

THE LITERATURE OF SURVIVAL

by

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Abstract

The major theme of this thesis is that survival is a human issue that goes beyond the definition of mere existence and that certain literary works are expressions of the issue of human survival. Survival is defined as the awareness and sensitization of the individual to the implications of his social milieu and his ability to act in response to those implications. The importance of basic survival is obvious to the individual but the relationships between physical, social and human survival require elaboration in order to comprehend how the writer of fiction makes his contribution and how it is important.

In order to coordinate human survival and creative literature it is necessary to understand the evolution of the social milieu and the individual's relationships in the social structure. The methods of socialization and the establishment of identity for the individual are the elements that comprise social life. Language, the most accessible means of incorporating individuals into social structures, can be used as either a tool or as a weapon. Understanding the relationships that define language and using language in specific ways result in establishing how much control is being used and to what end. The creative writer has the same basis for constructing his fiction as the individual has for constructing his life. It is here that the literature of survival has its birth.

Kazantzakis, Lawrence and Vonnegut represent the literature of survival. Textual analysis indicates that all three authors coincide

in the need for advocating rebellion in their characters as a means of surviving within their given environments. Kazantzakis represents the voices of the ancestors as the unwritten history of his characters. Captain Michales and Zorba are both figures from the past, barely socialized human beings who respond immediately and directly to their environment. They do not need to learn the art of rebellion, they respond to oppression directly as the contravention of what it means to be a man. Lawrence's characters defy the controls that want to nullify them in subtler ways. Lawrence uses the primitive sources of sensuality and sexuality to bring his characters to the awareness that survival depends on trusting less articulate centres of the body than the educated mind. Vonnegut makes use of the absurd to establish in his characters the need to rebel. The reader of survival literature learns how other individuals have managed to refute their history and rebel against social control; he also learns why.

The conclusions drawn from the application of social theory to creative literature are that rebellion is a necessary act for creating the terms of human survival and that responsibility for oneself and to others can only be accomplished by the risking of social survival. The individual must make his own choices in human connection rather than accepting the socially defined relationships. Rebellion destroys old forms of relating but it also creates the need to establish new ones. The individual needs confirmation of his identity in order to exist. For Kazantzakis, it was the 'thin red line' of blood that confirmed identity; for Lawrence, it was the phoenix rising from his ashes; Vonnegut's confirmation is found in the universal sadness relieved only by faint

laughter. The literature of survival succeeds in providing the reader with the essential information for his own human survival. The language sensitizes the reader to his environment and encourages him to use the means available - the ability to refuse - so that he may be willing to extend himself beyond his socialized beginnings and create his own history.

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Introduction

I intend, in the course of this thesis, to bring together two different ideas and unite them in discussing a third form, the novel. The first concept is that of survival, a common enough word but one that only finds application in the broadest of terms. The other idea is that of language. I realize that language is usually thought of as a solid and substantial form in the world but language as such only exists in use, otherwise we are discussing the concept of language. While both of these ideas have a multitude of applications, I am concerned with the development of the two of them in the context of the literary art form, especially the novel. What small insight I am endeavouring to develop will not be limited to the application as I have made it. I am not saying that Kazantzakis, Lawrence and Vonnegut are the only authors who fit into the category of survival literature. The concept is a means not an ends to discussion of the novel.

The other aspect I am trying to explore, and this is vital to the concept of survival and language, is the involvement of that elusive character known as the 'reader'. This perspective implies that the reading of the literature of survival is not simply an exercise in personal cultivation or enjoyment. On the contrary, the act of reading this form of literature involves the reader in an intimate and dynamic relationship to what is read. Everyone who engages in the act of reading for purposes of study or recreation is a reader, a subjective and personal viewer of the material at hand. The course of literary study is, for many, to remove this subjective element altogether and replace it with an objective observer who simply processes the information read. He is neither changed nor moved by the act of reading. Although we do not

adhere with total tenacity to Aristotle's theorems of absolute Truth or Beauty in the present day, his aesthetic still rules the study of literature in the form of dividing the subjective participant and the intellectual encounter. In fact, the principled denial of involvement cannot occur unless we give over the scanning of literature to computers, thus saving ourselves the onerous task of actually engaging what we know, what we have experienced with the fictional material as it is written. I would agree that the process of reading does not end on the completely subjective note but I would argue that, and this appears to be the point that is not conceded, it begins there. The quality of the investigation has as much to do with the quality of that subjective response as it has to do with the application of objective criteria.

