but by what the reader can infer about the author by the author's choice of text - the mental process that determines how and why the author chooses a particular allusion. The recognition of an allusion forces the reader into making important decisions about both the text and the author; it imposes decisions as to how the reader is to approach the text.

If we stop to consider only the text itself, to the exclusion of outside information, we can admit to no allusions, because the admission leads us back to outside sources. As T.S. Eliot points out in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," a text cannot stand without a past framework with which to buttress itself. Without Boccaccio there would be no Canterbury Tales and so on. This is especially true in the case of The Mint, where Lawrence makes much use of auto-allusion. The altered history and indirect references that Lawrence provides about his past speak of a wish

to be recognized as a "literary" author.<sup>46</sup> In working "undercover" he felt that he was free to be judged on his own anonymous merit. Yet, the auto-allusion, the act of referring to one's self, within The Mint would seem to give this the lie. The facts are that Lawrence enlisted in the R.A.F. under special terms. He was able to leave when he liked and through various influential friends was able to set in motion a great many reforms within the service.<sup>47</sup> The past was so much with him that he could not escape; he owed everything that he was able to do to his Arabian experiences; they crept into his work, his writing and his private life.<sup>48</sup> There were instances where Lawrence chose to acknowledge his past, for example, his comments to his Tank corps colleague Alec Dixon on Churchill being appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer. (Friends 376). One amusing incident occurred when a visiting Major General asked Lawrence to visit him with an eye towards obtaining a subscription for Seven Pillars.

T.E. went to Camberley and arrived at the house as the general was stepping out of his car. T.E. marched up to him, saluted smartly, and said: "Excuse me, sir -- are you General So -- and -- So? The general looked T.E. up and down and then snapped: "Who are you -- damn you?" T.E. looked him in the eye and said "I'm T.E. Lawrence and damn *you!*" Then he saluted smartly and rode off. Needless to say, the General's name was not on the subscription list. (Friends 377)

---

46 Lawrence changed the chronology of some of the events because, as he put it, so much of what happened was the same day in day out that it did not matter. Also, at some time in the manuscript's history, Lawrence had tried rearranging the text in a Joycean manner. He found that this did not work out as well as he wished so it was abandoned. Lawrence also tells us that the notes grew out of hand and he had to recopy them out into an exercise book that he had sent down from London. The Mint and The Letters both refer to this.

47 While Lawrence always had the opportunity to leave the service, he never volunteered to do so.

48 Lawrence's hob-nobbing with many important people gave rise to press rumours that did in fact result in his being discharged from the RAF for a two-year period.

The text cannot on these grounds be divorced from a series of precedent setting frameworks. The text must be placed within a certain sphere of reference. The intent of the author must be questioned in order to fully understand the reason for the use of an allusion. Often intention is a dangerous topic. Owing to the imperfection of language we can never be completely sure of an author's intent. Yet we must begin, in Lawrence's case, with the acknowledgement of the fact that he wished to write in the same league as a Whitman, or Tennyson or Melville or any other of his personal literary role models, thereby including himself in a literary, not a martial canon, in an effort to remove himself from his Arabian experiences. With Lawrence's own statement to this effect the margin of doubt is reduced considerably.<sup>49</sup> Our mutual frame of reference therefore is great literature - potentially any member of Lawrence's personal canon.

The first question to be asked, upon recognition of an allusion, is whether or not the author consciously or unconsciously placed such an allusion in the text. A consideration of the text from the author's view only yields these two possibilities. In the case of the conscious allusion, the author refers to something knowingly with an eye to achieving a calculated response on the part of the reader.<sup>50</sup> Any form of consciously placed allusion makes the point that the author wants the reader to recognize an allusion. Once again, we come to the question of intent.

---

49 It is tempting to say that Lawrence's character can be summed up by a line from the David Lean film: the character played by Claude Rains explains to "Bentley," the Lowell Thomas figure, that at this particular moment [Lawrence] wishes that he could be someone else. Lawrence spent much of his later life wishing to be someone other than Lawrence, yet made constant reference to his past, unable to dig out of the debt of his former life.

50. Most often for our needs another text, or an event, but not exclusively so.

With an unconscious allusion, the author unknowingly makes use of a snippet of text or a device that has already been used by a previous author. To make an analogy, an autopsy performed on a native of the most distant, primitive part of the globe would show traces of lead poisoning due to the air pollution produced by the industrialized portions of the world.<sup>51</sup>

For the reader, all perceived allusions have the same effect, whether planned by the author or not. They trigger an association with another text.<sup>52</sup> Unplanned allusions differ in that while they may not follow a specific pattern that the author has constructed, they do provide a deeper insight into the author's artistic machinery as well as his psyche or personality. These unplanned allusions are the untainted innermost workings of what constitutes a great work. Unlike the Beckson and Ganz definition the reception of perceived unconscious allusions is solely reader generated; the author assuming a passive, even submissive stance.

The interpretation of both conscious and unconscious allusions allows the reader, alerted by these allusionary signposts, to travel into the mind of the writer. During this journey the extra depth that the reader obtains expands the number of experiences that the reader can link to the primary text. In the case of The Mint Lawrence admittedly reworked the text to such an extent, examining events and himself, collapsing time and compressing the same occurrences, that the subconscious

---

51 It has long been held the task of the critical reader is to determine which of the two methods the author is using. There is a degree of validity in this line of reasoning. For example; if the reader sees what seems to be an allusion to historical events, then this can be an aid to determining the work's date of composition.

52 See Carmela Perri for more on the simultaneous activation of texts.

"baggage" expressed in the form of unconscious allusions was developed and brought forwards to our attention as well as his own.

Just as the conscious allusion is a discrete marker, so too is the unconscious allusion. They differ only in their deliberate placement. One is planned, "artificial," the other unplanned, often unsuspected on the part of the author and is "natural." Writing is an artificial figuration of the natural, "real-time" speech, or more properly thought, in the author's mind. The "artificialness" of textuality infiltrates a text and therefore the reader just like a virus.

Formed by the overall impact of the allusionary structure and the infinite variety of ways in which the reader uses his own life experiences to interpret what he reads, the unconscious allusion resists attempts aimed at quantification. It is a sensed quality on the reader's part, indirect, unmarked by the authority of quotation marks or self-conscious directness. It is that which lifts a work above the rest; it is that which the epic poet calls upon to help him in his task, the "muse." If the "muse" can grant a writer the power to move a reader it is only because the "muse" has granted an equal power to the reader to perceive. In this case the term "muse" can be taken to mean a commonality of experience that allows a reader to process the information supplied by an author. This is the goal that Lawrence sets for himself in the construction of The Mint. His wish to write Literature leads him to allude to works that he feels strongly push themes central to The Mint and himself, at the same time allowing a certain freedom of movement within the text. That is to say, allowing the chain of references to say something for him implicitly instead of having to say it overtly. In this manner Lawrence has used allusion to recall himself, Eurydice like, to the living world.



Unlike Orpheus, however, the reader is encouraged to look past Lawrence and to examine the text that follows him out of the past. Lawrence's own instinctual unplanned unconscious allusions betray him to us as his real life allusions betrayed his location and identity to the press. This resulted in his dismissal from the R.A.F as he was considered a potential threat to discipline.

By drawing upon this commonality of experience all literature works on a basis of allusion. The units that we see as words have no sense themselves. Their meaning is to be found in what they represent. The example of the word dog will do in this case. "Dog" is morphologically and phonetically unrelated to the French *chien*. The image that each of these individual linguistic counters conjure up is essentially the same, an example of the *genus canine*. By extension, literature works in the same fashion. Using discreet image triggers, a writer hopes to place in the mind of his reader a series of connected images. The triggers invoke a number of images that we all hold in common. This invocation of image frees the allusionary technique from dependence on the repetition of specific target texts. Instead, the target text is indirectly referred to, resulting in a higher level of reader interaction with both the primary and the target texts. Thus on a basic level we all know that Tennyson's Ulysses is in part a complaint about the infirmities of old age. The reader who knows nothing of Homer or the Trojan War would miss much of the enabling imagery that the poem depends upon, while still realizing that Ulysses is lamenting the infirmities of his old age. The specific planting of an allusion is done in order that the reader might be pointed to specific notions that the author wishes the reader to associate with the author's own. This can be done in order to amplify the importance of his own work

by piggy backing onto a "greater" writer, or to increase the surface area that his own work might deal with. A text which uses this technique is like a sliced onion, except that in this case the further towards the center one goes, the bigger the rings become.

Without doubt the target texts that the reader perceives are those with which he or she is most familiar. With this in mind a writer is apt to choose as his target texts works that he feels are well known, and so he is able to achieve a high degree of saturation. Lawrence tends to follow this rule in his use of allusion. There are distinct theme centered groupings to be found within The Mint. In general terms these allusions fall within the classes of literature, auto - allusion, religion and democratic men amongst men, with an intermediate stage between the two groupings to soften the interaction between the divine to the mortal.

To be more specific; religious allusions are drawn from The Bible and also from Milton, both Paradise Lost and minor works.<sup>53</sup> The allusions that I call "democratic men amongst men" are drawn from Whitman's Song of Myself, Housman's A Shropshire Lad and Kipling's Tommy. Intermediary allusions are present in the form of Tennyson's Lady of Shallot as well as at least one and possibly more Renaissance/Shakespearean allusions, to Romeo and Juliet and possibly Fletcher. There are also frequent cases of auto-allusion, as I have already mentioned, and at least one allusion to a nursery rhyme. (Mint 35)<sup>54</sup> All of the identified allusions that Lawrence employs have a common thread that aid in defining Lawrence both to himself and us.

---

53 Jeffrey Meyers lists several allusions including one to Milton's "On the Late Massacre at Piedmont".

54 The fairy tale alluded to is "come into my parlour said the spider to the fly...".

### Religious, Shakespearean and Miltonic Allusion

As the religious terms are by far the most frequent, I should like to begin with these. I should also like to point out that the reader depends on his or her own realm of knowledge to process the perceived allusions that I shall discuss, and those that I have not perceived. Thus no one person can describe all the possible variations that the target texts may conjure up. The reader is invited to add his own target texts and interpretations to Lawrence's writing.

The first religious allusion targets The Bible. "Naked we came into the R.A.F." (Mint 35). In this case our target text is Job 1: 20 and 21.

20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped,  
21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return hither: the LORD gave and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

Lawrence's comments on the disreputable state of his clothing, as well as military discipline and later his close cropped hair, linked as they are to his deliberate invocation of Job 1:21 lead us back to Job 1:20.<sup>55</sup> Therefore the reader is meant to associate Lawrence with Job. In short, someone whose patience and faith has been tested and found to be true. Just like Job, Lawrence cannot know the result or extent of the testing. Later on in The Mint, Lawrence has to wear rough work clothes, not the blue of the Air Force, and must do penance amongst the ashes, emptying refuse containers. The time spent at the depot is a testing time that the Air Force requires its recruits to undergo in order that they might prove themselves worthy.

---

55. Saluting may be said to be a form of military worship.

If we turn to the actual reasons for Lawrence's enlistment in the R.A.F. we find that not only has Lawrence implied that we are to link him with Job, but that he considers himself to be a Job figure whose faith and patience has been tested by the events in his own political, social and military history.<sup>56</sup> We are also meant to realize that Lawrence, like Job, is to some extent a pawn. All manner of terrible things are done to him in order that he might exercise his free and right choice of lifestyles regarding his enlistment. This comment applies to both Job and Lawrence and is born out by their acquiescence to their misfortune, naked they both came and naked they both shall go.<sup>57</sup>

Sandwiched between the two Job allusions there is a further Biblical targeting. Lawrence, trying to summon up the nerve to go into the R.A.F. recruiting office, finds that he has to go to the toilet. He states that: "One reason that taught me I wasn't a man of action was this routine melting of the bowels before a crisis" (Mint 35). The allusion is to Psalm 22:14. The context of the Psalm is: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels."

This Psalm of David's provides a further link to Lawrence's Christ-like view of himself via David's link to Christ. Like Christ, Lawrence cries to his "god" when he feels that he has been forsaken.

---

56 Robert Graves commented that Lawrence saw himself and was seen by others as a Christ figure.

57 There are additional factors for Lawrence. He was much bothered by the fact that his father, Sir Thomas Chapman left his wife for a servant, Sarah Lawrence, and had several children with her of whom Lawrence was one. Lawrence's mother also seemed to be bothered by this because she embraced religion and became a missionary (along with one of Lawrence's brothers) in China.

According to Jeffrey Meyers yet another biblical allusion is to be found further along in the text. This allusion would seem, in this case, to be the section in which the recruits are gathered for a church parade. They join in the hymn and Lawrence comments on the "serried ranks":

Nor did their minds see any contradiction between their worship and their life. Neither their clean words nor their dirty words had a significance. Words were like our boots, dirty in the fields, clean indoors: a daily convention, no index of the fellows' minds. They had not learned to speak. (Mint 116)

The Biblical target text is Matthew 6:27, 28, 29:

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?  
 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:  
 29 And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.<sup>58</sup>

While the connection between the texts is not as direct as some we have seen, resting as it does on a philosophical similarity, the sense of Lawrence's comments is spelt out in the target text. Lawrence is upset by what he considers to be the "misapplication" of the church service. The airmen, like the lilies, need no interpreter for the word of God because they too are unthinking. The words that the airmen use mean nothing. Unlike the words used in allusion, there is no deeper meaning. Their words are representative of image but not thought. Lawrence, using Christ's words to point this out sets himself in a position of authority not only over his fellow airmen, but over the priest conducting the service. Having said this Lawrence then returns to the commonality of the hut and at the parade's end is left to lie on the grass outside, lily-like, and bask unthinking in the sun. In many ways, having made the decision to

leave the world and join the R.A.F., Lawrence has cast himself in the role of the lily while at the same time reserving a kinetic potential for himself.<sup>59</sup> In this manner Lawrence is able to have the best of both worlds, yet Christ-like he pays a physical and a mental price for his time in the R.A.F. As he comments frequently in The Mint he feels an outsider; although his hut mates do come to accept him, there is always the shadowy impediment of class, background, and most importantly education between them.

At least two more biblical allusions occur within The Mint, both seemingly with the same target text in mind. Lawrence is commenting on the gulf between the juniors of the service and its head, Lord Hugh Trenchard.

The driving energy is his, and he drives furiously. The Jew said that God made man after his own image - an improbable ambition in a creator. Trenchard has designed the image he thinks most fitted to be an airman; and we submit our nature to his will, trustingly. (Mint 118)

Further along in his text, Lawrence continues the comparison of Trenchard to God: "Our God is a jealous God: and man's very best offering will fall disdainfully short of worthiness, in the sight of St. Hugh and his angels.."

The biblical target text that comes to mind respectively in relation with Lawrence's text is Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female he created him them.."

