

"THE TRUE CAUSE OF DOLLIE URQUART'S FALL:
COMPLEMENTARY PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF
LAWRENCE'S "THE PRINCESS"

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This essay attempts to defend Lawrence against the charge of cruelty to yet another woman character by arguing that once again his interest is much less political polemic than deft psychological portraiture. This essay argues further that such blame casting as there is in "The Princess" is directed by Lawrence not toward Dollie's mother but her father for his terrible detrimental role in the life of his daughter. This essay reads the story as an admirable psychological study of the results of Dollie's upbringing by him. Although essentially a psychological reading, it attempts to avoid being too reductive by finding its insights into this portrait of a woman in a number of different psychological theorists.

One of the saddest stories D.H. Lawrence ever told is that of the title character in "The Princess". Feminists less extreme than Faith Pullin and Kate Millet indict the storyteller as a misogynist, more or less so, for this portrayal of a woman humiliated by a man. However, it might be well argued that Lawrence should not be condemned for his sexual politics but praised for the keen psychology of this "strange picture her father had framed her in and from which she never stepped" (162). Some feminists contemptuously dismiss the argument that Dollie Urquhart is largely at fault for what Dominic Romero did to her up in the mountains. Certainly it is not good politics for any essay to "blame the victim". But those who would completely absolve Dollie ignore the heart of the plot and the achievement of its author: how compellingly Lawrence traces Dollie's dysfunctionality back through her to another man: her father.

It is not Lawrence but Dollie herself who denies the unarguable damage her father has done to her. For it is her father who has made her "sexless" and encouraged her infuriating hauteur. Yet, when early in the story men of a coarser type react to her expressions of "sexless beauty and its authority" with expressions of "phallic rage", "she decided it was the New England mother in her whom they hated" (163). Late in the story Domingo Romero will act out of such rage. Lawrence, however, portrays Dollie as essentially self-destroyed, by her father's mis-education and by her understandable repression of the unnatural intimacy between them.

It would appear that Lawrence had first-hand experience of such unnatural intimacy with the parent of the opposite sex, which his wife, Frieda, helped him understand in essentially Freudian terms. However, for us to fully understand Dollie's problem, no single psychological interpretation is sufficient.

Indeed, although the central tenet of Freud, the Oedipus Complex, seems the inevitable place to begin understanding the fall of Dollie Urquhart, this psychoanalytic theorist indicted by some feminists as a worse enemy than Lawrence heatedly objected to Jung's applying the name to the female child's complex on the grounds of its being so much less clear cut and serious than the male's.

Still, master and former pupil did agree on the principle.⁽¹⁾ And surely the disciples of both would concur that Colin Urquhart's transforming of his two year old daughter into a substitute for his deceased wife was largely responsible for the way Dollie developed. More to the point of Lawrence's tale, failed to develop. And this is the essence of Lawrence's story, as if he well appreciated a now common agreement among otherwise greatly disparate studies of the pre-adolescent female: the death of a mother can result in a general arrest of the pre-Oedipal girl's sexual development at this phase, where the mother is the object of strong affection and the father the rival for it. But what if this death should occur in the ensuing Oedipal phase, where these wishes are reversed? Many of these studies further agree that often the only recourse if these twin wishes should suddenly become fact is regression to the less stressful pre-Oedipal stage.

The reverse of such regression occurs in this story. Indeed, Colin not only encouraged his two year old daughter's progression to the Oedipal stage, he rushed it. The sad irony but simple psychological fact is that getting there too fast not only slowed but effectively ended Dollie's further development. Lawrence characterizes the grown-up Dollie as "childish" (160) for a better reason than her being "very dainty" and "nearly tiny in physique" (162): a lack of sexual maturity. Because she has had to grow up fast to become her father's partner, she never grows up fully. As Lawrence cogently diagnoses her life forever after, "She was always grown up; she never really grew up" (160). Because of their abnormal intimacy, forever after "there was an impossibility of intimacy with any other than her father" (161).

Such as that intimacy was. For, like the typical father and the typical child who has begun to learn society's moral imperatives, this unusual couple stopped well short of any intimacy nearly as sexually overt as that in *Sons and Lovers* between Mrs. Morel and her son Paul. Colin Urquhart, whose relationship with his wife showed him to be incapable of genuine intimacy of any sort, encouraged his daughter to even less of it in future relationships: "When I am dead there will only be you. And that is why, darling, you will never care for any of the people in the world very much" (161).