I perceive art as the last vestige of magic in our culture. I realize how dangerous it is to use such a non-scientific word in the age of science but it must be agreed that the study of art, be it music, painting or literature, is not the same thing as designing a rocket or building a high-rise apartment. We use language as a mediator between the world out there and world we feel is inside. Literature goes one step beyond this into the fictionalized world out there and the fictionalized world inside. Magic is not a controller, it is a mediator in the dark realm of fear and anxiety about what is going on out there. We know that everything is not as it should be yet there is the same feeling of helplessness that has been with us since the beginnings of the human community. Apparently we have gained significant control over the outside world with the aid of science but we have been unable to acquire the same control over the inside world despite the attempts of science to bring the subjective experience into the realm of objective criteria.

I would maintain that survival - once the realm of physical necessity - has become much more than that; it has become an art form in itself. In a sense it is creative living and, when necessary, creative dying. We have to learn how to survive creatively because our culture does not provide the information directly. We have to learn how to chose from the possibilities present; in other words, we must decide how we are going to live in and cope with the world as it exists. In order to make such decisions one must know where one stands, how one got there and, more importantly, who one is. We do not act alone and we do not survive alone. That is the basis from which I intend to fill out a concept of survival that is illuminated by certain works of literature. Literature alone does not accomplish connection; the present lived situation of the reader must engage the material of the fictional writer in his time and place.

I intend to outline certain trains of thought that lead to the rather special situation of twentieth century man. It is not just that has led to the overworked concept of alienation but rather the actual conditions of lived experience. I maintain that the condition and the attendant effects of that condition have always been a part of the definition of human; the degree to which alienation can be developed results from the social and historical processes that arise out of the catch-all called 'progress'. It appears as though we are trapped in the alienated condition and yet I believe that, because we have set the trap for ourselves with the help of our ancestors, we can spring the trap without catching our toes, or at least not all of them.

It may be that I am holding forth a hopeful prognosis for humanity, one that is not completely justified by the conditions as they exist.

The fact that we have endured, given all the situations that could have eliminated us as a species, and that we continue to survive despite our own obvious attempts to commit environmental suicide convinces me that there remains the ability to generate alternate ways of living and being in the world. The fact that we still create art, that we still write and read literature, is an indication that we still are endeavouring to explore ourselves and our relationships in the human sense. Not that all artistic work fulfils the creative and connective framework that encourages human beings to explore their possibilities as human beings. Much art merely reiterates the known and often the negative aspects of human life. It is the other kind that I am concerned with in the following pages. Every novelist explores what he considers to be the 'human condition', but some do it with more power of perception and communicate that perception with more intuition; they create magic as opposed to discourse.

Chapter 1 The Process of Becoming Human

Survival is a very personal word. It means being alive and aware of the fact that one is alive. The most common use of the word is in its more general application to larger systems such as societies, civilizations or impersonal subjects that can be scrutinized and investigated with the hopes of solving problems inherent in their structure. In such a way one manages to explore possibilities of the failure to survive without actually risking one's personal involvement. The main reason that one does not want to become involved or implicated in the question of personal survival and the context of surviving is one of anxiety about the final outcome.¹ Surviving implies that possibility that one won't survive and that is a terrifying situation for isolated individuals struggling, as it were, to maintain some kind of identity and sense of personal value in situations that do not encourage a feeling of participation in the whole of humanity. Many of the activities of daily life contribute directly to survival although the persons involved in the activities may never think of them as such. Involvement in the economic system of any society, as a producer, consumer or servicer, indicates participation in the process of survival. Contact and interaction with other people through conversation or shared activities extends the individual into social survival. No one considers the risks involved in such activities nor the implications of those activities unless personal disaster strikes and the individual finds that the simplest of personal needs cannot be easily acquired. Consideration is then given to areas that were a matter of habit and expectation. This kind of social shock is one method of bringing to the attention of the individual his actual

relative position in the schemes of the world and the tenuous nature of his right to survive.