---

58 This allusion is pointed out in Jeffrey Meyers' article.

59 The energy is unused because Lawrence did not renounce his place in the R.A.F. The escape clause was never used and Lawrence was eventually discharged after his second period of enlistment ran out.

The obvious association to be made is that Trenchard is cast in a God role for the R.A.F.<sup>60</sup> Lawrence's text also alludes to II Kings 9:20:

And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving is like the driving of Jé-hu and the son of Nim'shi; for he driveth furiously.

The second snippet of text alludes most visibly to Exodus 20:5;

Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the father upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.

Religion, in one form or another, played a large role in Lawrence's life as well as that of his family. His mother served as a missionary in China, as did a brother. It is tempting indeed to say that she wished to atone for her unmarried status and life with Sir Thomas Chapman, Lawrence's father. A case can be made for like mother like son.

Lawrence later came to reject conventional religion, not unlike many other veterans. Instead he channeled his efforts in other directions. However, as David Garnett comments, religion was a powerful early factor in Lawrence's life:

The Lawrence boys had a religious Christian upbringing and attended church regularly. In the latter part of his time at school Lawrence was an officer in the Church Lad's Brigade and taught in Sunday school. His elder brother, Dr. M.R. Lawrence (Bob) ... served in the R.A.M.C. in France throughout the war, and later became a member of the China Inland Mission [accompanied by the boys' mother]. (Letters of Lawrence of Arabia 40)

If Lawrence casts Trenchard in the role of God, then Lawrence may see himself as the Son of God, through his regard for Trenchard (a "clean and honest" man) and his

---

<sup>60</sup> This image is confirmed in Lawrence's letter (20.1.28) to T.B.Marson about Trenchard's

pleadings to join and later to remain in the service of which Trenchard was head.<sup>61</sup> This possibility is strengthened by Meyers' comments that Lawrence saw the R.A.F. as an almost religious retreat.

The Christ image was one that was familiar to Lawrence. He makes use of the Christ metaphor in chapters 99 and 100 in Seven Pillars to describe his role in the Arab Revolt. Lawrence speaks in terms of sacrifice, not only on his part but also on the part of his fellows.

To endure for another in simplicity gave a sense of greatness. There was nothing loftier than a cross, from which to contemplate the world. The pride and exhilaration of it were beyond conceit. Yet each cross, occupied, robbed the late-comers of all but the poor part of copying; and the meanest of things were those done by example. The virtue of sacrifice lay within the victim's soul. (Seven Pillars 551)

In his role as leader of a nationalist movement, it is little wonder that Lawrence, raised in a religious household and familiar with medieval aspects of

---

retirement from the Air Force. See Letters 569.

61 This is borne out in a letter that Lawrence wrote to someone asking him what his motivations in Arabia were. While the events Lawrence writes of in this letter were well in the past for him, they do emphasize the Christ-like qualities that Robert Graves remarked on. I have reproduced a portion of the letter here rather than in the body of the paper in an (hopeful) effort to make my arguments somewhat less cumbersome. The underlining for emphasis is mine.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

You asked me "Why" today, and I'm going to tell you exactly what my motives in the Arabian affair were, in order of strength:

- (i) Personal. I liked a particular Arab very much, and thought that freedom for that race would be an acceptable present.
- (ii) Patriotic. I wanted to help win the war, and Arab help reduced Allenby's losses by thousands.
- (iii) Intellectual curiosity. I wanted to feel what it was like to be the mainspring of a national movement, and to have millions of people expressing themselves through me: and being a half-poet, I don't value material things much. Sensation and mind seem to me much greater, and the ideal, such a thing as the impulse that took us into Damascus, the only thing worth doing....

If you want to make me work again you would have to recreate motives (ii) and (iii).

As you are not God, motive (i) is beyond your power. (Knightley 182-83)

Lawrence described Trenchard as a "clean and honest" man in his letter to C.M. Doughty, dated 7.5.20. (Garnett Letters 303).



religion, saw himself in the role of Messiah. In later life Lawrence traded the cross of the Arab nationalism for that of the Air Force, acting as a mainspring for change and bettering of the serviceman's life as he had at one point intended to act for the Arabs.

The use that Lawrence makes of biblical allusion is obviously meant to invoke a series of concepts within the mind of the reader. The first of these concepts is the recognition and recalling of the specific texts. This we have done together with Lawrence. As he recalls texts in order to insert them in his work, we too recall them in order to recognize the allusion and also to interpret Lawrence's use of the allusion. The obvious question then is why would Lawrence wish to recall biblical text in a work that in other hands would not necessarily suggest such a target text. As I remarked at the beginning of this chapter, the technique of allusion springs from the root stock of literary tools and as such is of a much more primary importance than a school of critical thought. Few of the audience that The Mint was intended for would have been ignorant of biblical matters. Yet, on a sadder level, it is clear that the past suffering that Lawrence underwent provoked a need for redemption. As we have already seen, John E. Mack, in his book A Prince of Our Disorder, cites Lawrence's reputed frequent flagellation bouts at the hands of a fellow soldier as a "form of penance through which Lawrence attempted to come to terms with the homosexual rape at Deraa in 1917" (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 751). As Lawrence states to Charlotte Shaw the incident made him swear off "decent living" (Letters of T.E.Lawrence 106). This of course was accomplished via his life amongst the

"uncouth" airmen of the R.A.F. This quasi-religious retreat again brings a Christ-like suffering to mind.<sup>62</sup>

It seems a natural progression to move onto the Miltonic allusions that Lawrence makes use of in The Mint. The most obvious is his description of the park near the training depot, which evokes the Garden of Eden in Paradise Lost.

The clouded breath of the fallen park, into which this war-time camp had been intruded, made an appeal to me. [...] The Park dipped in the middle to the ragged edges of a little stream, and huts climbed down each slope from the tops, reaching out over the valley as if they had meant to join roofs across its leafy stream -- but something, perhaps the dank, deep grass of the lowland meadows, stayed them. I paused on the bridge above the stagnant water, which wound into the hollow between banks of thicketed rush and foxglove. By each side were choice-planted great trees. [...] Curtains of darkness were drawn around the playing fields by other bulky trees, from whose boughs green shadows dripped. The particular wilderness of the Pinne's banks seemed also forbidden to troops: in its sallows sang a choir of birds. (Mint 38)

The key trigger in the passage above is of course the words "fallen park." This alone is sufficient to associate the text with Eden, yet there is also a topographical echo of Milton's description of Eden in Paradise Lost, book iv, lines 260-264. Compare the following lines to lines 3 and 4 of Lawrence's text:

...meanwhile murmuring waters fall  
Down the slope hills dispersed, or in a lake,  
That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned  
Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.

---

62 The notion of a Christ complex is strengthened by the rumours that surrounded Lawrence at the time of his death. The reforms that he introduced into the R.A.F. led many to believe that he held "the plans for the defense of England in his head." At the time of his death he was considering a possible meeting with Hitler in an effort to solve the growing threat that the German leader presented. Not a few biographers have raised the possibility of foul play in Lawrence's death as a result of this involvement. If Lawrence's sojourn in the R.A.F. was for reasons other than those he stated, as they well might, Lawrence being so contradictory a character, the notion of the gentleman ranker takes on a new meaning and we have the image of a man enduring the wilderness and sacrificing himself for a greater good.

This imagery also occurs in line 237 when Milton speaks of "crispéd," or wavy brooks -- similar to Lawrence's ragged edged stream. There is a clear, subtle and planned similarity between the texts that continues with: "The birds their choirs apply" (Milton Bk iv l. 264), echoed in Lawrence's lines 14 and 15. Other links are Lawrence's trees (which are planted by choice, with all the Edenic symbolism inherent in tree and choice).<sup>63</sup>

The obvious questions then are why Milton, and what is Lawrence doing in targeting Paradise Lost? As I have already mentioned, there is a strong biblical linking at work within a triangle formed by The Mint, Paradise Lost and The Bible. Knowing this, what are we to make of Lawrence's vantage point regarding the park? As the park is already fallen he cannot readily be the serpent. He comments on that "sinful misery" of organized games. Lawrence makes it clear, in Seven Pillars, The Mint and his letters that he has difficulty mixing with others. To paraphrase Sartre, Hell is other people, but sin, in addition to having the usual definitions, is that flaw of his character that provokes his bursting appetite (Seven Pillars 563). Since Lawrence

---

63 J.M. Wilson comments on the similarity to A.E. Housman in this section of The Mint. Housman's poem, from "Eight O'clock" is as follows:

He stood, and heard the steeple  
 Sprinkle the quarters on the morning town.  
 One, two, three, four, to market-place and people  
 It tossed them down.  
 Strapped, nosed, neighing his hour,  
 He stood and counted them and cursed his luck;  
 And then the clock collected in the tower  
 Its strength, and struck.

Both The Mint and the Housman work refer to bells sounding their quarters, yet, as Wilson remarks, the poem was published after Lawrence's enlistment in the R.A.F. This being the case there can be no allusion to Housman in the original form of The Mint, the daily notes. However, it is quite possible that during his polishing Lawrence added the allusion in order to provide the text with further resonance for the reader with reinforcement to the imagery and sentiments expressed in this section of The Mint. See T.E. Lawrence, Minorities, ed. J.M. Wilson (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971) 256.

places himself in a position to recognize "sin," something the others are blind to, Lawrence is implying that he has a degree of omnipotence, but not total omnipotence because he is being sent to the park, albeit with his own approval. We know that Lawrence, in organizing strenuous exercise for himself, was attempting a form of sexual sublimation. The "sin" he recognizes in the games is no doubt a comment on the carnality he associates with physical exertion.

Textually speaking, Lawrence places himself in a God-like station by reconstructing, recreating memory and himself in the form of writing.

A strong possibility for the invocation of this specific Miltonic target text is that Lawrence is reconfirming his own vision of himself as a Christ-like figure. That we too are meant to make this association is evident by the perception of the target text.

There is a long stretch of The Mint following the Milton allusion in which Lawrence makes extensive use of auto-allusion. This allows both the author and the reader an opportunity to re-orient themselves and take stock of the situation, a deep breath before the next series of "exo-allusions." This occurs when Lawrence comments that

[m]y determined endeavour is to scrape through with it, into the well-paid peace of my trade as photographer to some squadron. To that I look forward as profession and livelihood for many years: - for good, I hope, since the stresses of my past existence give me warrant, surely, for thinking that my course will not be too long. How welcome is death, someone said, to them that have nothing to do but die.<sup>64</sup> (Mint 109-110)

---

64. Lawrence adds a footnote which I have reproduced in the same fashion: "Alas: in March 1935 my engagement ran out. J.H.R.". It really does seem that with this statement, Lawrence, who died in May 1935, reaches out of death to speak to his readers.

This is another example of Ross's debt to Lawrence. Lawrence learned his photography at his father's knee and practiced extensively in the course of his archaeological studies. As Lawrence of Arabia, he took many photographs during his time in the desert, and as Lawrence he wrote to the Air Force asking to be advanced into the photographic course.

Jeffrey Meyers identifies a portion of the above text as a reference to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. The allusion is of course to Romeo and Juliet, yet it is an allusion to Shakespeare's text through another text, as signified by the addition of "to them that have nothing to do but die" to the tag "how welcome is death." It has been suggested that the use of quotation marks detracts from the quality of the allusion, marking it as such and making it too obvious a reference. The presences of quotation marks legitimize the allusion, adding authority to the words. We accept the symbols " " as metaphors of truth, much as a signature denotes the truthfulness of a document, or the author's name on an autobiography seals its validity.

While this allusion does function through the allusion to Shakespeare's text through another text, defaced by the use of use of the word "someone," the intent in the use of Romeo and Juliet remains the same, despite the complications involved with the addition of another target text. The target lines are from act 3, scene 5. and are spoken by Romeo to the personification of death. The morning is dawning and Romeo says that he must be off. Juliet does not wish him to go. Romeo protests that if he stays until morning he will be taken and killed. Juliet counters by saying that they are hearing nightingales not larks, and that what Romeo thinks is the sun is a

comet. As is often the case, our wishes influence our perceptions. Romeo finally agrees to stay

I have more care to stay than will to go.  
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.  
How is't, my soul? Let's talk, it is not day. (Shakespeare III v. ll 23 - 25)

Once again the reader must wonder to himself what Lawrence is doing with Romeo's speech. The obvious connotation is that he wishes to stay in the R.A.F. This is clear, but as to why these lines, the answer may well lie in the realm of biography. It was at this time that Lawrence was relaying his opinion of the Nonesuch edition of Shakespeare to David Garnett. It may well be a case of "grist for the mill." Yet, the invocation of this specific target text must involve us with the central tenants of the target text itself. In the case of Romeo and Juliet, one of the major threads of the tale is the role of fate. The acceptance of death is one of the ultimate acquiescences to the power of fate, just as Lawrence's surrendering himself to the tender mercies of the R.A.F. is an acceptance of a kind. The allusion to Romeo and Juliet and the additional, unknown target, adds to the mosaic that Lawrence has built earlier with his Job/Christ analogies.

A further Renaissance-type allusion is found in Lawrence's comment: "Tall, vague, occasional beings, spendthrift and magnificent, / Godlings to our groundlings" (Mint 172).

One possible source for this Elizabethan-sounding line would be Fletcher's Prophetess: Lawrence was not entirely unfamiliar with Fletcher's works as there was

a copy of Fletcher and Beaumont's works in Lawrence's library when he died.<sup>65</sup> "We tilers may deserve to be senators...For we were born three stories high, no base ones, none of your groundlings, master."<sup>66</sup>

Taken in the Elizabethan sense, groundlings are those members of the audience at ground level in the front of a stage. They have a "worm's eye view" of the action. Groundling also has an R.A.F. slang connotation in which it describes those who do not fly flightless birds, penguins in First World War Air Force slang. The use that Fletcher and perhaps Lawrence makes of the terms here carries forth the notions of religious imagery that Lawrence continually applies to himself in The Mint while at the same time presenting a social difference that Lawrence has a great deal to say about: social differences that are part, in one form or another, of all the target texts that Lawrence designates.<sup>67</sup> The reader is constantly being reminded of the social differences between Lawrence and his hutmates. They themselves remark on the difference and urge Lawrence to make the most of his higher education in his dealings with brutish N.C.O.s. The possible allusion to Fletcher allows Lawrence to bridge the gap between the target texts concerned with the metaphysical and the concrete as well as their own chronological placing.

### **Lady of Shalott**

Lawrence continues to bridge the gap between the metaphysical and the physical with a rather direct allusion to Tennyson's The Lady of Shalott.

---

65 T.E. Lawrence by his Friends.

66 OED See the entry for "groundlings", number 4.

67 Paradise Lost involves a conflict between good and evil, two forces not unknown to society, similarly the Book of Job. Romeo and Juliet has a deal of social conflict. All of the texts that Lawrence targets contain some degree of conflict expressed within the society of the work.