Brian Finney correctly surmises that Mrs. Morel "wants to keep" all her sons "virginal so they can remain her lovers without breaking the incest taboo" (27). Even more woefully immature at thirty-eight than Paul at twenty, Dollie "was relieved when her father died", for she can finally let go of

"her passion" for him(165). Such as it is, it is the only kind she knows; and limited as it is - and her acknowledgement of it - this is sufficient to inhibit the kind of relationship with the opposite sex Paul's mother finally begrudgingly allowed he must have. Although Dollie never comes as close as Paul Morel to admitting the unnatural character of that "passion", for the parent of the opposite sex, "like him she does acknowledge her emotional condition now: an empty vessel"(165). Her unresolved, and unwarranted, guilt, coupled with Colin's repeated insistence that she is far superior to other people, has caused her to deny any need for sexual intimacy and thus to forfeit any chance for a normal woman-man relationship.

In terms at times identical to those used by Lawrence, the uncategorizable Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing says that "In the absence of a spontaneous, natural, creative relationship the 'inner self' thus develops an overall sense of... impoverishment" (*The Divided Self*, 96). Although Dollie is not the clinical schizoid Laing is speaking of, Lawrence shows her as suffering an equally horrible estrangement from self. He would certainly agree with Laing's assertion that this "unembodied self"(71) cannot allow the passion that engages the "real self"(89). And, again, Lawrence shows this denial of the need for emotional engagement to be the living legacy of a father almost psychotically self-sufficient.

Interested as Lawrence was in Celtic mythology, he might well have known that in it the title of princess bestowed upon Dollie by her "Celtic hero"(159) father has a deeper meaning than merely a designation of royalty. Those familiar with Jung's thought would definitely recognize the princess as one of the many symbols in this mythology signifying what Jung archetyped as the anima, the female side in man. According to Jung, a man shows great wisdom when he recognizes this complementing anima within himself. Colin's insistence upon an inner "demon" that "is a man's real self, and a woman's real self"(161) seems to suggest admirable insight into the human psyche generally and a particular congruence with Lawrence's dearly held notion of "isolate selfhood".

However, Lawrence portrays this "demon" is the core of Colin's personality not as the deepest part of human personality but as another example of the "disastrous modern egoism of the individual" decried in his posthumously published essay "We Need One Another"(188), functioning, ironically, more like Jung's "persona": to protect itself from contact with the anima and with that other crucial component of the unconscious archetyped by Jung as the shadow, "all those uncivilized desires and emotions that are incompatible with social standards and our ideal personality"(Fordham, 50). And what desire more uncivilized than incest?

As protection from both shadow and animus (the male side in a woman), which in Dollie are especially threatening, she has been all too successful in developing this persona. What for Jung was an archetype was in the age of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* a literal mask, a resonant wood device that projected the voice and by its colour markings just as broadly conveyed the actor's temper. Oppositely, Dollie's figurative mask hides what Laing calls the "real self", not just from public scrutiny but self-awareness. Indeed, effectively she becomes this persona, which shields her, far beyond any reasonable and healthy deference to superego, from all contact with the animus and shadow buried deep within.

The price for this denial of significant parts of personality, for becoming in Laing's term a "false self", is shown by Lawrence to be terribly steep: an inability to form meaningful relationships with people; indeed, even to see them as more than "a nominal reality" ("The Princess", 160).

This is precisely what she has reduced herself to by refusing any real intimacy with a man for many years after her father's death, remaining "utterly intact", retaining "that quality of the sexless fairies"(164), acknowledging the desirability of marriage, but only as a social convenience, "in the blank abstract", with "the man ... a property of her own mind rather than a thing in himself"(166). Any reality in a man withered "before the look of sardonic ridicule"(167).

However, Dollie is well worth Lawrence's writing a story about because she does not remain impervious to her need for emotional connection, as her father did even during his short marriage. Only a few months after the death of this man who in his wife's judgement "just wasn't there"(159), the "sexless" Dollie meets a man who seems the nearly literal embodiment of the unacknowledged components of her personality. Emma Jung, adding to her husband's insight that the animus is the complementary male within the female come alive (2), says the animus can be any male who gives "flashes of knowledge"(27) to a woman. Domingo Romero does so unmistakably: "Tourists come and go", we are told by Lawrence, "but they rarely see anything, inwardly. None of them ever saw the spark at the middle of Romero's eye." But Dollie "caught it one day"(168). And soon after, in a moment of total candour, she permits herself to see in him much if not all of a real man, a man with the "power to help her... across a distance"(170).