There is another way of drawing out the concerns that should affect those people who are engaged in a system of apparent comfort and ease. The other faculty besides the rational intellect that man possesses in a high state of development is the imaginative intellect. It is the imagination that allows him to jump out of his skin and into the skins of others in the world, at least on a temporary basis. With this imagination the individual can engage a system of possibilities and so prepare himself for changes in the actual world by gaining insights into conditions even as they are being lived. Lack of imagination can be a great hindrance in the struggle for survival. The inability to perceive other alternatives can be devastating.

Imagination is not activated beneficially without recourse to existing information. Imagination, like any other social skill, is developed and heightened by practice and the gathering of information. Primarily, it is a projective skill that re-forms in-formation that has already been processed by the analytical constructs of the individual concerned. The information that any individual has access to in any society is the history of past events, the current ideology of human relationships, and the actual experience of being alive at that given time and in that given place. It is from this material that the individual constructs the world as experienced and the world of possibility. In a sense the world must always be imagined as it is being lived because selection of information and even information itself are postulates of a human system of reason. This mode of perception is actually automatic imagination rather than creative imagination. The difference is that the former is the given

set of what constitutes the real life and the latter is the extrapolation of the information beyond the boundaries of the given structures.

Imagination is a strong bond between individuals. Even in the exchange of conversation or gestures the ability to imagine that one knows what the other means by those words and movements is essential for communication to occur. One must prepare oneself in the task of comprehending the other person with whom one shares the world. Much of the labour is accomplished through the basic socializing processes that every individual experiences as part of growing into adulthood. Beyond that lies the accidental developments and the desires for exploration into the world of the unknown quantities of life that are the possibilities and the impossibilities as they are known or conceived. Ruth Benedict concurs in this but her emphasis is on the impossibilities.

The life history of the individual is first and foremost an accommodation to the patterns and standards traditionally handed down in his community. From the moment of his birth the customs into which he is born shape his experience and his behaviour. By the time he can talk, he is the little creature of his culture, and by the time he is grown and able to take part in its activities, its habits are his habits, its beliefs are his beliefs, its impossibilities his impossibilities.²

In terms of becoming human, it is the possibilities that are of importance. Possibilities are open areas implying the potential for growth and expansion. To think in terms of impossibilities is to negate the process of being alive, one can only accept and obey what one is told. Humanness is dependent on the ability to expand beyond the boundaries of the self; to perceive, conceive and possibly execute more vital connections among people. This is the basic human goal.

Survival

Survival is more than existence. As much as anything, it is a talent for utilizing the information of a given environment in such a way that the probabilities of remaining alive, despite changes in living conditions or unpredictable events, are increased. This talent must be developed by all the higher order of animals as they mature because they live in a network of possibilities with other species. They must eat or be eaten according to their species' characteristics, hunt or be hunted. Except in exceptional circumstances there are no higher species that feed on their own kind so, generally speaking, they must engage themselves with the habits and abilities of other kinds of animals. Zoologists use the term 'instinct' to cover the basic behaviour patterns that contribute to the survival of a species. It is the pre-existing information that appears to be coded into genetic structures; the basis upon which future activities will elaborate the ability of the animal to survive. Animals with a proclivity for being eaten reproduce with greater speed and/or numbers than their predators or, conversely, they develop more efficient methods of avoiding teeth and claws. Natural selection efficiently sorts out the non-survivors from the survivors without recourse to any form of value judgement, be they species or individuals of a species. ³

There is only one animal that does not belong to this value-free situation; the one animal that is not eaten by any other species except through carelessness or accident. Man occupies both the natural environment and the environment of his own creation called society. Of the two, society has come to be the most crucial for the purposes of survival of the species and the individual. It is only with the introduction

of the self-conscious animal that the conscious struggle for survival begins.

The abstraction which we call "society" does not exist as an entity, but the power relationships that define society are real and verifiable. The question is, how did these relationships come into existence in the first place and what functions do they fulfil for the species known as homo sapiens? What does exist as a tangible reality within the constructs of a society is the individual. Given the reality of a social order two types of survival are in question. One is the survival of the society and its systems of power relationships, the other is the survival of the individual and his personal systems. The survival of a society partly guarantees the survival of its members; the survival of the individual in no way acts as a guarantor of the continuance of a society.