Most of us unconsciously favour ourselves when we are dividing:  
 unless I'm on and I consciously serve myself short. No virtue there.  
 Like the Lady of Shalott I prefer my world backwards in the mirror.  
 (Mint 157)

The first step of the reader response is defined. I, the reader have recognized an allusion to the Lady of Shalott, the main purpose being not the recognition of the poem, but the events which happen to the Lady and which Lawrence allows the allusion itself to relate to. At this point the reader must interact with the text in deciding what steps are to be followed if Lawrence's invitation to journey further along this path is accepted. A reader with some knowledge of literature is also aware that the body of Arthurian literature and its Victorian reinvention is also activated by the invocation of the Lady of Shalott. While the primary allusion is to Tennyson's work, we are also reminded of the great body of medieval literature, which lies like an unbroken path into the past.<sup>68</sup> The specific section of The Lady of Shalott that Lawrence refers to is:

She has heard a whisper say,  
 A curse is on her if she stay  
 To look down to Camelot.  
 She knows not what the curse may be,  
 And so she weaveth steadily,  
 And little other care hath she,  
 The Lady of Shalott.  
 And moving through a mirror clear  
 That hangs before her all the year,  
 Shadows of the world appear. (Shallot Part II ll 38 - 48)

---

68 He must decide which Lady of Shallot Lawrence is referring to. Is it the Tennyson Lady, or the Malory Lady? At this point one may turn to biographical detail in order to learn whether or not Lawrence was familiar with either. As it is known that Lawrence spent much of his desert campaign with a copy of Malory in his saddlebags we cannot rule out Malory. However, the explicit reference to mirrors seems to be more in keeping with the Tennyson Lady.



The reader with a biographical knowledge of Lawrence can see much in this that applies to his life. Lawrence refused to accept any position of responsibility despite many offers from influential friends. Just as the Lady of Shalott cannot bear to expose her real self to the outside world neither can Lawrence. Like Adam and Eve, he is initially ashamed of his "nakedness" when joining up. When the Lady leaves her bower, she dies. From a biographical view Lawrence's dread of having to leave the security of the R.A.F. and the effects that he felt it would have on his life is well documented. Thus the surface nature of the allusion lies in both Lawrence's and the Lady's retreat from the real world.

In using the technique of allusion Lawrence is doing precisely what the Lady did. The almost magical act of textual invocation enables Lawrence to examine himself in the mirror provided by his target texts, and the reader is invited to participate in this examination of the target text and Lawrence's own work as well as him or herself. The allusion to The Lady of Shalott provides confirmation of Lawrence's intentions in his use of allusion, that is, to use them as the Lady does her mirror. However, Lawrence has already tasted the "real" world and has decided to retire from this world in order to work on his own tapestries in the safety of the R.A.F, transfiguring "real" life into the proseopoeizing form of life we call writing. Lawrence acts as an alchemist, transmuting not lead, but service life into gold. Ironically, or perhaps fittingly, Lawrence died within months of his release from the service.

### Democratic Allusions

The last allusionary grouping that I wish to discuss is that which I have called "democratic men amongst men." If, as I propose, we have seen a progression from a Biblically targeted search for salvation via the use of allusion, through a retreat to the mirrored world, then surely the targeting of Whitman, Housman and Kipling is an emergence of sorts into redemption amongst the ranks. Much like Dante, Lawrence has passed through the levels of his lessons. With this redemption comes the hope of a degree of self-discovery, of seeing his real face in the mirror of his writing.

The reference to Housman occurs with the title of The Mint. According to Desmond Stewart, the use of the word mint can be traced to Housman's A Shropshire Lad: "They carry back bright to the coiner the mintage of man, /The lads that will die in their glory and never be old" (Stewart 267).

If we accept Stewart and allow this allusion to stand then we must activate within our own critical interpretation this particular work by Housman, A Shropshire Lad. This establishes a pattern that Lawrence follows in his adaptations of the men amongst men theme and prepares the reader for not unexpected allusion to Kipling's Tommy, which occurs when Lawrence states that

The band's spirited conductor rose to the occasion [a church parade] with Chopin's funeral march. The "Saul" would have been better, but to play it without a funeral is a service offence. The same judgment makes a crime of repeating "Tommy here and Tommy there" in barracks. (Mint 79)

Kipling's verse tells of the disregard in which civilians hold military personnel in times of peace as opposed to war and pageantry. The allusion is strengthened with the presence of a band in Kipling's work.

I went into a public-'ouse to get a pint o' beer,  
 The publican 'e up 'an sez, "We serve no red-coats here."  
 The girls be'ind they laughed an' giggled fit to  
     die,  
 I outs into the street again an' to myself sez I:  
 O it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, go away";  
 But it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band  
     begins to play-  
 The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to  
     play,  
 O it's "thank you, Mister Atkins, when the band begins to play"  
     (Kipling 1st verse)

Lawrence, who feels incapable of living a "decent life," has chosen this environment in which to take his rest cure. No doubt it is better to be respected and rested in Hell than to be shunned in Heaven. Yet as Lawrence points out when he says that in 1919 the trains would "be like a public lavatory, with airmen spewing, pissing and fighting along its swaying length," airmen are not plaster saints by any means, but their conduct has improved, ordinary men and women many now enter the coaches unhesitatingly (Mint 147). The average airman is now conforming to the codes of society, a sign of their returning to the fold. Just as the airman returns to the company of decent men, so Lawrence is able to return to the company of the infra-society of his hutmates. Evidence of this may be seen in the manner in which Lawrence is treated upon his departure from "boot camp." He is feasted by his hutmates. At this point we turn to auto-allusion

The use of the word "we" is noticeable in The Mint, according to Victoria Ocampo in her essay "Felix Culpa." To be precise she comments, "[i]n Seven Pillars and The Mint we find many uses of the deceptive 'we'." In what sense does Lawrence use "we?" Ocampo is certain that use of "we" and "ours" refer to

Lawrence's fellow airmen. In using these words Lawrence/Ross seeks to impress the reader with his inclusion in the barrack life of the Air Force. However, Ocampo states that "our" and "we" is not inclusive as Lawrence is always set apart from the others. This is a distance that Lawrence confesses to. He cannot truly be one of the men in the ranks; he can only suture himself to the body of the RAF. There may be no rejection to this suturing, but lack of rejection is not acceptance. Lawrence cannot mix with the men, cannot properly utter the dirty words.

Lawrence is apart. There are many potential causes for this separation, the sense of binary opposition. Class, education, upbringing and experience all play their role in setting Lawrence apart. However, there is also the separation of the biographer from his subject to consider.

In the writing of The Mint, Lawrence sought to set down a snapshot of life in the ranks of the RAF and to recreate himself as A/c Ross, aircraftsman. In this process The Mint is not only a biography of the RAF, but it is an autobiography of Ross, but not of Ross alone. This is where the use of "we" and "ours" becomes most important to the text.

The critic Paul de Man has commented on the "...distinction between autobiography and fiction..." and the difficulties experienced with the literal and the figurative, the non-literal (de Man 70). de Man tells us that the sign(ature) of the author on the autobiography supposedly guarantees veracity.

The reader enters into a contract with the author, legitimately suspending any sense of disbelief and granting credibility to the author. The reader's difficulty in suspending disbelief arises from Lawrence's own history and the reader's familiarity

with it. Lawrence mentions to David Garnett that he doctored fact for The Mint. He "...did three church parades...and I believe they can be boiled to two: or even to one which would be the quit-essence and exemplar of all my church parades." Lawrence "...cut them into sections and shuffled them...meaning to have them stitched for you." (Garnett 532). Weintraub, citing letters and the work of Suleiman Mousa, pinpoints areas where Lawrence doctored fact in Seven Pillars, creating a pattern that was to follow Lawrence in the writing of The Mint (Weintraub Impulse 55 – 56).

Lawrence is an untrustworthy auto/biographer. The joining of the RAF to drop out of sight, the name changes, all are winked at when Lawrence confesses that a mess hall photograph of him is consigned to the incinerator. The other photographs on the wall, The King, Trenchard, Haig, Beatty, some land girls, and a destroyer at speed speak not of A/c Ross, but of Lawrence of Arabia and the trappings of Empire, an empire that Lawrence of Arabia had an integral part in forming. This narratorial winking at the Lawrence persona and the reader involves the reader in the "our"/"we" conceit that Ocampo comes close to realizing in Felix Culpa. Ocampo refers to Lawrence's gesture of "...turning into Ross inside "Holy Mother RAF"... and confirms to us that the one who speaks in The Mint is John Hume Ross. (Ocampo Journal 51) Is this the case? How would Ocampo explain "[e]ven there was a small picture of me, a thing later conveyed slyly to the ever-open incinerator" (Mint 71- 72)? Is this a photograph of John Hume Ross that is being burned? The answer of course is that it is a photograph of Lawrence, a photograph of "me." The burning of the photograph serves as a form of suicide; the representation of the old Lawrence is

gone and in its place is presented the new Ross, the author who is providing us with this auto/biography.

To return to Paul de Man and view of the autobiographical moment that occurs during the “alignment between the two subjects involved in the process of reading”, the moment at which Ross acknowledges his previous incarnation provides the space between the two subjects, the "we" and their opposite(s), Lawrence into Ross, is the space within which reading and digestion of the received material take place both for the reader and the author. It is within this space that the action of The Mint is synthesized. (de Man 70)

In a letter to E. M. Forster dated September 6 1928, Lawrence tells of the composition of The Mint. He wrote at night and

...tried to put it all down, thinking that memory & time would sort them out, and enable me to select significant from insignificant. Time passed, five years and more (long enough, surely for memory to settle down?)... and instead of selecting, I fitted into the book, somewhere & somehow, every single sentence I had written at Uxbridge. ( Garnett Letters 618)

By this act of allowing time to pass Lawrence is separating himself from the text, placing himself in the reader's position, entering into de Man's "reflexive substitution. But there is more. Why does Lawrence feel that memory should settle down? The answer is of course to allow for the figure of reading or of understanding. Lawrence wrote The Mint to remember memory. Most often the word remember is used to mean recall. In the case of Lawrence, remember is just that; re-membering, rejoining, reattaching memory in his cut and paste exercise. This serves to further separate him from the autobiographical truth of the text. By sorting and selecting he

is allowed ease of access to the moment at which he may enter into de Man's "alignment between the two subjects involved in the process of reading..." (de Man 70). The two subjects being Ross/winking Lawrence and reader; but again there is more. Not only are we aware of the Ross/winking Lawrence reader/equation, but there is another equation to consider. Aware as we are of the Lawrence history we must consider the Lawrence Ross binary.

Writing is intended as a preservative, a method of aiding memory or accuracy, yet in his re-remembering, Lawrence poisoned his own reliability through his role as a narrator, rendering the distinction between fiction and autobiography undecipherable. The framework within which the reader is induced to place the text, the framework touted by the authorial guarantee on the title page, is shattered and stitched together, the reader's role is altered. No more is the reader to deal with the memoirs of a "simple" enlisted man. The deflation of the text is achieved by drawing it and the reader into the efforts Lawrence makes in hiding his fame, his winked at Lawrence identity. The undermining of the text through the heterogeneous nature of Lawrence and the narrator forces the reader to recall the career of the figurative incinerated photograph. We are caught in a representative trap of endless referential productivity, as is the narrator. He and us become We. This trap is the space between autobiography and fiction, the suturing of fact to fiction, of Lawrence to Ross to the RAF. It is the distance between the self and the self-perceived, "our," "we" and "their." It is the space in which the him of Lawrence attempted to become the me of Ross.

Lawrence (Ross) has been accepted to a degree, but only to a degree. One of the generally unacknowledged functions that Lawrence performed in the R.A.F. was a series of reforms conducted with the aid of several of his very well placed friends. The suffering that Lawrence underwent in his "redemption" or cleansing results in the eliminating of evils within the service.

The final target text that I should like to bring up, the most important of the democratic men amongst men, is Whitman's Leaves of Grass (one of Lawrence's "big books") and specifically "Song of Myself." Meyers points out one allusion to Whitman: "Just we lay there spread-eagled in a mesh of bodies, pillowed on one another and sighing in a happy excess of relaxation" (Meyers 134).

The allusion is to the bathing scene in Song of Myself and possibly section 5 of Song of Myself: "I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning/How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turn'd over upon me." This is invoked through the description in Lawrence's "Interlude" chapter of The Mint. (Mint 231)

There are also other instances of Whitman being targeted by Lawrence, such as the following: "I lay in the grass all afternoon, with the sunlight melting the week's aches out of me, joint by joint, till my whole being glowed with welfare." (Mint 116) This image reoccurs at the end of The Mint:

The sunlight poured from the sky and melted into our tissues. From the turf below our moist backs there came up a sister heat which joined us to it. Our bones dissolved to become a part of this underlying indulgent earth, whose mysterious pulse throbbed in every tremor of our bodies. (Mint 232)



This is a paraphrasing of section 6 of Song of Myself, in which the poet answers a child's question about grass. The images of bones are common to both, as is grass, and the notion of loafing from section 1 of the poem:

I lean and loaf at my ease observing a spear of summer grass....  
[grass]...seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you grass,  
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young  
men... (Song of Myself Section 1, 6)

As well as the similarities in images, Whitman and Lawrence both share the wish to be respected writers. Whitman's wish was to be cast as a national poet while Lawrence's wish was to be seen as a writer of "good" literature. On a personal level, we also have to deal with both Lawrence's and Whitman's sexuality. Throughout his life, Whitman denied any homosexual leanings and claims have been made for his fathering several children. His writings certainly indicate that Whitman was homosexual. Lawrence's own sexual orientation is a matter of debate. His use of the Whitman allusion, coupled with his friendship with Forster indicates a tolerant attitude towards homosexuality that was unusual at the time.

Lawrence's invocation of democratic, earthy, class breaking Whitman reveals to the reader that Lawrence has once again rejoined the ranks of "decent" men; the rest cure has been successful. It is in this respect that the allusions to Whitman are amongst the most important in The Mint and as such it is fitting that it should be the final allusion that I perceive in the text.