Unfortunately, although the feeling "was very thrilling", the diminished person she is needs to reduce this flesh and blood threat. To her credit, doing so isn't easy. Although he has fallen to the economic status of paid guide to the rich, the unconventional Dollie sees no obstacle (171) on that score to this fallen Mexican gentleman almost as impoverished emotionally as he is financially. Still, despite a "subtle inter-recognition"(170) she will not let the "spark" in his eye "in the midst of the blackness of static despair"(168) ignite her.

"Almost she could more easily marry one of the nice boys from Harvard or Yale"(171) at the dude ranch, and thus for Lawrence not a real ranch. A deep down part of Dollie must silently agree with Lawrence's loud complaint about such places, for the desire persists in her to be taken out of there. Indeed, she resolves the ambivalence marking so many characters, female and male, in his fiction by acknowledging only that. She asks to be taken not out of herself but only away from the ranch on an outing to the Rockies. In contemporary idiom, an out-ing indeed. But what exactly will out in her? Otherwise put, what fascinates her in the mountain setting, which, as usual, Lawrence is so masterful at using to reflect the character's inner landscape? From the ranch she sees that "the aspens were already losing their golden leaves" and "high up, the spruce and pine seemed to be growing darker" and, in a prefiguration of the story's near climax, the "oak scrub on the heights were red like gore"(172).

The landscape so perceived is the external embodiment of that deathly emotional landscape she has acknowledged in Romero if not fully in herself. Indeed, this "sense she had that death was not far from him made him "possible" to her"(170). Perhaps for a brief time she also sees in Romero at least a glimmer of the redemptive power Lawrence saw in the Rockies and Jung surely would have as well in this awesome natural force.

Lawrence's description of the scenery as they ascend into these mountains suggests that if he didn't know Jungian psychology he sometimes thought in kindred terms. And here as so often he, like Jung, shows himself adept in transforming idea into image, occupying himself especially with light and even more with shadow. For Jung the shadow is the archetype of the dark side of the human personality we don't want to know but must not ignore. For Lawrence, too, there is much that is discomforting, even disintegrating, in darkness, but for those who will see it, there is less, borrowing Freud's terms, thanatos than eros in this intimidating domain deep within us.(3) And of course, for Lawrence, even more than Freud, eros has a much broader sense than the overtly sexual. Without it there can be no full life.

Alas, for Dollie a full life is a kind of death. For this all too civilized Western white woman "the shadows of the adobe pueblo"(174) just beyond the ranch emblematic things deeper and darker than the conscious mind, thus things to be greatly feared. As they ascend further, the light she has until now exclusively lived in quickly begins to fade, "leaving her under profound shadow" that, the reader is forewarned some pages later, "Soon ... would crush her down completely"(185).

Dollie's seemingly purely negative perception of the shadows would seem to make her journey purely perverse. When we were told half a dozen pages earlier that her notorious wilfulness is manifest in "a fixed desire to go over the brim of the mountains, to look into the inner chaos of the Rockies"(178), "to look over the mountains into their secret heart"(172-3), as Lawrence put it earlier still, likely he intended for us to understand that is

essentially how she perceives both the shadow and the animus in herself. But is her motive totally negative? Does she see the journey as inevitably towards the death of her last chance for real life? Unlike her guide, does she see no possibility of the death instead of what Laing denominates her "false" or "disembodied self"? When very early in the journey a "chill entered the Princess's heart as she realised what a tangle of decay and despair lay in the virgin forests"(175) does she not win credit at least for reading the signposts along the way honestly and accurately?

If, after all, perversity is the only fair characterization of her motive, then at least it is a perversity qualified. For this daughter of a "spectre"(159) does lose some heart in her climb up "the stark corpse slope" of the mountains "empty of life or soul"(181) and needs to be encouraged by her guide.