Society provides a measure of protection for a species that is ill-equipped organically for hunting or defense. The unique development of the brain as a tool for drawing together possibilities found in the natural environment, the ability to utilize objects in functions other than the obvious, such as rocks for weapons, also brought out the problem of self-awareness. Animals may become frightened in natural situations but it is a response to and not a construction of what is frightening. Man became aware of the urge to stay alive but also aware of the fact that there were forces "out there" that actually could and would eliminate him as a participant in life. The only viable way to survive was to form bonds with those sharing common experience. Society provided the pool for developing and retaining experiences that extended beyond the individual but were accessible to him in the social experience. Survival skills acquired through generations could become cumulative and transmittible.

Undoubtedly the development of society coincided with the accumulation of ancestors who could also be called 'history'. The means of retaining the ancestors as a vital part of the social group is through language, or symbolic representation. The ancestors function as a stabilizing force in an otherwise chaotic world. Self-consciousness implies an awareness of birth and death, both in terms of others and of oneself. The ancestors make sense out of past events in the present; they explain things and establish precedence. Group history or group ancestry unites all the members of that group into cohesive patterns, a necessary condition for a society to exist. Every individual must make the commitment to the group through his actions and his beliefs so that he may, in turn, receive the commitment of the group to his existence.

In the earliest forms of society, the subsistence societies, each member of the group could comprehend all of the survival techniques available to the group as a whole. The individual was in control of his culture and was controlled by it. There were no strangers or outsiders, the links among the tribe were immediate and vital. Each individual experienced birth, growth, maturation and death as part of the tribe's and his own natural processes. All of these aspects of life were happening every day of the individual's life. History was experienced directly through the repetition of common experience and continual use of accumulated survival skills. In such a society where there is little surplus of the basic necessities of life, there can be little change in the routine relationships within the group. Inter-dependence is a vital factor amongst members of the group. All things, including the ancestors, are held in common. Each individual feels that he had been history as he watched the birth of new members; that he was history in the daily

experiences around him; and that he would become history as the ancestors had.

Societies develop and change around increases in population and increases in the ability of the population to acquire surplus materials.⁴ Such changes in the basic material conditions of surviving within the group initiates new methods of interacting among members of the group. Areas of accumulated knowledge become areas of specialization for certain members of the group to the exclusion of other members. Society still relies on the common history and common beliefs to maintain itself but the real world of individual experience begins to break into sections of available experience. Specialization means that some members of the group do not have the same access to the information as do other members of the group. The individual emerges the same as but different from other individuals within the same larger structure. The ancestors may still be common but reinforcement through daily activity and experience is lost to the individual.

At this point in time, society ceases to be simply the means through which a group may acquire survival needs from the natural environment, sharing in the small surpluses and also the scarcities. As George Herbert Mead points out,

In the primitive society where everybody is related to everybody else, a surplus as such has no meaning. The things are distributed in accordance with definite custom, everybody shares the surplus.⁵

Common experience becomes scarcer in actual fact as the specialization of activities in the group grows more distinct. When experiences of the whole group are no longer available to all members of the group then there is a lapse in the communication of personal identity and assurance

that once emanated from the whole group. Language replaces the actual experience of group co-operation as the central issuing body of information within a society. Before, language had been used as the reinforcer of what was already known through experience by each member of the group. Because that common experience is no longer available to every person, language assumes the place of common experience. Surplus relationships and relationships built on necessity do not have the same basis in reality. It becomes necessary to create new ways for members of a society to interact with each other and to validate those new relations through specific language. The external world of actual experience in the communal sense is replaced by internal experience as expressed in language and called social attitudes. To remain a functioning member of the more complex sets of relationships, the individual must adhere to the social beliefs that he is informed are the common attitudes of the entire group.

Even as the processes that were to dominate the social life of any individual involved in maintaining his existence were forming into rigid contracts that superceded individual participation, other areas of social involvement and social action were also coming into their own. That which had been the collective activity of mediating with those invisible forces and powers outside of the society separated itself out of the collage of daily living into an explicit area of specialization. In the beginning, it was called magic but as it moved into the institutionalized form it became known as religion. Malinowski's definition of the difference between magic and religion indicates the direction that society, and the individual's participation in that society, takes when the one supercedes the other. He states that magic is based on the assumption that superior powers can be controlled if the appropriate means are applied through

ritual and incantation. The failure to accomplish the control of the forces is rationalized by assuming that the wrong words were used or that one of the participants failed to prepare himself properly. Religion, on the other hand, is based on man's powerlessness in the face of superior forces and requires the intervention of other forces presumably benevolent towards the supplicants. The ability to practice magic was given to the entire group whereas religion imposed an intermediary set of experts whose task was to filter both upward and downward the participation of the group with the gods.