In conclusion Lawrence's use of allusion is deliberate and specific. His choice of target texts allows the reader to examine not only Lawrence and his text, as well as

the texts alluded to, but the reader is able to examine him or herself and the target texts in a like manner. The target texts, filtered through our own experiences, often serve to take the place of direct information concerning Lawrence himself. The touchstone quality of the allusions used allows us to travel with Lawrence along the route that he has chosen for his own redemption and readjustment in a circumscribed area of society. Religious allusions establish Lawrence both to himself and us with a starting point on our mutual journey. In this case, Lawrence is able to see himself in as a Christ-like personage, who, within his own mind, has suffered and is suffering for the sins of others. His entry into the "fallen park" of the R.A.F. is a return both to the land of the living, and a setting in which he is able, through both experience and writing, to absolve both himself and the service of any "sins" that either may have collected. In an echo of the Lady of Shalott, he has struggled with his own real world self but in a manner opposite to the actions of the lady has retreated into a world where he can heal himself. Finally, redemption is earned and acknowledged by the willing interaction between Lawrence and his camp-mates. By using allusion in such a manner, Lawrence has established that allusion creates an interaction between various texts -- the allusion to Milton, and an allusion to Whitman have a common theme that explains the reason for their invocation. In turn there is a degree of interaction between the reader, the author, and all the target texts and their authors. In following this plan, Lawrence is free to imply certain information without feeling that he had revealed his deepest, most shameful secrets. Ultimately we see that allusion allows us insight into Lawrence's mind.

**Chapter Eight**  
**Confession of Faith**

### Future Plans

Through the writing of The Mint, it seems that Lawrence was able to come to terms with himself to some degree whether through the actual writing of the piece as a form of self-analysis, or due to the experiences that he lived through compiling the work. A portion of this was his attempt to write in a newer, more modern style owing more to aspects of modernism than William Morris. This break from the styles of the past was a conscious effort on Lawrence's part and owed much to the connections he established during the writing of Seven Pillars.

Lawrence often remarked that his reason for joining the R.A.F was to write a book that dealt with the view from the ground up. With the completion of The Mint, it seemed that Lawrence had in part achieved his goal.

As we have seen, Lawrence was occupied with other literary work during and after The Mint, his translation of Homer's Odyssey and The Forest Giant, and literary criticism for The Spectator amongst others. Yet he continued to entertain thoughts of a big book of the Air Force, especially since he did not envisage the publication of The Mint before 1950, due to the harm he and others felt might result to the Air Force due to his portrayal of its harsher elements. There was also the possibility of prosecution for libel due to the extremely unflattering portraits that Lawrence had provided of his superiors.

As the time of his enlistment ran down, Lawrence became heavily occupied with non-literary R.A.F duties and had little time for serious writing. However, one night he related to Charlotte Shaw in the following letter:

...something happened to me last night, when I lay awake till five. You know I have been moody or broody for years, wondering what I was at in the R.A.F., but unable to let it go - well, last night I suddenly understood that it was to write a book called "Confession of Faith"...embodying The Mint and much that has happened to me before and since as regards the air. Not the conquest of the air, but our entry into the reserved element "as lords that are expected, yet with a silent joy in our arrival". It would include a word on Miranshah and Karachi, and the meaning of speed, on land and water and air. I see the plan of it. It will take long to do. Clouds Hill, I think. In this next and last R.A.F. year I can collect feelings for it. The thread of the book will only come because it spins through my head: there cannot be any objective continuity - but I think I can make it whole enough to do. The Mint, you know, was meant as notes for something (smaller) of the sort. I wonder if it will come off. The purpose of my generation, that's really it. Anyway I shall tell no one else...Three years hence we'll know. (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 911-12)

Once again, like the Lady of Shalott, Lawrence felt the need to cocoon himself within his literary work. This letter, written on 9/12/33, contains many similarities, often taking the form of word for word repetition, to a poem written by Lawrence entitled "Confession of Faith," which has tentatively been dated as being composed sometime in 1929.<sup>69</sup> If this dating is accurate, then Lawrence was untruthful in his letter to Charlotte Shaw. The notion did not spring fully-grown into his mind, but rather had been sitting there for some years. I believe that the poem was to have occupied the same position in the proposed Confession of Faith book as the poem "To S.A." did in Seven Pillars. The fact that the projected book bore the same title as the poem is a strong indicator of such a notion. The text of the poem is well worth examining at close range.

Not the conquest of the air, but our entry thither.  
We come.

---

<sup>69</sup> See The Essential T.E. Lawrence.

Our soiled overalls were the livery of that sunrise. The  
 soilings of our  
 bodies in its service were prismatic with its light. Moody or broody.  
 From ground to air. First we are not  
 earthbound.

In speed we hurl ourselves beyond the body.  
 Our bodies cannot scale the heavens except in a fume  
 of petrol.  
 The concentration of our bodies in entering a loop.  
 Bones, blood  
 flesh all pressed inward together.  
 Not the conquest of the air. Be plain, guts.  
 In speed we hurl ourselves beyond the body.

We enter it. We come.  
 Our bodies cannot scale heaven except in a fume of  
 burnt petrol.  
 As lords that are expected. Yet there is a silent joy in  
 our arrival.  
 Years and years.  
 Long arpeggios of chafing wires.  
 The concentration of one's body in entering a loop.  
 (Essential 291)

Once again we are faced with a notion of Lawrence the alchemist, this time  
 along with something of the pagan sacrifice: Lawrence sacrificing his old self in the  
 vortex of a "fume of petrol" in an effort to ascend into the heavens. The  
 transmutation that he is hoping for is that of "Lawrence" to "Shaw."

Despite Lawrence's earlier attempts at self-reintegration with his fellow man, it  
 is obvious through the poem that he does not feel to have succeeded. The poem  
 alludes, quite directly in some cases, to other works that speak of alienation. The  
 third line in the first stanza echoes Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. "Mislike me  
 not for my complexion,/The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,/To whom I am a  
 neighbour and near bred."

These words are spoken by the Prince of Morocco to Portia. Like the Lawrence passage, the Prince goes on to comment that hues, or colour, make no difference to the quality of the humours. The Prince would only change his hue if that would win him Portia. Lawrence's love for the R.A.F. is reflected in the soilings of his livery. The Prince's love would be reflected in his hue.

Lawrence's choice of the word livery is a curious one. Livery of course has a great many connotations that link it to riding, and to chivalry as well. We may also, fittingly, see livery as uniform – appropriate for Lawrence's Air Force blue. Lawrence's academic and personal interest in the medieval as well as its reinvention through Tennyson and his contemporaries most definitely coloured his work, as M.D. Allen points out in The Medievalism of Lawrence of Arabia. Yet by the time that The Mint was being written Lawrence had lost much of the romantic aspect of his personality that showed forth in Seven Pillars. Not all to be sure, as this allusion proves, but enough to provide a rather jaundiced view of modern day chivalry. In drawing upon a word that harks back to his earlier “unspoiled” days, Lawrence states that he, while being Shaw, still has the elements of Lawrence within himself. The self that excavated medieval pottery in Oxford and idolized William Morris and the reinvention of the Middle Ages found expression in the R.A.F.

During the First World War and for a while after, those who fought in the Air Forces of the various combatants were often described as knights of the air by the press. Lawrence as a commander who had Air Forces at his disposal could not but be aware that the war in the air was often far from chivalrous. It is ironic that Lawrence for all of his dislike of the press would share in their regard for the mythical knights.

This use of irony, coupled with Lawrence's acknowledged medievalistic retreat into the Air Force adds extra force to this allusion. In joining the Air Force at the level he did it must be remembered that Lawrence joined what the public considered a glamorous branch of the service and if not a knight of the air, was in the public eye certainly a squire.

It has often been remarked that Lawrence tended to express his feelings towards women in a manner that bordered on the misogynistic. Lawrence James, in his biography of Lawrence, cites several of Lawrence's disparaging remarks, as do other writers. Despite this Lawrence interacted well with women, counting Charlotte Shaw, Lady Astor and Clare Sydney Smith (wife of his commanding officer at R.A.F. Mount Batten) as both friends and confidants. The key to his friendship with these women might well lie in the fact that they were non threatening to him, being already married, or cast in the role, as was Charlotte Shaw, of mother figures. Lawrence's upbringing, that of a fairly traditional English youth of the time was more or less female less, all boys school, all male Oxford, all male archaeological digs. His Chapman half-sisters, known to him in later life, remained distant, unconnected, and it seems likely that Lawrence never met them.

Yet, for all that Lawrence chose in the first passage of his poem, to liken his Air Force service to love for a woman. It is true that Lawrence became passionate about his Air Force duties, especially in later years. Yet there is a further dimension to this attitude.

In the Medieval period, a time whose history and literature Lawrence was well acquainted with, it was often felt that a "pure" chaste love would lead the lover to a



seat in Heaven. To put things simply, if one loved a woman chastely and with the best of intentions and action, then the result was that you became a better person, and, by the very goodness of your love, that emotion was transmuted into a love for God, and therefore one would be saved. This expression carries Lawrence's attempt at reintegration, his own form of Socratic hemlock, to even further heights of sublimation. When viewed in this light, Lawrence's entrance into the R.A.F. is not quite the complete abandonment of "Lawrence" that one might imagine. His "confession of faith" was not to be so much a title as a description of his actions, his rehabilitation or penance, in the Air Force.

**Chapter Nine**

**The Empty Nourishment of "Unworking"**

### Lawrence and Food

Lawrence's attempt to recreate himself through his text was difficult for him due to the means by which he sought to efface or purify the Lawrence aspect of himself. The recreation is difficult for the reader because of the unreliability that Lawrence generates within the autobiographical moment. The means by which Lawrence cleansed himself were both beneficial and toxic. This is reflected in the text where the unsuspecting reader must choose which morsel of text to accept or reject, informed—and poisoned – by his prior knowledge of the Lawrence persona. When one deals with a "fictionalized" autobiography there is potential for the text to unravel, or turn upon itself through minor factual inconsistencies that may be discovered. This is certainly the case with The Mint.

In an earlier chapter I remarked on the fact that one of the signals we have of the new Lawrence/Shaw's acceptance into the ranks of the R.A.F and of ordinary humans was the farewell dinner given him. The actual meal that Lawrence consumes is merely a part of a greater whole that we, the reader, and Lawrence in his various guises, have to deal with, something we too must consume without finding hard to swallow. In digesting what is represented to us in Lawrence's text we have to chew over and digest his words. In doing this we break the text down into its constitutive parts; it "unworks" itself. That is, the text contains within itself that which when examined causes the work to break apart into its constitutive members. A limited form of "unworking" has occurred through identifying allusions that assist in examining Lawrence's use of auto-allusion to rediscovering himself.

I propose to dish out some views on "unworking" and other positions developed by this particular textual pattern and then apply these views to an examination of The Mint, which will reveal that the methods used to generate the climate for writing were not totally successful.

The word nourishment implies the extraction of those elements needed to foster growth, or at least maintain status. The word "empty" negates the function of nourishment. The reader is told that with his enlistment, Ross/Lawrence will have seven years before he need "think of winning a meal" (Mint 36). I quote this passage simply to lay the table for our own meal. The term "meal" is used as a metaphor for security, for safety, for healing (both spiritual and physical, for Ross is malnourished) and more importantly, for acceptance of himself and acceptance of the new self by others. These are the elements that Ross will extract from his R.A.F. food. Our consideration lies with the theme of this particular question, that of the text as empty nourishment. What does Lawrence synthesize from this meal?

In his essay, "The Reader's Supper: A Piece of Hegel," Werner Hamacher comments on the relationship that Hegel draws between food and script. The dialectic of the host and the body of Christ is presented. The metaphorization of the wafer into the body of Christ is explained by Genette's "roundabout". Paul de Man comments on the application of the roundabout in his essay dealing with "Autobiography as De-Facement," some of which I should like to look at, as it is appropriate in our examination of the face value of The Mint.

### The Autobiographical Meal

Paul de Man writes of the "distinction between autobiography and fiction" and the problems experienced with the literal and the figurative, the non-literal. (de Man 68) The fact that we have a text with the author's signature grants the text "legal...authority" (71). This functions in much the same way as the use of quotation marks does. With these legalities in mind we consider accuracy, "factness." Is the text truthful, dependable, and correct? Two sections of de Man's essay stand out in this regard. He writes:

It appears then, that the distinction between fiction and autobiography is not an either/or polarity, but that it is undecidable. But is it possible to remain, as Genette would have it, within an undecidable situation? (de Man 70)

The undecidable situation is of course the abyss of the tourniquet. It is in this abyss, for our purposes Lawrence's hidden motives, the gap between factual events during his R.A.F. career and the events of The Mint that the movement, the digestion, occurs. de Man's moment in which autobiography is determined by the relationship between the "two subjects involved in the process of reading" continues This "moment," part of all understanding, "reveals the topological structure that underlies all cognitions, including knowledge of self" (de Man 71). The movement within the tourniquet is a chiasmatisation (a "chymation") of fiction and autobiography.<sup>70</sup>

In reading de Man's text I place it within the tourniquet of my own digestive apparatus, I eat/read it, breaking it down onto assimilative portions, swallow it, and attempt to digest, to extract "meaning," to absorb part of the *sein* that is contained

---

<sup>70</sup> I translate tourniquet to mean roundabout

within the text of my meal. Is not the quote, a snack at the author's contextual expense - a snack of the *sein* ? By removing the fragment from the meal, helping myself as it were, is the bite rendered less digestible? Is there less "toxic homeopathy" inherent in the chiasmic movement? No, there is not. An economy of movement is established that attempts unsuccessfully to limit the production of waste. Waste products of food, waste product of slippage, waste that spins off into referential productivity. That which we cannot suck further use from, but which we continue to suck in the attempt to discover and absorb absent nutritional value. Total absorption is impossible; therefore manageable bites are the order of the day so as to maintain an economic flow.

Is the metaphorization of food into text hard to swallow? Lawrence makes a direct link between food and text.

My mind on literature is not yet crisp. I have looked in poetry (the crown and head, the only essential branch of letters) everywhere for satisfaction: and I haven't found it. Instead I have made that private collection of bonbons: chocolate éclairs of the spirit: whereas I wanted a meal. Failing poetry I chased my fancied meal through prose, and found everywhere good little stuff, and only a few men who had honestly tried to be greater than mankind: and only their strainings and wrestling really fill my stomach. (Garnett Letters 370)

There are precedents for such foodotropes. One such precedent occurs in "The Reader's Supper, a Piece of Hegel." The "tropological substitution" (in de Man's words) used is the transformation of the Host, as I have already brought up. At one point during the ceremony the wafer becomes the body of Christ, the wine becomes the blood. The trick of the tourniquet is turned. Lawrence attempted to turn his own

actuality into something different, via the R.A.F. This prompted Robert Graves to attach a Christlike tag to Lawrence. Just as

[w]hat Christ offers as his own flesh and blood to his apostles and to his congregation is not merely named and interpreted by Hegel: rather this gift is mimetically repeated as the gift of the text. (Hamacher 64)

The act of eating destroys the integrity of the morsel, referentially producing yet another chiasmus. The act of reading breaks into the structure of the text and seizes only that which the reader is capable of digesting. The rest is eliminated, is waste, and becomes marginal. I offer the following soupçon of Hamacher.