What is his motive for encouraging her? This living embodiment of her anima and vibrant shadow has been nearly reduced to a spectre himself. Lawrence initially described the excessively "sombre" Domingo Romero as someone close to moribundity incarnate. Dressed in black, with "black eyes", he is one of those ruined, denatured primitives seen in Lawrence before, with "nowhere, nowhere at all for their energies to go"(168). However while both Dollie and Domingo are inflicting a deathly torture upon themselves, he at least is intent on ending it, one way or another; that is, getting back to life or else going on to his death. His murder is effectively a suicide, after failing to generate real warmth in her with whatever spark of real life is left in him.

Although Dollie wanted "warmth" and "to be taken away from herself, at the same time, perhaps more deeply than anything she wanted to keep herself intact. ... It was a wild necessity in her that no one, particularly no man should have any rights or power over her"(188). Like so many characters in Lawrence, Dollie could not help being attracted to something totally foreign to her. But for the "false self" at her core the inner reality and outer embodiment of both her shadow and her animus were finally too threatening, too overwhelming. As Frieda Fordham says about the dangers of repressing the shadow, "in the unconscious it seems to acquire strength and grow in vigour, so that when the moment comes (as usually happens) when it must appear, it is more dangerous and more likely to overwhelm the rest of the personality"(51). As Laing says, in terms closer to Lawrence's story, the disembodied person's "autonomy is threatened with engulfment" by "a real live dialectical relationship"(80).

This threat is symbolized in Dollie's nightmare in the mountain cabin: "She dreamed it was snowing, and the snow was falling on her through the roof ... and she was going to be buried alive." "She awoke with a sudden convulsion, like pain" Lawrence says, and "Her heart seemed unable to beat." Her unspoken wish is strong enough that Domingo hears it: "Oh, would

not someone help her heart to beat?" For a short time, and the only time in her life, the shadow in her is fully woken: "she is given over to this thing" (188), in act now not just in desire, taking the leap into the "secret heart" of her darkness, until now seen only emblematically in the Rockies. For Lawrence, such an inward journey is always painful but often finally a regenerating act. But, again, what for one person is the source of life is for another death. And Dollie cannot long deny her father's injunction to keep the demon at her centre unassailable.

Regretting by the light of daybreak Domingo's having "got hold of her, some unrealized part of her which she never wished to realize" (193), this deeply maladjusted woman realizes the only way to break his hold is to strike the "cruel blow" (189) of trivializing their sexual intimacy. Although this meant cutting off her only source of warmth in that freezing cabin, on a deeper level of turning her back on those newly illuminated dark places deep within, it was her only chance, as Lawrence says sounding much like Laing, "to regain possession of all herself" (190).

Having struck her in effect a murderous blow, she is once again, in her distorted sense of the term, free, "the Princess, and a virgin intact." But what price freedom? To have been where she has been and return with her "false self" entirely restored can be achieved only at the terrible price her father also suffered: to become "not a little mad". This is the means of her transforming her guilty fantasy into an innocent nightmare, into a mere "accident in the mountains, when a man went mad and shot my horse from under me, and my guide had to shoot him dead." Two halves of one man, of course: her attempted destroyer and attempted saviour. And finally, of course, what is salvation and what destruction is Dollie's to decide, correctly or gravely mistakenly. While she admits to the dude ranch owner that since then "I have never felt quite myself" (196), she has come back close enough to what Laing calls not just the "false" but the "imaginary self" (89), that she need never again fear nor hope to be brought close to her "real self". By contorting the heavy burden of what was more than a wonderful sexual fantasy into a simple ugly nightmare, she has given up more than she knows. She does finally marry, but "an elderly man" (196), who is most unlikely to threaten, as Laing puts it, "the imagined advantages the disembodied self" perceives "of safety, ... isolation, and hence freedom from others, self-sufficiency, and control" (78).

Laing goes on to articulate what is the greatest fear of Lawrence's Dollie Urquhart: "the full, substantial, living reality of others is an impingement which is always liable to get out of hand" (80). Indeed, he sounds much like Lawrence in "We Need One Another" succinctly generalizing the fundamental conflict between women and men in most of the fiction: "It is in relationship to one another," Lawrence says, "that they have their true individuality." He adds, "without the real contact, we remain more or less nonentities" (191). Or as Dollie sees others, "a nominal reality" ("The Princess", 160).

Since this is her unacknowledged deathly wish for herself, Dollie will probably be quite happy married to an old man. She has succeeded once before at holding a large part of herself back in an intimate relationship with an old man, whose flesh when his poor wife "touched it, did not seem quite the flesh of a real man" (160). For all too brief a time Dollie did touch a real man and was touched into life by him.