While in the magical act the underlying idea and aim is always clear, straight-forward, and definite, in the religious ceremony there is no purpose directed towards a subsequent event.⁶

The accumulation of knowledge had the same affect as the accumulation of surplus goods in that something had to be done to control and maintain the new balances created out of the new conditions and relationships. A society of individuals who believe that they can control the real forces around them and deal directly with the powers that threaten them is vastly different from a social group that believes in its impotence in the face of external forces. The latter requires formalized methods of containing its panic in the face of adversity. The more information about the world that is available, the greater the number of variables that must be taken into consideration when predicting future events. Certainty about the world vanishes as the variables increase. Magic moved out of the sphere of religion and came to reside, as it always had, in the individual and his ability to act out the appropriate rituals in the specific instance as it related to him. When the individual and the tribe were indivisible, that is, inter-dependent without recourse

to intense specialization of individuals, magic was the group experience with each person's participation reflecting a definite, common goal. Specialization and social distinctions arising out of specialized activity separated the communal group into much smaller components, finally ending in the total isolation of the individual from all others in the immediacy of being alive and present in the world. Magic remained as a personal power but religion became a manifestation of the group's power as mediated by specialists.

Music, dance, drawings and language are all means of making magic. Magic is made whereas religion is practiced. The filtering down of the system of means becomes 'art' when they are used in the same way that the original makers of magic utilized them, in the communication of imagination and the reconciliation of the world as perceived and the world as experienced. Religion utilized the same means but, as the religion became formalized and institutionalized, so did the means. Language became cant and drawings stylized and static.⁷ It is not that art is magic but rather that the ability to express control over the exterior world through the manipulation of form stabilizes a discrepancy between what one knows and what one feels. The invisible world of the "interior" is made visible to the "outside" world for others to enjoy.

Historically, magic and art are not isolated procedures. Each requires communal energy to mediate the unknown and make it work on society's behalf. In the human world the prime source of energy resides in human beings, since human energy can be utilized to transform other energies to the purposes demanded by the needs of a particular world. Energy is power in reserve. Other sources of energy must be extracted and controlled from the outside world. Magic and art gave purpose to

the energies from within the group that sought control over the forces of the natural process that surrounded it. When man left the natural world for the world of self-consciousness he did not destroy that world but rather he had to carry it around within himself all of the time. The greater his isolation from other men, the greater the weight of the burden that came to be on his individual shoulders.

The growth of society was dependent on gaining control over the potential energies of the external world and also over the potential energies within men. Shaping the world into human terms requires the constant employment of human energy to maintain and develop the resources in utilization. That energy must also be controlled from outside the individual because there are no ways of knowing with certainty that it is being channeled in the appropriate manner. The external form takes precedence over the individual content. The self-conscious individual needs confirmation that his experience of the external world coincides with that of others in his society. His actions in the world need direction and authority from structures that are greater than he is, more powerful and with more historical verification. The whole experience of the society becomes unavailable to each of the members as the complexity of the relationships develops in response to accumulated goods and information so that language is forced to fill in more and more of the gaps in the continuity of experience for the individual. Belief becomes equivalent to experience, experience that extends into the past as well as into the present, thus making institutions the focal point of continuity. The commitment of the individual is to believe in the institutions so that they may continue to function as supporting pillars of the social order. Institutions need to be internalized by each member

as a means of social control and the means of internalization lies with language as the only way in or out of the individual.

Identity and affirmation of identity are the only sources of action for the self-conscious individual. He must know what his reference points are in the world in order to act in a purposeful way. Society provides the belief structures for personal action in the world but the structures are impersonal, often leading to a contradiction between what is believed and what is experienced. This state of affairs leads inevitably to anxiety and conflict. There is nothing so unique as the individual and nothing so expendable as this single unit of society. Men require motivation to move in the world and the motivation must appear to come from the inside because it is there that the energy resides, latent but ready to be put to use. Survival is an effective motivator, especially personal survival, but it is so only under conditions that are recognizable as being dangerous or destructive in themselves. Institutions supply the minimum assurance of personal continuity by subsuming the greater assurance of the personal that resides in the group of origin as a whole. As such, they remove from the individuals concerned the ability to affirm each other in meaningful ways. The direct contact of human with human is interrupted by the social structures that precede them in history and in power. Such structures inhabit the invisible world of social interaction. There may be buildings that house them in a traditional sense and laws that uphold them but their very invisibility makes it difficult to recognize their potential harmfulness or to strike out against them. One cannot kill a social structure or an institution, one can only dismantle it.