A reading which reads its text from the perspective of the impossibility of a restitution of its totality must not only read something other than what stands written in it, and thereby refer to it not as a living coherence of meaning, but rather as a written, ground-down, a crunched and chopped corpse...Those who read this script and eat this supper are...put in reference to the corpse[.] (Hamacher 67)

Having chewed up the text, the morsel can never be made whole again. The all, the totality of meaning cannot be extracted from a text. The text is slippery, it breaks down and rots. The reader is unable to assimilate the rotten portions (potions, poisons) and they are rejected. Does Lawrence's use of disassociated textual morsels constitute an effort at poisoning? In a sense, yes, as for autobiographical purposes the text is tainted. Writing, an aid to memory, a replacement for memory is short-circuited. The reader is forced to remember -- to piece together -- the texts that Lawrence alludes to. In swallowing the text -- recognizing allusions -- and seeing past the Ross deception we reject, or at least delegitimize, the role of writing in memory.

Hamacher makes much of the corpse, seemingly inferring that something devoid of meaning is devoid of life. It is true that we dine off of death, off of

dismemberment. That which has been uttered is past, is dead. We also read off of dismemberment, that is, Lawrence "re-members" while we disassemble -- dismember his text and "re-member" it once more. Writing is the reconstruction of death and it attempts to recreate the live form. The act of writing as well as the physical sense of the textual characters acts as a preservative, a fixative that attempts to render the meal of veracity nontoxic. This would seem appropriate if we consider the trope that links script and meaning with nutritive value. That which is left unconsumed spoils, it rots, and it goes off. But is writing not a form of preservative? Does it not fix that which has been spoken? Is it not a remedy for rot? In some instances, yes. However, the introduction of a preservative alters the makeup of that which is preserved, there is a mixing of their native elements. The freshness of immediacy is lost. So it is with writing. The preservative is the *pharmakon*, the cure for corruption.

Of course, the *pharmakon* itself is corrupt. Too high a dosage kills the patient and not enough is ineffective. Toxic homeopathy is too much of a good thing, too much of the same thing.<sup>71</sup> Let us sample a tincture of Derrida in the hopes of striking a balance.

### **Preserving the Meal**

Writing is a preservative, it functions as an external memory, keeps us aware of the past, preserves speech, moves the abstract to a more solid basis. This function has both pros and cons. Derrida chews up the notion of the *pharmakon*. He digests it and extracts a wide variety of meanings. One of these meanings casts the

---

71. Of course, due to the nature of homeopathy, too much of a good thing, but in small, insidious doses. The effect is a creeping one, catching the victim unaware, until a sudden realization of the cumulative effect becomes apparent. But then of course, it is too late.



*pharmakon* as a comestible item, a cure, a remedy administered by a magician, a pharmacist.

[W]riting, touted by Theuth as a remedy, a beneficial drug, is later overturned and denounced by the king and then, in the king's place, by Socrates, as a harmful substance, a philtre of forgetfulness. Inversely, and although in a less immediately readable manner, the hemlock, that potion which in the Pheado is never called anything but a *pharmakon*, is presented to Socrates as a poison; yet it is transformed, through the effects of the Socratic logos and of the philosophical demonstration in the Pheado, into a means of deliverance, a way towards salvation, a cathartic power. (Derrida "Plato's Pharmacy" 126)

The *pharmakon* -- writing -- is at once both a remedy and a toxin. How can we resolve this seeming binary opposition? The answer is of course in the act of chiasmas, the act of digestion, the action that occurs between the two poles. The homeopathic morsel that must be consumed, often secreted within the text, is that which undermines the system from within. It is both infection and cure. In this passage we are coming close to the transmutative notion of the Host once again. Writing is a preservative, but the effect of the preservation often renders the mouthful toxic, because it incapacitates the memory. Speech is displaced by writing, which, with its removal from immediacy loses a degree of its potency, its freshness. Writing makes speech go bad. Writing is a corruption of speech, it is impotent speech removed from the immediacy of the moment.

What is the reaction to the swallowing of corruption, of a "rotten morsel"? It is infection, illness, and expulsion. The attempt at containment, at framing unworks itself. The body rejects what has been swallowed. Socrates is thrown up, is vomited,

he is poisonous. The body that throws him up is of course the societal body, at the same time, the poisoning body.

Writing is not, as the king tells us, a remedy for memory. It is a supplementary parasite, a parasite that nests within the rottenness of the bite. Writing contains within itself the potential for poison. What is the remedy? There is none, save for careful usage. Overhanding can prove dangerous. Yet writing can be cast as a remedy, a physic, and a purgative.

What may we do to rid ourselves of the toxic morsel, toxicity that is inherent within writing? Derrida provides a clue -- vomit. How does this "barfotrope" function?

It is an irreducible heterogeneity, which cannot be eaten either sensibly or ideally, which - this is the tautology - by never letting itself be swallowed must therefore *cause itself to be vomited*. (Derrida "Economimesis" 22)

The morsel that resists the metaphorization of reading is that which cannot be digested. Derrida conflates his terms. If an item cannot be swallowed, then it cannot be vomited. The act of vomiting requires that the framework (stomach, text) be violated. Vomiting of the indigestible bite halts the fetishized attempts at absorption, stops the process from pushing through to its ultimate conclusion. In this respect, this imposition of interruption, the phallacy of being in charge of vomiting (or what we believe we chose to accept) allows us to continue eating, to continue this bulimic fetishization. The "subject can at least still mimic mastery or dream it in auto-affection, believing that he *makes himself vomit*" (Derrida "Economimesis" 21).<sup>72</sup>

---

72. Note the use of gender in this page of Derrida's. Is he following a usage by Kant, or is he tainting his own text?

Derrida uses vomit in the sense of gagging, or coughing up. This is incorrect. Not only does vomiting dislodge the offending material, but also it regurgitates that which has already been consumed and is in the process of being digested. Mimetically speaking, writing is authorial vomiting just as the rejection of the text by the reader is also vomiting. It brings up that which has been spoken and allows it to be reexamined, redigested. In this sense, we are dealing with auto-affection. There is a sudden gush of ejaculatory referential productivity that must be dealt with. Derrida quotes Kant as speaking of vomit in terms of disgust; that is to say, discusses vomit as both negative pleasure and *jouissance*. "[V]omit is represented in advance as forcing pleasure, and that is why it disgusts" (Derrida "Economimesis" 22).

Vomit is related to enjoyment [*jouissance*], if not to pleasure. It even represents the very thing that forces us to enjoy - in spite of ourselves [notre corps defendant]. But this representation annuls itself, and that is why vomit remains unrepresentable. (Derrida "Economimesis" 22)

Vomit remains "unrepresentable" because it is the chiasmic, abysmal stuff. It is rotten, slippery, has had much of the nutritive value removed, or defies removal. The negative pleasure arises in the notion that it is within control. Writing is both an aid to memory and a potion for forgetfulness. It is the writer handling, overhandling the pen, and causing it to spit forth words and the reader rejecting these words. It contains the potential for both potency and impotency. To quote Derrida at length, re-heat him as it were:

By limitlessly violating our enjoyment, without granting it any determining limit, it abolishes representative distance -- beauty too -- and prevents mourning. It irresistibly forces one to consume, but without allowing any chance for idealization. If it remains unrepresentable or unspeakable -- absolutely heterogeneous -- it is not because it is this or that. Quite the contrary. By forcing enjoyment, it

suspends the suspense of non-consummation, which accompanies pleasure that is bound up with representation [...]pleasure bound to discourse, to the poetic in its highest form. It can be neither beautiful, nor ugly, nor sublime, give rise neither to positive nor negative, neither to interested nor disinterested pleasure. It gives too much enjoyment...for that and it burns up all work as mourning work. (Derrida "Economimesis" 22)

To return to ancient mythology, Kronos the Titan was the father of many of the Olympian gods. Having been informed of a prophecy stating that one of his offspring would overthrow him, Kronos devoured these offspring at birth, all save Zeus, who escaped through trickery. When grown to adulthood, Zeus provided Kronos with a magic potion (again, via trickery), which caused him to vomit up his children. Zeus then castrated Kronos and took his place, setting his siblings up in their respective domains.

Zeus became enamoured of Mnemosyne and lay with her for nine nights. The result of this union was the birth of the Muses. *Jouissance*, the use of the phallus, linked with Memory produces the Muses; writing. All well and good, but what does this have to do with Lawrence/Ross and The Mint?<sup>73</sup> Our mint can be consumed. It is admittedly a reference to the stamp that the Air Force carries, that of its maker, Lord Trenchard.<sup>74</sup> *Minthe* was beloved of Hades, metamorphosed out of jealousy by Persephone into an herb. This is an herb that Lawrence makes a meal of, auto-

---

73. During part of the time that Lawrence was engaged in working on The Mint, he was also at work on a translation of The Odyssey. This was finally published anonymously in 1932. However, like the secret of Lawrence's enlistment, this too was overhanded and the author's identity became more or less common knowledge. Lawrence was by training an archaeologist, having assisted in the supervision of an extensive dig at Carchemish before the First World War. His younger brother Arnold also shared his passion for this practice and became a professor of archaeology at Cambridge in later life.

74 Lawrence considered Trenchard to be a sort of father figure. He goes to great lengths in The Mint to point out Trenchard's god-like attributes.

affectively, fetishistically metamorphosing himself into Ross. Yet the meal does not sit well, Lawrence both vomits it up and is vomited up; chiasmus.

### **Consuming Autobiography**

Lawrence serves an opposition of the literal and the figurative for our consumption. The space in the middle of the figurization is that which concerns us. The Mint is cast as a form of autobiography. Caught up in this context are the many threads that designate what the reader expects when an autobiography is read. However, to return to de Man's argument, some of which I dealt with at the beginning of this essay, the "legal...authority" of the author's signature is cast into doubt. This doubt is created both within the text and externally to it. Lawrence, in a letter to David Garnett, describes his rewriting of the "Uxbridge notes" (an early version of The Mint) as being "like eating yesterday's vomit" With this phrase, Lawrence himself turns the trick of the tourniquet. The space between vomiting and consumption is the turning. His writing, which he likens to yesterday's vomit, is reconsumed and offered for the consumption of others. The nutritional qualities of yesterday's vomit are slight, and in redigestion are completely exhausted. With this in mind it may be well to explore this quote in further depth.

This is a reply to your letter of June 27, which ended up with a well-introduced remark about my Uxbridge notes [The Mint]. I write this on the back of one, to show you that the not sending them as they are is only a kindness to you. I wrote them pell-mell, as the spirit took me, on one piece of paper or another. Then I cut them into their sections, and shuffled them, as Joyce is supposed to have shuffled Ulysses, with the idea of curing you of any delusion you might be persuaded by the chorus of critical England to entertain of me as a person of literary promise or capacity - where was I? - Ah yes: - to show you that I can't write for toffee, I decided to send them to you. You would have thought them the raw material of a paper-chase. So I

began at Clouds Hill to stick each class in some sort of order onto sheets of paper, meaning to have them stitched for you. But that did not work, for the sections were too intertwined. So I am copying them seriatim into a notebook, as a Christmas (which Christmas?) gift for you. It is a posh manuscript, in my most copper-plated hand. It will be bound, and gilt edged. Can I do more? (or less.) Please regard it as an expensive gift. Copying my old notes is like eating yesterday's vomit. I add nothing but take away repetitions, where vain. I "did" three Church parades for example: and I believe they can be boiled to two: or even to one, which would be the quint-essence and exemplar of all my church parades. (Garnett 532)

Lawrence too depended on *mimesis* in early experiments with his Mint. This mouthful (in which the writer performs that which has been laid out in the previous part of this essay) was too much; he had bitten off more than he could chew. There were too many tough strands to bite through. Lawrence rejected this method because the textual framing was too tough to digest. However, Lawrence does violate the textual framework. He castrates "fact" and slyly replaces it with figurization, with non-literality, with a digested truth, with deceit.<sup>75</sup>

Lawrence intended his text to be a cure (a *pharmakon*) for the deceit that Garnett suffered from, the deceit that Lawrence is a writer. Yet there is a further deceit at work. A deceit that tells us that "fact" has not been rendered impotent. This deceit is dished up throughout The Mint. There is a constant chiasmus of fact and

---

<sup>75</sup> Supplementary to the notion of castrating is the publishing history of The Mint. It was decided by Lawrence himself, at the urging of the head of the RAF, that The Mint would not be published until 1950. It was felt, by both parties, that the material would have been damaging to the RAF. There had been a long and bitter struggle for the Air Force to gain autonomy from both the army and the navy. This was finally achieved on April 1, 1918. The service that The Mint portrayed, it was felt, would not have appealed either to the politicians or the public. Upon his retirement from the Air Force, Lawrence planned to publish a limited edition (100 copies) of The Mint. Lawrence's death in a motorcycle accident (the accident itself wrapped in suspicion and not a little mystery) prevented this. The Mint, edited by A.W. Lawrence, the brother of the author and a distinguished classical scholar in his own right, appeared in 1955 in two editions. The popular version was expurgated. The limited (2000 copies) edition was

fiction. Those familiar with the biographical details of Lawrence's career are able to pass over the deceit, knowing of this propensity for chiasmus. Those to whom the work is served up cold, however, are poisoned by the text.

What is the barf-o-trope, what is the function of vomit for The Mint? In literal terms the act of vomiting is an act of rejection. This is the definition that Derrida would have us swallow when he speaks of

an irreducible heterogeneity which cannot be eaten either sensibly or ideally and which -- this is the tautology -- by never letting itself be swallowed must therefore *cause itself to be vomited*. (Derrida "Economimesis" 21)

As I have already stated, Derrida conflates his terms, using "vomit" for "gag." Gagging does produce vomit. The homeopathic, toxic tit-bit that must be consumed and survived occurs at a stage approximately one third of the way into the text. We have survived the soup of the introduction and are well into the main course. The toxic morsel is served to us in the R.A.F camp mess hall where Lawrence/Ross is stationed.

Round the walls hung tinted photographs of King George, Trenchard, Beatty, Hag, some land-girls, a destroyer at speed. Even there was a small picture of me, a thing later conveyed slyly to the ever-open incinerator. (Mint 72)

This passage forces us to regurgitate that which we have already read, provides more referential productivity, marginality. The distance within which chiasmus functions is reduced, fact and fiction mix, the veracity of the word is thrown into question. Slippage is increased, the *pharmakon* becomes dangerous. The pen is unfaithful to

---

complete. This edition is to be found in the Université de Montréal library. In the context of this essay, the thought of an expurgated text is, to say the least, intriguing.

Memory. The distinction between autobiography and fiction then, as de Man says, becomes undecidable.