Perhaps no other writer had a better intuitive grasp than Lawrence of the potentially enormous emotional profit in such an engagement and the great chance lost in ending it. "The Princess" fairly proves Lawrence's ability to rise above political polemic in his fiction to create a finely realized psychological portrait. Too rich for satisfactory explanation by any single psychological theory.

ENDNOTES

1. In *The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex*, consistent with his introduction there of his pronouncement that "Anatomy is destiny", Freud insisted the girl child is not nearly as affected by this complex. However, he did concede that she resents the mother, who has not provided her with a penis and who herself seems a castrated, and thus impotent male. The child replaces this socially unsuitable, and psychically quite uncomfortable, resentment with a wish for a baby by her father, he theorized further. In turn, she goes on to displace this taboo desire into affection for an acceptable man and beyond that the symbolic certification - indeed, the literal possession - of his affection: a child of her own. Better still, a male child. It is not just strict followers of Freud who suggest that a common substitute for this biological reliance upon a man is the empowerment more directly afforded by the financial independence a career brings. Another substitute, as in the case of Hedda Gabler, is power over a man. Or over all men, as some critics insist Lawrence feared.
2. For Jungians, one's shadow must always be of the same gender. This essay establishes a man as the embodiment of it in Dollie Urquhart in order to be more congruent with Lawrence's immediate intentions and his general thinking. For students of Jung, this liberty might seem to establish a closer correspondence between shadow and animus than Jung likely intended. However, for those with an interest in Lawrence, it should do more to shed light than to further obscure the debate about his sexual politics.

3. The internal struggle between eros and thanatos that so occupied Freud is especially recurrent in Lawrence's fiction, essays, and letters and perhaps most emphatically so in those writings whose focus is the American Southwest and Mexico. An extreme example, which fascinated Lawrence as much as it did Huxley, is the self-flagellating Catholic Penitences, in whose company Lawrence explicitly puts Romero, calling him one of those who have "turned on their own selves, and worshipped death through self-torture" (168).

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"RESTRUCTURING THE LAWRENCE IMAGE: RECONSIDERING WOMEN IN LOVE, THE PLUMED SERPENT AND LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER IN THE LIGHT OF FEMINISM"

Pamela Stadden

There have been various attacks upon Lawrence's literary reputation. Lawrence's representation of women is perhaps the most criticised aspect of his work, with formal criticism beginning as early as 1953 with Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. Some critics even recognize John Middleton Murry's disparaging comments about Lawrence and women in *Son of Woman* as early feminist criticism. (Balbert, 4) However, the point of integration between feminist criticism and the Lawrence text is not nearly so important as the intense debate that has arisen concerning Lawrence and feminism. Lawrence criticism up until the 1980s has generally represented him as a misogynist writer. Only within the last few years there has been a resurgence of Lawrence philosophy through complementary readings of Lawrence texts. For example, Hillary Simpson, and Sheila MacLeod acknowledge Lawrence doctrine and yet maintain a faithfulness to feminism.

The structure of this particular study is meant to follow a similar pattern. I feel Lawrence ideology has been generally ignored, especially in earlier essays such as Millett's *Sexual Politics*. Lawrence's theories should maintain some level of credibility within the critical interpretations of his work. However, as a woman, I sympathize with criticism that rejects the continual emphasis on the phallus as an instrument of knowledge.

Early feminist criticism, such as Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, tends to encompass two areas of concern: first of all, a feminist reading generally conceptualizes the text as the authoritative voice of women's experience. Lady Chatterley's submissive nature then becomes a comment about the rightful behaviour of all women; a feminist reading becomes a close reading of the text, paying little attention to other areas of discourse, i.e. essays, letters and biographies.¹ And secondly, the feminist is generally unwilling to separate Lawrence the writer from Lawrence's fictional characters. Biography becomes a major instrument of interpretation. This is Millett's greatest mistake. As tempting as it is to mix Lawrence's life with the text, (even Frieda does this in her autobiography), the two mediums must remain separate. Even if Birkin closely resembles

1 Lawrence was not part of the New Critical Movement. It is too difficult to understand Lawrence's ideas from one text alone. Lawrence also tended to contradict himself as he grew older. See the Simpson essay.