The justification of a system that extends far beyond the individual

requires co-operation and co-ordination of beliefs. Each new member born into a given society is enjoined to trust what he is told, that what he is told is valid and true for every member of that society. The system takes precedence over history as experienced by the individual. A basic contradiction in the system is that while the individual must trust the information that he receives from outside of himself through his senses, he may not trust that information with regard to himself. The information which he receives is in support of the powers and realities that precede him. To question these powers and realities is to deviate from the norms of acceptable behaviour. The manifestation of deviance requires either punishment and readjustment or elimination. If the expression of deviation appears to be gaining support from within the membership of a society, then it may be incorporated into the existing structures and so decontaminated.

Deviance does require expression or it can become uncontrolled aggression directed at the powers in control. Socially sanctioned means of expressing deviance transform the undesirable aggression into socially acceptable behaviour. Every individual within a society is a potential hazard to the structures that determine his life. Anxiety and frustration at social limitations can be channeled away from direct confrontation. One such means is the institution of religion. As long as people believe that a higher power than that of the secular world will intercede on their behalf at some unspecified point in the future, they will endure hardship and deprivation in the present. Potential deviates are brought under control by the incorporation of superstructures containing the elements of ineffable powers. Religion controls the internal contradictions of individuals but it does not resolve them in any real way in the present.

Fear has always been a part of religion but fear was made manifest and formalized in the institution of religion. Gods could and would destroy the deviant individual even if his protest was still internal to himself. Absolute belief and obedience must be given to the powers in control, a message not lost on the more mundane controllers. Art, another means of expressing deviance, served religion to the point when the rigidity of the religious institutions no longer allowed expression of the magic between people. When institutions assume the responsibility for affirmation of the world that once belonged to the group as a whole, they no longer affirm the survival of the component parts, they only affirm their own survival. Institutions then cease being concerned with the individual entirely and control and maintenance become the only priorities.

Socialization and Identity

Socialization means bringing new members of a pre-existing group into conformity with the norms of behaviour and attitudes that the group as a whole experience towards each other. Socialization also means to make the new individual as similar as possible to every other individual in terms of identity. Groups require co-operation to exist and function in the world; the more homogeneous the members the more likely that the group will survive through their co-operative efforts. As such, conformity of identity and conformity of behaviour are beneficial to the maintenance of stability for the whole group, ensuring a small amount of security for the individuals concerned. This particular attitude towards human beings would be extremely positive if it were not for one major factor that involves all living things - change. The world is never static nor are the processes of human endeavour that manipulate the environment, yet the generalized attitude of any society is that what was is and should be in the future.

No one escapes the influence of his or her society. It is the cause of the situations that one finds oneself living and experiencing on a daily basis. The newborn infant enters a relationship that has been established before him and he requires the stability of adults to nurture him through the prolonged infancy period, a period extending far beyond the dependent stages of other animals. The child experiences a miniature version of the larger society that he has been born into; his parents contain the capsulized history of the immediate family and they also represent the larger history of the entire group. The parents are the first transmitters of the culturally acceptable patterns of living within the society. The child cannot act beyond the history

that he is given and the possibilities latent in that history.

Initially, the child has no access to any history for he has no past and no awareness of being separate and distinct from the world at large. The experiences that he will have are dependent on the cultural attitudes of the given society with regard to the position of children within the social order. The mother must initially supply the necessities of life. Beyond this stage, the child must come under the influence of the controlling powers in the family, the adults. They are significantly larger and have more control over the world than the child. At first the child does not know that he is being controlled but he soon comes to the realization, as he attempts to extend his contact in the world, that there are others in the world who can and will inhibit his activities. He learns what it is to be manipulated. The control that is forced on the child may be for his protection from external sources of harm but the experience itself is that of being a victim. In time he will extend this knowledge into controlling things that are smaller than he is, things such as toys. Once the experience of being both the victim and the victimizer has been established, the child is prepared to assume both roles simultaneously as the controls are internalized. He is able to control himself once he has developed the perspective of self-awareness. These controls are first in the physical sphere of experience: one must control movement in order to have freedom of movement; one must control sounds in order to be heard.