The heterogeneity of Lawrence/Ross, the unacknowledgement of which (an homeopathic attitude towards slippage) allowed the text to function, is brought home and the text begins to unwork itself. As Derrida, referring to Kant, puts it:

...the artistic representation of the object is no longer distinguished from the nature of the object itself in our sensation, and thus it is impossible that it can be regarded as beautiful. (Derrida "Economimesis" 22)

The framework within which the reader is induced to place the text is shattered. No more are we to deal with the memories of a simple enlisted man. The undermining of the text, through the heterogeneous nature of Lawrence/Ross forces the reader and the author to recall the career of Lawrence, who further retreats in the chiasmus of T.E. Lawrence/Lawrence of Arabia. This in turn creates and is infringed upon by endless referential productivity. The parasitic toxicity, which has infected the text, also infects the reader. What we have read is retroactively poisonous. What we continue to read becomes homeopathically toxic.

### **Concluding the Meal**

How can I put a face on what has already been said? There is endless difficulty and danger in attempting to prosopopoeise the signature on the autobiography. How can I conclude? How can I perform the "impossibility of closure and of totalization (that is the impossibility of coming into being) of all textual systems made up of tropological substitutions."? (de Man 71). The effects of the toxic morsel, the *pharmakon*, the word, these effects are never ending.



In conclusion then, to sum up (my own performative vomit) the "unworking" or "constitutive ruination" of a text is a kind of empty nourishment because the text carries the seeds of its own ruination within itself. The *pharmakon*, the potion, the poison is contained within the slippage of script. The *pharmakon* can also be sugar coated, working subtly (or not) to build its effect, producing a greater degree of ruination. The text comes apart when the unswallowable, indigestible portion lodges in the reader's gullet. In rejecting the morsel, in throwing it up, one must also regurgitate that portion of the text already digested. In that this fetishized action is never resolved no nourishment is obtained. The meal is empty.

The morsel may take many forms, for such is its nature, but essentially it is that which produces a narrowing between poles, or more properly produces a heightened degree of chiasmus, in our case the closeness between Lawrence/Ross. Thus, life and death, fact and fiction, potency and impotency, swallowing and vomiting, literality and figuration, all are chiasmasized by the toxic morsel, the "means of deliverance" that is the text, the R.A.F. and the recognition of Lawrence's different personas. That is what I have gained from my meal. My pharmacy is closed.

## **Chapter Ten**

### **Lawrence's Imperialism of the Self**

### Lawrence's Imperial Tools

The means by which Lawrence attempted his cure were violent and injurious, yet they were a vital part of the purification and liberation process that Lawrence, through the rule of the R.A.F., subjected himself to. The topics dealt with in the study of The Mint have centered on the violent. The Mint is a violent text, the subject matter is often brutal, not due to the crudity of the Air Force recruits or their surroundings, but because of the violence that Lawrence commits upon himself in his search to find a new identity. There are of course the physical aspects of this violence, latent in the physical exertion and deprivation present. The actual and far more important aspects of violence are mental ones, an ego driven version of whipping and beatings. We know that Lawrence was in a precarious position, both physically and mentally, at the time of his enlistment. This condition was largely needless, but is frequently apparent in the attitudes and habits often assigned to artists, for example, Coleridge's drug abuse. The warrior, jaded, tired, worn out sought refuge in the words and feelings of others. This is not to suggest that Lawrence did not feel. Rather he felt too much and sought to drown these feelings through the experiences of others and the creation of a shell in which he could function. The shell was his masquerade as an ordinary Air Force man and as a man of letters.

Lawrence was certainly aware of the slipperiness of words. The pains he took to shape his translations, to capture the feelings of the writer, tell us that. They also tell us that Lawrence felt qualified to impose his notions of the author's ideas. In the case of the Odyssey, he felt that he was suited to translate the work because he had,

to paraphrase his words on the translation, fought wars and killed many men. (Knox, Odyssey xii) Aware of the nature of words, of language, Lawrence attempted nevertheless to subject them to his will, to bend them and to shape them, quite against their nature, to redefine, express his own nature.

The violence present in The Mint is the violence of imperialism. The Oxford English Dictionary provides the following definitions for imperialist.

1. An imperial system of government: the rule of an emperor, esp. when despotic or arbitrary...
2. [2] of so uniting the different parts of the empire having separate governments, as to secure that for certain purposes such as warlike defense, internal commerce, copyright, and postal communications, they shall be practically a single state.

Words such as those above are an extension of the man, of the writer's thoughts, feelings, experiences, and the pieces that make the sum of the author. The definition does not address the benefits of the arrangement described, it describes results, but not morals or impacts upon the united people. In this respect it is very much a reflection of Britain's imperial outlook at the end of the nineteenth century and, as Edward Said points out, for Lawrence, "...the empire is everywhere a crucial setting" (Said 63). This is both true and untrue. It is correct that Lawrence did pursue the British interest in the Middle East. However, he also disagreed strongly with the aims of the Sykes-Picot agreement and the subsequent divisions in the Middle East. This is proven by his actions at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. During the conference Lawrence acted as interpreter/escort/aide to Prince Feisal. Owing to French Government opposition to Feisal's role as a possible future sovereign, Lawrence found himself taking a more vocal role than he may have

preferred. Lawrence and Feisal were shunted from pillar to post on various official tours in both France and Britain. In one instance

Lawrence and Feisal went on an official tour to Edinburgh and Glasgow, where they attended various civil functions. According to Lawrence, when Feisal was asked to give an address at one of these, he recited passages from the Koran while Lawrence, pretending to interpret, made an impromptu speech. (Wilson Lawrence of Arabia 593)<sup>76</sup>

The wonder of Lawrence's efforts on behalf of Arab independence was not the strength of his commitment, but, to paraphrase Dr. Johnson, it was that he had any anti-imperial feelings at all. To return to Said's comment, it must be remembered that Lawrence was a product of a fairly stern Victorian upbringing. As such, in his role first as a warrior and then as a writer, in forcing words to his will, Lawrence demonstrated a Nietzsche-like philosophy in his attempt to be bravest and best. This was the same philosophy that he used on himself and ultimately, upon the Air Force itself in instituting reforms and initially pushing himself beyond his physical limits during the initial recruitment.

Lawrence was well equipped to become a literary figure, but the form of literature that was offered to him, by the role of public demand, was a "what I did in the War" form of book. This did not sit very well with Lawrence and his list of "big" books. To aspire to be a Whitman or a Melville is one thing, to end up as Tom Clancy is another. (Williams 3)

---

<sup>76</sup> There is evidence to suggest that this happened a number of times. (Mack 267)

### **Military and Political Views and Conquest**

The plot of the war novel centers on deeds, actions, historical events -- in short, literature in an epic mold. The theme of The Mint, while that of a military book, is quite different. It is a story in which the central thought or theme, like that of Moby Dick, is the study of man. It is the story of the development of the Air Force from the bottom ranks and more importantly the ability of man to grow and develop. The fact that it served as a form of penance/therapy/salvation/debasement for the author would be significantly lessened for the casual reader, ignorant of the biographical truth behind the scenes.

Note the word conquest, a word that Lawrence himself uses. A military book, written by a military man, an enlisted man familiar with French, Greek, Arabic, Latin, an enlisted man who was a fellow at All Souls College.

Lawrence all his life was involved in conquest, on a political and a personal level. Obsessed with speed he would race his motorcycle against airplanes, deprive himself of food and sleep to test his limits. Conquest of knowledge, of the Turks, of the Politicians and ultimately, of himself, through the Air Force.

Of the points that are raised by Lawrence students one of the most perplexing concerns the reasons for his leaving public life to enlist in the Royal Air Force. For a man who could have been or done anything to turn his back on everything is remarkable. Lawrence chose to marginalize himself.

One of the keys to this lies in a letter written by Lawrence to The Times shortly after the war. At the time, Lawrence was working with Emir Feisal attending the Peace Conference in Paris. It was at this conference that the fate of the post war

Middle East was to be decided. I shall reproduce a large portion of the text, commenting on some of its key words and phrases in an effort to backlight my previous text. The letter is important as an aid to understanding the crystallization of Lawrence's future. It is one of the first instances of unhappiness and doubt beginning to form in the mind of the author of The Mint. It is an aid to understanding Lawrence's attitude as it was at the end of the war.

Lawrence was bitterly unhappy over his role during the war. Having made promises of autonomy to various Arab leaders on behalf of the generals and politicians, he had the rug pulled out from under him and witnessed his promises and those of his country going unkept. Many biographers feel this to be a principal reason for Lawrence's refusal to accept any position of responsibility after the war. Lawrence wrote about this in a letter to The Sunday Times on the 22nd of August. This letter was written at the request of the editorship of The Times in order to inform the public as to the commitments made by the British government in the Middle East.

The people of England have been led in Mesopotamia into a trap from which it will be hard to escape with dignity and honour. They have been tricked into it by a steady withholding of information. The Baghdad communiqués are belated, insincere, and incomplete. Things have been far worse than we have been told, our administration more bloody and inefficient than the public knows. It is a disgrace to our imperial record, and may soon be too inflamed for any ordinary cure. We are to-day not far from a disaster.

Note the language that Lawrence uses; "tricked," "insincere, and incomplete." In light of his own later literary trickery, these terms are remarkable for their hypocrisy. In using them Lawrence was attempting to startle the public into a

realization that promises made by him on behalf of the government were not to be kept, and this deceit with their blessing. By invoking the inviolate nature of these promises, by using such strong words, Lawrence demonstrates the unreliability of language.

The sins of commission are those of the British civil authorities in Mesopotamia (especially of three 'colonels') who were given a free hand by London. They are controlled from no Department of State, but from the empty space which divides the Foreign Office from the India Office. They availed themselves of the necessary discretion of war-time to carry over their dangerous independence into times of peace. They contest every suggestion of real self-government sent them from home. A recent proclamation about autonomy circulated with unction from Baghdad was drafted and published out there in a hurry, to forestall a more liberal statement in preparation in London, "Self-determination papers" favourable to England were extorted in Mesopotamia in 1919 by official pressure, by aeroplane demonstrations, by deportations to India.

We have seen the extent to which Lawrence depended on biblical allusion in The Mint. A religious terminology is invoked in this text by the use of the word sin. Sin specifies that the transgressions of the colonels are against a much higher authority. They are not controlled, but exist in an empty space. This empty space, this wilderness, is the area that forms the binary opposition that defined Lawrence. It is the space that lies between the point of origin and the destination, it is the journey. Yet for Lawrence, the empty space represents a bureaucratic nightmare that lacks control. As a Medievalist in his early college days, and as a result of his strict religious upbringing, Lawrence was well aware of the function of the chain of being. The empty space that Lawrence abhors is a break in the chain. To put things simply, the theory behind the Great Chain of Being holds that there is a natural hierarchy to everything. God appointed kings. Nobles were responsible to the King and so on,



down to the smallest blade of grass or insect. This organization is reflected in the army and it is the empty space caused by the breakdown in the chain that Lawrence abhorred. The colonels have neither the right nor the ability to take their present actions upon themselves despite their free hand from London.

The Cabinet cannot disclaim all responsibility. They receive little more news than the public: they should have insisted on more, and better. They have sent draft after draft of reinforcements, without enquiry. When conditions became too bad to endure longer, they decided to send out as High commissioner the original author of the present system, with a conciliatory message to the Arabs that his heart and policy have completely changed.\*

Yet our published policy has not changed, and does not need changing. It is that there has been a deplorable contrast between our profession and our practice. We said we went to Mesopotamia to defeat Turkey. We said we stayed to deliver the Arabs from the oppression of the Turkish Government, and to make available for the world its resources of corn and oil. We spent nearly a million men and nearly a thousand million of money to these ends. This year we are spending ninety-two thousand men and fifty millions of money on the same objects.<sup>77</sup>

The difficulties suffered by the cabinet, and the problems which are ultimately their responsibility are due, according to Lawrence, to the fact that they are poorly informed. The "published policy" has not changed and does not need changing, Lawrence states. It is evident that Lawrence feels that the written word is inviolate, that it legitimizes the promises made. The cabinet denies this legitimacy, as the "author" of the system is sent to unravel his words. Once again, Lawrence invokes an opposition. In this case, it is between the "profession" and the "practice." Independence is not to be granted to the Arabs. Instead a wilderness is created by the difference between the legitimacy of the written word and the actuality of deeds.

---

<sup>60</sup> The \* symbol refers to a note appearing at the end of the article referring to Sir Percy Cox who was to return as High Commissioner in 1920.

Lawrence continues, at this point, condemning the entire allied effort during the war by comparing the British form of Government to the prewar Turkish system.

Our government is worse than the old Turkish system. They kept fourteen thousand local conscripts embodied, and killed a yearly average of two hundred Arabs in maintaining peace. We keep ninety thousand men, with aeroplanes, armoured cars, gunboats, and armoured trains. We have killed about ten thousand Arabs in this rising this summer. We cannot hope to maintain such an average: it is a poor country, sparsely peopled; but Abd el Hamid would applaud his masters, if he saw us working. We are told the object of the rising was political, we are not told what the local people want. It may be what the Cabinet has promised them. A Minister in the House of Lords said that we must have so many troops because the local people will not enlist. On Friday the Government announce the death of some local levies defending their British officers, and say that the services of these men have not yet been sufficiently recognized because they are too few (adding the characteristic Baghdad touch that they are men of bad character). There are seven thousand of them, just half the old Turkish force of occupation. Properly officered and distributed, they would relieve half our army there. Cromer controlled Egypt's six million people with five thousand British troops; Colonel Wilson fails to control Mesopotamia's three million people with ninety thousand troops.

Lawrence turns to a discussion of military logistics in the above paragraph. This is a direct commentary on the imperial situation that has been foisted onto the people of the Middle East. In controlling the Arabs through military force, including airborne force, and refusing to entrust local matters to the Arabs, the British return to an unsubtle, patronizing form of imperialism. By not asking what the object of the uprisings was, the British marginalize the wishes of the local residents. As Lawrence, points out, they may be rising up in search of what had already been promised to them.

Lawrence continues to comment on the logistics and the wasteful approach to controlling the area. In his final summing up of the imperial situation in Mesopotamia,

Lawrence explodes the myth of the kindly imperialistic manner of developing a country or region on behalf of its inhabitants, who are presumably far too backwards to control their own affairs

We say we are in Mesopotamia to develop it for the benefit of the world. All experts say that the labour supply is the ruling factor in its development. How far will the killing of ten thousand villagers and townspeople this summer hinder the production of wheat, cotton, and oil? How long will we permit millions of pounds, thousands of Imperial troops, and tens of thousands of Arabs to be sacrificed on behalf of colonial administration which can benefit nobody but its administrators?

\*Sir Percy Cox was to return as High Commissioner in October, 1920 to form a provisional Government.

These comments, expressing very publicly his feelings regarding British attitude, filter down into Lawrence's later writing, and specifically The Mint. These experiences, capping Lawrence's wartime exploits, formed the personality that Lawrence felt he had to liberate. In effect, by disregarding the promises and Lawrence's role in delivering their words, Lawrence was betrayed by the government, in just the same manner that the Arabs had been betrayed. In marginalizing the Arabs, those in charge also marginalized Lawrence. Lawrence was placed on the same level as the people of the Middle East. Knightley and Simpson, who quote from Lawrence's war diary:

"O my...I'm terrified [determined] to go off alone to Damascus ...to get killed ...for all sakes try and clear this show up before it goes further. We are calling them to fight for us on a lie and I can't stand it. (Knightley and Simpson 92)

As Tabachnick asks, “[I]s this the cold-blooded declaration of an imperial agent?” (Tabachnick 80) The response is no, it is the comment of someone who considers that his trust has been betrayed.

Betrayed, let down by the government and the cause he served, and ultimately, by his own naivety, he made a public statement of the facts as he knew them. He could not "conquer" through the facts of his desert experiences; therefore Lawrence traded on his name in an effort to publicize what he felt was incorrect. This is a case of Public Lawrence intervening for Private Shaw. At one point questions regarding Lawrence's enlistment in the Air Force were being asked in the British Parliament. Anxious that questions of his parentage not be made public, Lawrence visited the MPs in question, and resolved the matter with them. Not only did he avoid any embarrassment, but he actually became friendly with the members.

Note again the wording that Lawrence uses: "dignity and honour...belated, insincere...administration...blood...and inefficient...disgrace to our imperial record...empty space."

"Imperial record," Lawrence it must not be forgotten, was born into the Victorian period. With this letter he attacks the empire. Why would he do so? Such an act would certainly alienate him in many eyes, and would constitute a public betrayal of the empire and its policies. Like Joyce, T.S.Eliot and others, Lawrence responded "... to external pressures on culture from the *imperium*." (Said 188). I interpret Said's use of "*imperium*" to mean the ruler, or ruling class or conditions, in short, the mechanics of empire.

Let us be clear on what is meant by Empire. This refers specifically to the British Empire, India, Ireland and all its dominions. But Empire is also a state of mind. It implies the existence of subjects who are not in control, who are marginalized, away from the seat of power. It also confirms the existence of the seat of power.

### Lawrence's Honour

There is no doubt that Lawrence had a strong sense of personal honour, the traditional prop of the English Gentleman, of the Gentlemen of the Empire. This was affected by the realization that he had been used as a tool in the war effort, let down by the senior officers, lied to. Who else had lied to him, what other father figure? The answer is of course his father.

Lawrence was brought up in the shadow of his parent's sham marriage. Malcolm Brown related a story written by C.F. Bell, a boyhood friend of Lawrence's. The notes were written on a sheet of paper, pasted onto a copy of Liddell Hart's Lawrence biography in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. The notes concerned the family history.

The details do not tally at all with those imparted by TEL to Hogarth and repeated by him to me. They are not important, but amounted to this, that the "father", Mr. Lawrence, who was known in Oxford, was not the boy's father at all, but that Mrs. Lawrence, who we all knew, *was* their Mother...Mr. Lawrence married her later and adopted the children. (Brown Journal 41)

Brown adds his own comments:

...I can't help feeling that this curious off beat background was more disturbing than he admitted, particularly if he had to cope with two versions of it...Now I'm no psychologist, but with all that weight in your mental knapsack, I don't find it surprising that T.E. as a teenager

was more than a bit eccentric. Indeed, "barmy" was a phrase used by at least one of his fellow undergraduates at Jesus College...(Brown Journal 43)

It may be that Brown is correct. While the allegations that Mr. Lawrence (Chapman) was not the Father of T.E. seem unlikely, there is no doubt but that Lawrence was disturbed by the origins of his birth. And his occasional offhandedness was even more of a sham than originally thought. One feels, and this may reinforce it, that Lawrence's father, despite bicycle trips and photography lessons, made much less of an impact upon him than his mother did. Mrs. Lawrence figures prominently in T.E.'s letters, while there are fewer references to his Father, even during his lifetime.

By all accounts smothering, her attempts at controlling Lawrence were described by T.E. as "...hammering and sapping..." (Brown Journal 45). Once again the military metaphors break in. Lawrence's younger brother A.W. "...thought that their mother had seriously damaged T.E..." (Brown Journal 45).

Lawrence retreated into the world of books, to the world of heroic actions and deeds. In the books that he preferred were to be found the seeds of empire, medieval romances, both genuinely medieval and modern retelling of the myths. Lawrence was a son of the empire. His deeds in wartime say this. There can be no doubt that he came to see the Empire, and certainly senior officials such as Allenby and Trenchard as father figures.

In harming himself, whether knowingly or not, Lawrence was following a pattern not uncommon. We have already seen that his monkish regime, including starvation and lashings, was designed not only to sublimate his sexual appetite, but

also to enhance his ability to write. One thinks of the extended "crazy pelican" sessions centered on the writing of Seven Pillars.

Lawrence's experiences during the war increased the already present tendency for these physical exertions and added, or increased the mental aspects of this. Having found a measure of fame and the potential for fortune in soldiering, Lawrence was forced to admit that the military life did in fact suit him best. It is often been remarked that there is a certain type of men for whom war becomes a defining event, men who are only fit for war. It is possible that Lawrence was one of these men. Yet, it must be remembered that Lawrence was more than a soldier. He was also an intelligence agent aiding the expansion -- very actively aiding the expansion -- of the British Empire. Lawrence was, at this early stage of his career, concerned with establishing sovereign countries that would exist within the British sphere of influence. There can be no doubt of this, particularly when one considers Lawrence's role in the foreign office shortly after the war and his part, along with Churchill, of establishing the present national boundaries in the Middle East. As the war progressed, and promises were broken, Lawrence became disillusioned with the trappings of the *imperium*. This extended to his tastes in literature. Tabachnick comments that Lawrence rejected the imperialism that Alexander Kinglake and Charles Doughty expressed in their Arabian works (Tabachnick 35, 42). On the level of politics, Andrew Lownie cites a remark made by Lawrence to John Buchan. "I think there's a great future for the British Empire as a voluntary association..." (Lownie 234). This comment was addressed to a man who was later to become Governor General of Canada. The comment speaks of Lawrence's wish to remove

the imposition of imperialism on colonies, resulting in a degree of self-determination for these lands. The remark also predicts the formation of the Commonwealth.

Lawrence served in an imperial force, yet this is only an adjunct to his particular brand of imperialism. The imperialism practiced by Lawrence was an imperialism of the self. This self-exploitive tendency was evident from an early age. The death of his Father shortly before the writing of The Times letter amplified the letdown produced by the actions of the British government. In effect, Lawrence was deserted by two sets of Father figures.

An analogy is apparent when viewed in the context of imperialism. Lawrence, marginalized, equated with the Arabs, was faced by abandonment and was forced to fall back on his own resources. These resources constituted his renouncing his fame and joining the Air Force. The separation from his past was, of course, not completely successful. In joining a new branch of the armed service Lawrence was involved in the forming of new traditions. The Air Force was under the command of Lord Trenchard. Trenchard became another in the list of Father figures that Lawrence looked up to including G.B.Shaw and Thomas Hardy.

It seems evident that Lawrence spent much of his adult life in the search for a Father figure. His search echoes the links between a colony and the seat of Empire. In relating this to his literary efforts, and particularly The Mint, we can place Lawrence of Arabia on the side of the imperialists. What can we say for A/C Ross or T.E. Shaw, much the same? Ross is as much an instrument of empire as Lawrence. The distinction arises not in the day-to-day actions of Ross the author, but in the conscious effort made to shed the Lawrence skin and for A/c Ross to emerge from



the chrysalis. The distinction lies not in the arrival, but in the journey. The process described in The Mint concerns an individual's attempts to break away from all of the former influences and center of control. This is often violent, as in the author's struggles to deal with the physical aspects of his training and with the inner conflicts experienced in basic training. In attempting to define the path of his own life, his independence, Lawrence mirrored the actions of a breakaway nation. His betrayal by the central tenants of the Empire, God, King, Country, resulted in dissatisfaction with them and ultimately himself.

## **Chapter Eleven**

### **Conclusion**

### The Family

It is difficult to "humanize" the facts behind Lawrence's life. How does one push aside the mask, the differing personas and discover what lies under the many-layered mask? In the sixty-nine years since Lawrence's death have we come closer to understanding the character of this self-mythologizing man? Can we ever understand a myth? In his attempts at self-recreation, Lawrence created many contradictions, many difficulties for the researcher. This is the prime obstacle for any Lawrence scholar.

As I have already said, there is much risk in attempting to prosopopoeise the signature of the autobiography. Lawrence was driven by the need to prove himself. In this simple statement we can find the key to tying the threads of our examination together. As a child Lawrence was raised in a household that was living a lie. His parents were not married and were living under assumed names. This, coupled with the very religious attitude, which his mother fostered, no doubt created an air of confusion in Lawrence. Of the five brothers, two, Will and Frank, were killed in the First World War. The oldest, Robert, was a medical doctor who afterwards became a China missionary, along with Lawrence's mother. This was a remarkable feat for a woman of Sarah Lawrence's age and era. This makes her earlier living arrangement seem all the more hypocritical. Arnold Lawrence, the youngest, of the brothers, followed in T.E.'s footsteps to some degree, becoming an archeologist and excavating in the Middle East and later teaching in England and Africa, where he also became a museum director. He married and had a child, which Robert did not. T.E. often remarked that he found his mother overpowering, with the ability to stifle his own

development. This seems to have happened to Robert, but not to Arnold. The effect of escaping from this prevented Lawrence from having frequent contact with his mother.

It seems that the Lawrence household was one in which Sarah Lawrence held the majority of the power. This experience made Lawrence wary of women, although it did not prevent him from having many women friends, the majority of whom were unreachable in a physically intimate manner.

Lawrence's attitude towards his father is harder to discern. He seems to have had a good relationship with him, often going on bicycling trips with him. Lawrence would later state that he learned his photography from his father. There would evidently then have been several common bonds.

There is no doubt that Lawrence felt something to be lacking in his later life. He searched out older role models, both male and female, critical sounding boards for both his writing and his actions in life. Chief among these was Charlotte Shaw. This also played a part in the decision to join the rank of the R.A.F. and the Tank Corps. Lawrence needed the discipline of military life in order to provide a shelter from which to work. In much the same way that a convict will break parole and so be sent back to prison, so Lawrence sought the shelter of the ranks and his writing.

Given this mix of theory, of critical work and factual knowledge, just how is it possible to conclude, how can the "impossibility of closure and of totalization (that is the impossibility of coming into being) of all textual systems made up of tropological substitutions" be arrived at? (de Man 71). Can it be arrived at? Can the two be sutured together? Must we settle for merely bringing them into close proximity?

### Identity and Truth

The ability to rationalize biographical and textual differences and contrasting sense of identity lie in coping with the fact that in Lawrence's Mint we are not dealing with simple "truth." This is not a "straightforward" view of life in the ranks. At the time of writing, such a thing in itself would have still been a fresh dot on the literary horizon. The traditional imagined reliability of the text, a reliability to which Lawrence often subscribed, has been shattered and so too has the faith that a reader feels compelled to offer to the text. The trust between reader and text, reader and author is broken, betrayed. The reader is caught and forced to recall the "true" biographical facts denied in the text. What is expected and what is often felt to be the reader's due is not delivered. We are caught in a circular stream of referentiality, in which we are joined by Lawrence, who used his Arabian notoriety to escape unsuccessfully from his Arabian notoriety. T.E. Lawrence was a man of many sides. It has been remarked in this study that he had the ability of seeming all things to all men. It is possible that there was a degree of this attribute that Lawrence was aware of. This would account for the many name and occupational changes. What was writing to Lawrence after Seven Pillars? At first, it was a means of justifying his joining the ranks. Later, when he came to love the R.A.F., and find his niche in it, writing became somewhat less important, publicly, yet it was a cornerstone for his life. Linked to his life in the R.A.F. it was the means by which he sought to rebuild

his life and establish a new identity. It was also the toxic morsel, the obsession that shot his final years through with unhappiness.<sup>78</sup>

Lawrence spent much time attempting to escape from the post war fame that "Lawrence of Arabia" collected. Yet, like the tin can tied to the dog's tale, it always followed him. The irony is that even though he was respected as a writer, he felt that this respect was only granted because of the Lawrence persona. On several occasions Lawrence sent anonymous essays to journals or magazines. These essays were often returned, unpublished, and convinced him of the fact that he was not a writer.

Shaw could never escape the obligation owed to Lawrence. The convoluted system, which resulted from the attempt, confused his sense of identity, and also confuses the reader. We share in his guilt, in his necessity for name and identity changes, and ultimately, in his search for a self. "It seems to me that you are free to chose your own name. Lawrence is best." Sherif Ali in Lean's Lawrence of Arabia utters these words. T.E. felt that Lawrence was not best and spent his life in a denial of that which would have portrayed, he felt, a falsehood to the world. In pursuing this did he not create a further falsehood for himself?

Lawrence justified his escape from himself and the means which he used for it by claiming that he decided to do so himself. The fame which he sought to escape was praise and renown for a persona Lawrence despised. Knowing how Lawrence was loved, how could Shaw feel about that hated one, which no matter how he denied it was still a part of him?

---

<sup>78</sup> We find Lawrence in the last years of his R.A.F. service lamenting the fact that he felt he would be too old to reenlist.

The realization of this contamination, this toxic self was no comfort or solution for Lawrence. It was a constant confrontation in his relationships with friends, superiors, the press, the public and possibly most damaging, in his writing. The method with which he tried to reinvent himself was tainted from the beginning.

This taint is evident in the nature of his writing; full of allusion, he constantly comes back to previous events, previous incarnations. How can this be otherwise, considering the nature of writing? It is a fixative, a preservative, an artificial memory. It only serves an artistic end because it arouses emotion and memories by drawing upon our own pool of memory. It reactivates our experiences, good or bad. The strength with which these are activated is the scale by which literary art is judged bad and good. The lack of memories, or the inhibition of memories, or the setting aside of memories is what makes a good critic. For this reason Richard Aldington's biography of Lawrence was a failure. It drew too much on Aldington's emotions. This biography sought to debunk the myth of Lawrence the hero, characterizing him instead as a glory-loving fraud. This brought many friends and admirers of Lawrence -- the still extant Lawrence Bureau -- to Lawrence's defense. Of course Aldington totally missed the point of The Mint in which Lawrence, suffering under questions of self-worth, seemed to agree with the sentiments that Aldington wrote after Lawrence's death. It is the same fact that made Lawrence's Mint an important work; it was a conscious attempt at setting aside the memories. It was, however, a vain attempt. In its attempt to create a new man for Lawrence/Shaw/Chapman/ Ross/Ned/ T.E./ A.C.2 the work was a failure. A failure in the writing, but not in the attempt. It was the attempt that proved both Lawrence's salvation and his undoing. Salvation

because it gave him a hint of an identity which he adapted to. It was his undoing because this identity was taken from him due to his age and the need for a man of 46 to leave the service. Age is the ultimate product of self-referentiality that Lawrence could not escape from. Leaving the R.A.F. left Lawrence feeling depressed and at a loose end. Despite this he felt the need to write beginning to reawake. Through reworking The Mint, the introduction to life in the R.A.F., and printing it in the private version that he envisioned, would be able to return to the service life he had come to love. This follows the same pattern as his rewriting of the Seven Pillars manuscript. Faced with a crisis Lawrence once more retreated into the past through print.