The protracted dependency of the child on adults secures the socially necessary responses of dependency, submission to authority and the internalization of controls. Time is allowed for the acquisition of

skills such as language that will greatly increase the rate of socialization and individualization through communication. The child learns to put names to his experiences of the world - historically sanctioned names. He expresses his experiences as the group expresses its experience, with the same words and grammatical constructions. The child learns that he belongs to the group that tells him who he is and he learns to repeat the formula back to the group so that he may receive the verification of membership.

Socialization is a process of unifying individuals into productive and predictable parts of the social fabric. At the same time, however, awareness that one has an inside and an outside, that one is separate from but attached to the others in the world, increases the isolation of the individual. The unique sense of identity that the individual human being develops as he comes to differentiate more and more aspects of the world can be mitigated by the existing social structures if they establish the concurrence of what the individual believes about the world and what he experiences. Communal activity is a form of security from the isolation and separation that the individual feels simply by being distinct from the rest of nature. But one must be able to experience the communal activity and not just believe that it is occurring in the invisible world of ideas.

It appears as if all men share the same world of experience yet have a unique relationship with the world from the aspect of individuality. Such a contradiction establishes doubt as to the validity of common experience. It might be more correct to say that all men share the world of possible common experience. They have the same senses with which to experience the real world but different personal and historical

attitudes towards that experience. Language requires reflection on translated experience. The historical givens that come about through the learning of language will determine the social forms of experience and expression. Historical beliefs imply the range of possible experience available to the holder of those beliefs. Without historical beliefs, interactions that determine a social structure would be incapable of sustaining themselves through time, given the individual variance of actual experience. The kind of experience available to the person who believes that a god made the world he inhabits will differ significantly from the individual who believes the world to be a biological accident of random events on the cosmic scale. The way in which each of these persons feel about events that happen to them will determine their response to those events - the former would likely submit to the greater power whereas the latter might struggle to overcome it. Historical beliefs are systems of justifications for the manner in which the experience of the social life is offered to its participants, as well as providing an explanation for the quantity and quality of life as it is lived by individuals.

In order to belong to any group, large or small, the individual must be able and willing to conform to the historical necessities of that organization. The historical necessities are arrangements of past events into a logical ordering that both explains the present conditions and acts to uphold them. The metaphysics of historical necessities can be reduced to the postulate concerning the nature of men and their interactions with each other. Most Western ideologies work from the position that man is by nature rapacious and destructive, thus creating the need for strong external controls to inhibit his base

character. On this basis, he will not act for the good of the group unless he is coerced by the fear of punishment. Man must not only learn what the 'good' is in his society but he must support it with his commitment to the belief structures that are the foundations of the 'good'. He must act on the premise that the beliefs are true and valid. By doing so and finding that he is reinforced by group approval, the individual finds it easier to accept the basic idea that man, and himself included, are just as the structures dictate, selfish and destructive to social order. The message is repeated over and over again in the social interactions that occur on a daily basis and it is taught to the children from birth onwards. The pattern, once established, is very difficult to break or change given that the children are unaware of how they came by their view of man. Basic beliefs are the most difficult to change because they are the framework on which the individual functions in his society; aberration from the basic premises incurs the possibility of denial of membership in the group, a possibility that threatens identity itself.

One cannot be continually forming the world into coherent patterns as one lives. There must be givens upon which one can depend. The anxiety that would result from uncertainty in all aspects of the individual's life would render the individual unable to act or interact at all in the world. Having lost the ability to act spontaneously with the environment, the human being must have some intellectual confidence that his activities will produce continuity of being in the world. He gains this confidence through the continual processes of socialization and affirmation of identity within the group. It would be a great mistake to assume that the process of socialization and identity ever reach a final stage while

the subject called the individual is still alive and functioning within the system. There must be a constant input of information both from within and without the individual if any balance is to be maintained. The assumption is that individuals and societies develop and expand throughout the life process and development can only occur when the boundaries of the known and the given are extended outward. Extension means risk and imbalance thus necessitating the renewal of balance through adjustment and reinforcement that one's experience coincides with the experience of the others in the group. The more distant the links between individuals and their personal reinforcement systems with each other, the stronger the reliance upon external belief structures that are disembodied forces apparently surrounding and controlling the relationships between people. These structures, once they have gained credibility through time, come to be known as institutions. They can be diagrammed on paper and have an entire network of language organization in their service. These intangible entities have people in their service whose duties include seeing that the institutions function efficiently in the society.