There was the danger to himself that every word written along the journey to self-realization, every paragraph read and rediscovered was an agony in which a further piece of his awareness was exposed and rubbed raw because Lawrence found it wanting. He had experienced this at the end of an enterprise, the writing of Seven Pillars, before. In the case of Seven Pillars Lawrence needed to find that raw exposure, needed to find it wanting in order to justify the loathing that he felt for the "Arabian." Yet there could have been no Shaw without Lawrence, no singularity without duality, no master without a slave. No new self without the writer, no author without the reader, the ultimate reader being Lawrence/Shaw himself. This realization was a constant torment to Lawrence, a torment to be mulled over and polished, "crazy pelican" like, in rewrites, over and over again. To be cast in The Mint, the form of which resembles an aircraftman's uniform.



### Drawing on the Past

By drawing on past experiences, lived, read and written, Lawrence continuously reopened wounds, continuously reexamined and reinvented himself. He continuously hurt himself and laid himself open to hurt. Considering Lawrence's masochistic tendencies, here was an undoubted appeal in this danger.

Perhaps it is this sense of danger, this sense of vulnerability that has made Lawrence a figure for biographers, filmmakers and the simply curious. Perhaps it is these qualities that have placed Lawrence in a prominent place in our culture.

Ultimately I am reminded of the monster in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Shelley presented a tale in which a creature was sutured together from graveyard parts. The physical components were assembled. This is perhaps best defined as the inability deal with others' inability to see past the mask, the ugliness. Much as the monster was a victim of his looks, Lawrence was the victim of other's views. What was lacking in Lawrence's life was a willingness to settle, to settle for fame, to settle for notoriety, to settle for himself. Lawrence searched for the truth about himself, but misguidedly so, not knowing when to stop and accept matters. In his life as Shaw, it is reported that Lawrence developed considerable skills as a mechanic. This was due to his studying an engine and then stripping it down to its last nut and bolt. Then he felt that he had a thorough knowledge of what he was dealing with. He brought this approach to literature; it is evident in his criticism and in his own written work. It seems to also be what he attempted in life, adopting the mechanical means to a stripping down of his own life, his likes, his dislikes, his actions, his inactions, his

"truth" and his "untruth" stitching them together to construct t his life as Ross then as Shaw.

Truth can appear in many forms, and its interpretation lies within our own natures, both personally and culturally, for indeed both are part of the same thing, or process. Truth is nothing by itself, but the process, which allows us to arrive at a decision of truth, at a determination that something is by our lights, by our perceptions and past experiences true, is the actual important matter. The bridging of the gap between "true" and "untrue" is the part of "truth" that matters, it is the only part of reality that cannot be poisoned. The ends and the means may be toxic, but the distance between the two, between any two in the "true," untrue," "fact," fiction," "reader," "writer" equation is the area in which true discovery and creativity dwells. The Mint and the requirement for service life, a lowering of the self to accept no responsibility was Lawrence's attempt at building a new self, yet always the ghost of Lawrence hung over his efforts, recalled through his writing and the reality of his physical envelope. Through the writing of The Mint and the circumstances of its composition, Lawrence was not able to purify himself, as the old Lawrence was inescapable finding solace only in the penance of the Air Force. It is in the denial of this that Lawrence partook of his toxic morsel.

**Works Cited**

- Aldington, Richard. Lawrence of Arabia: A Biographical Enquiry. Chicago: Regnery, 1955.
- Adam, Paul. Les Echecs de T.E. Lawrence. ts, n.d.
- Allen, M.D. The Medievalism of Lawrence of Arabia. University Park (PA): The Pennsylvania State UP, 1991.
- Asher, Michael. Lawrence. The Uncrowned King of Arabia. London: Viking, 1998.
- Beckson, Karl and Arthur Ganz. Literary Terms: A Dictionary. New York: Farrar, 1975.
- Ben-Porat, Ziva. "The Poetics of Literary Allusion." PTL 1 (1976): 105-28.
- Boyle, Andrew. Trenchard. London: Collins, 1962.
- Brown, Dennis. The Modernist Self in Twentieth –Century English Literature: A Study in Fragmentation. London: Macmillan, 1989.
- Brown, Malcolm. "Behind the Genteel Façade." The Journal of the T.E. Lawrence Society. 6.2. 31-48.
- Brown, Malcolm and Julia Cave. A Touch of Genius: The Life of T.E.Lawrence. London: Dent, 1988.
- Buchan, John. Memory Hold the Door. Toronto: Musson, 1940.
- Carey, John. The Intellectuals and the Masses. London: Faber, 1992.
- Caton, Steven Charles. Lawrence of Arabia: A Film's Anthropology. Berkeley: U of California P, 1999.
- Coe, Richard. "All Done with Mirrors." The Vision of Jean Genet. New York:

Grove, 1968.

Cohn, Maren. "Reflective Heroes." The Waking Dream of T.E. Lawrence: Essays on His Life, Literature, and Legacy. Ed. Charles Stang. New York: Palgrave, 2002. 67-105

"Counterfeit or True?" Rev. of Lawrence of Arabia, Richard Aldington and The Mint by T.E. Lawrence. Times Literary Supplement. 18 Feb. 1955: n.p.

Coward, Noel. The Noel Coward Diaries. Ed. Graham Payn and Sheridan Morley. London: Phoenix, 2000.

Daniele, Paola. "The Mint di T.E. Lawrence: Come Documento e Come Confessione." (Tesi di Laurea, Istituto Universitario Orientale Napoli, 1992). 136 pp.

de Man, Paul. "Autobiography as De-Facement." The Rhetoric of Romanticism. New York: Columbia UP, 1984.

Derrida, Jacques. "Economimesis," Trans. Richard Klien, Diacritics 11(1981),

Derrida, Jacques. Mimesis des Articulations. Paris: Aubier Flammarion, 1975.

Derrida, Jacques. "Plato's Pharmacy." Trans. Barbara Johnson. Dissemination. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1981.

Dinshaw, Carolyn. Chaucer's Sexual Poetics. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1989.

Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory: An Introduction. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983.

Eliot, T.S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Norton Anthology of English Literature Major Author's Edition. Ed. M.H. Abrams et al. New York:

- Norton, 1968. 2608- 615.
- Forster, E.M. "The Mint by T.E. Lawrence." Listener 53 (17 February 1955): 279 – 80.
- Gallop, Jane. The Daughter's Seduction. Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1982.
- Graves, Robert. Lawrence and the Arabian Adventure. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1928.
- Graves, Robert. T.E. Lawrence to His Biographers. New York: Doubleday, 1938.
- Grosvenor, Charles. "The Subscriber's Seven Pillars of Wisdom." The T.E. Lawrence Puzzle. Ed. Stephen Tabachnick. Athens, Georgia: U of Georgia P, 1984.
- Hamacher, Werner, "The Reader's Supper: A Piece of Hegel." Diacritics 11,1981 52-67.
- Hartley, L.P. "The Mint: A Failed Masterpiece." The Listener: 14 April. 1955: 658 – 59.
- Hesiod. Theogony. Trans. Dortha Wender. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973.
- Henderson, Helene and Jay P. Pederson, eds. Twentieth Century Literary Movements Dictionary. Detroit: Omnigraphics, 2000.
- Holy Bible. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984.
- Homer. The Odyssey. Trans. T.E. Lawrence. Ed. Bernard Knox. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991.
- Housman, A.E. The Collected Poems of A.E. Housman. Ed. John Carter. New York: Holt, 1965.
- Hull, Keith. "Lawrence of The Mint, Ross of the R.A.F." South Atlantic Quarterly

74. (Summer 1975) 340 – 48.

Hyde, H. Montgomery. Solitary in the Ranks: Lawrence of Arabia as Airman and Private Soldier. London; Constable, 1977.

James, Lawrence. The Golden Warrior. London: Abacus, 1995.

Johnson, Anthony L. "Allusion in Poetry". PTL 1 (1976) 579 - 87.

King, Dean. Patrick O'Brian: A Life Revealed. New York: Holt, 2000.

Kipling, Rudyard. "Tommy." Norton Anthology of Poetry. Ed. Alexander Allison. New York: Norton, 1979. 435.

Knightley, Philip and Colin Simpson. The Secret Lives of Lawrence of Arabia. London: Panther, 1971.

Knowles, Patrick. An Handful with Quietness. Weymouth, Dorset: Hunt, n.d.

Larès, Maurice. T.E. Lawrence, La France et les français. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1980.

Lawrence, A.W. T.E. Lawrence by his Friends. London: Cape, 1937.

Lawrence, T.E. The Letters of Lawrence of Arabia. Ed. David Garnett. London: Cape, 1938.

Lawrence, T.E. The Letters of T.E. Lawrence. Ed. Malcolm Brown. London: Dent, 1988.

Lawrence, T.E. Minorities. Ed. J.M. Wilson. London: Cape, 1971.

Lawrence, T.E. The Mint. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987.

Lawrence, T.E. The Mint. London: Cape, 1955.

Lawrence, T.E. Letter. The Times. 22 August 1921.

Lawrence, T.E. Revolt in the Desert. New York: Doran, 1927.

- Lawrence, T.E. Seven Pillars of Wisdom. London: Cape, 1935.
- Lawrence and Arabia. Prods. Julia Cave and Issam Hasan Mihyar. BBC Omnibus and Jordan Television Corporation. 1986.
- Liddell Hart, Basil. "T.E. Lawrence" in Arabia and After. London: Cape, 1935.
- Lejeune, Philippe. On Autobiography. Trans. Katherine Leary. Minneapolis: U of Minneapolis P, 1989.
- Lownie, Andrew. John Buchan: The Presbyterian Cavalier. Toronto: McArthur, 2004.
- McDonnell, Denis. "A Durable Lawrence, T.E." Home Page. 25 August. 1999 <<http://www.denismcd.com/>>.
- McDonnell, Denis, Ed. T.E. Notes 2.4 Honesdale PA: N.D.
- McDonnell, Denis, Ed. T.E. Notes. 3.1 Honesdale, PA: ND.
- Mack, John. A Prince of Our Disorder. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1976.
- Marcus, Laura. Auto/Biographical Discourses. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994.
- Meyers, Jeffrey. "T.E. Lawrence: The Mechanical Monk." The T.E Lawrence Puzzle. Ed. Stephen Tabachnick. Athens, Georgia: U of Georgia P, 1984.
- Milton, John. Paradise Lost. Eds. M.H. Abrams et al. The Norton Anthology of English Literature: Major Authors Edition. New York: Norton, 1968. 594-701.
- Morris, Robert. Lawrence of Arabia: The Official 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Pictorial History. New York: Doubleday, 1992.



- Mousa, Sulieman. T.E. Lawrence: An Arab View. London: Oxford U.P. 1966
- Norris, Christopher. Derrida. London: Fontana, 1987.
- O'Brien, Philip. T.E. Lawrence: A Bibliography. Boston: Hall, 1988.
- O'Brien, Philip. T.E. Lawrence: A Bibliography. New Castle (DE): Oak Knoll P, 2001.
- Ocampo, Victoria. "Felix Culpa." Trans. Maria M. Alonso. The Journal of the T. E Lawrence Society, 10.1 (2000)
- O'Donnell, Thomas. "Romantic Will in Seven Pillars of Wisdom and The Mint." The T.E. Lawrence Puzzle. Ed. Stephen Tabachnick. Athens, Georgia: U. of G. Press, 1984.
- Oxford English Dictionary. Compact edition, Oxford; Oxford UP, 1971.
- Perri, Carmela. "On Alluding". Poetics 7 (1978): 289-307.
- Perrin, Noel. Dr. Bowdler's Legacy. Boston: Godine, 1992
- Said, Edward. Culture and Imperialism. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- Shakespeare, William. Romeo and Juliet. The Riverside Shakespeare. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans. Boston: Houghton, 1974.
- Smith, Robert. Derrida and Autobiography. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.
- Steel, Nigel and Peter Hart. Tumult in the Clouds: The British Experience of the War in the Air, 1914 – 1918. London: Coronet, 1997.
- Stewart, Desmond. T.E. Lawrence. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- Tabachnick, Stephen. Lawrence of Arabia: An Encyclopedia. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood P, 2004.
- Tabachnick, Stephen. T.E. Lawrence. Boston: Twayne, 1978.

- Tabachnick, Stephen. T.E. Lawrence: An Encyclopedia. Westport, CT: Greenwood P, 2004.
- Tabachnick, Stephen E. and Christopher Matheson. Images of Lawrence. London: Cape, 1988.
- Tennyson, Alfred. "The Lady of Shalott". Norton Anthology of English Literature. Major Authors Edition. Ed. M.H. Abrams et al. New York: Norton, 1968. 1846 -1850.
- Tunbridge, Paul. With Lawrence in the Royal Air Force. Sevenoaks, Kent: Buckland, 2000.
- Villars, Jean Beraud. T.E. Lawrence, or the Search for the Absolute. Trans. Peter Dawnay. New York: Duell, 1959.
- Weintraub Stanley and Rodelle Weintraub. Lawrence of Arabia: The Literary Impulse. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U.P. 1975.
- Whitman, Walt. Walt Whitman: The Complete Poems. Ed. Francis Murphy. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986.
- Williams, Andrew. "T.E. Lawrence and Tom Clancy". T.E. Notes ns 3.1 (1992) 3.
- Wilson, Jeremy. Lawrence of Arabia. London: Heineman, 1990.
- Wilson, Jeremy. Letter on Seven Pillars editions. 1 September, 2004.  
T.E.LawrenceDiscussionGroup,  
<http://www.TELAWRENCE@hermes.gwu.edu>.>
- Wilson, Jeremy. T.E. Lawrence. London: National Portrait Gallery, 1988.
- Wilson, Jeremy. Ed. T.E. Lawrence Studies. January 12 2005

<<http://www.telawrecne.info>>.

Yardley, Michael. Backing into the Limelight. London: Harrap, 1986.