The power of a society does not come directly from these institutions but must be drawn from the people. The amount of energy that can be redirected from human interaction determines the potency of the institutions to effectively control and organize human beings. This energy is taken from the original source by the collective fear of chaos in the social sphere. Given that one has been socialized to the fact that man is evil and destructive, held in check only the collective forces of supra-individual control, one is bound to come to the conclusion that to deny the right of institutions to maintain order is socially destructive,

hence individually destructive. A belief is only as strong as the number of believers within a given social group and history, the verifier of present situations through continuity with the past, is only as meaningful as those who give meaning to it have the ability to communicate that meaning. Societies, in order to retain shape and meaning amid the flow of lived time, require that the past be repeated in terms of human relationships. In other words, all phases of the socialization process are directed towards shaping individuals into approximations of the individuals that have preceded them. Socialization is a kind of pruning process whereby each new sapling is encouraged by grafting and cutting to become the best producer of the acceptable fruits of that society.

The course of society, as seen in retrospect, is to increase the probabilities of knowing about future events and decrease the unpredictable aspects of worldly existence. The translation of this condition is security in the present or comfort from chaos. Society requires a comfortable margin to function in reality. Comfort implies a slowing down of creative activity in that the means of survival are easily attained by repeating the forms that have meant survival in the past. Comfort depends on surplus; the more surplus available then the more comfortable the situation. Comfort is also a dangerous position when it means the loss of adaptability and the loss of sensitivity to the human situation which is, in actual fact, never certain or secure. Surplus is only meaningful when scarcity exists and scarcity means discomfort for someone else in the world. The comfortable individual is unable and unwilling to reach beyond his apparently secure foreground into the background of those who do not live as he lives, those individuals who contribute to his comfort and security by their lack of it. This

knowledge may be the very means by which he survives but sufficient insulation from the others' world, those who are not as he is, allows him to ignore such knowledge until a time when the pressure becomes critical. Societies, and it must be realized that societies are the groups of people who comprise the belief boundaries of a particular society, have met their critical point in the past when the gap between beliefs and actual experience has extended beyond the limited flexibility that is built into a system that relies on previous examples for present conditions. Societies change slowly under normal conditions. The structures that have been established as viable inter-relationships between individuals inhibit change. It is only during periods of revolution or physical cataclysm that societies change rapidly because the power that was drawn from the populace as a whole for maintenance of the social structures is directed elsewhere, either into personal survival or into the aspirations of a revolution. Once disrupted, the old forms wither away leaving a void of social control until new forms rise out of the ashes of the old. People are willing and eager to give up autonomy to those social forces that appear to promise security and assured identity against the fear of uncertainty.

It is not that socialization is a necessary evil that man has created for himself. Social involvement in any species requires cooperation and trust among the membership but man is beyond the stage of social insects in that he has withdrawn from the natural environment in terms of his attitudes towards the external world. It is not only the complexity of the system that surrounds the individual but it is also the complexity of each and every individual that must be considered as a contributor to the whole social order. They are not discrete

systems at work but the one has dominance over the other in terms of social control. The individual can say 'no' to the social structures without much effect whereas the social structure can say 'no' with great effect on the individual. He is one of many but he has lost the ability to function as one when he allows the institutions to speak for him, to function for him. He becomes a renewable and definitely expendable part of the whole when he assigns not only the dictation of his relationships with other people to the institutions but also his ability to feel and acknowledge the experience of others in the world as being potentially his experience. The individual comes to model himself on the institutions rather than the other way around. In doing so, he has taken the first step towards dehumanizing himself and all others in the world, he denies his own possibilities and the possibilities of others to be creatively human.

Language as a Social and Human Skill

Language is the affirmation of what it means to be human. It is the process by which the inside of an individual can get outside and be known by other people in the world. It also serves as a means for the outside to get back in. Even in cases of vocal incapacity, the most important need is to establish a substitute system of communication between people. The child's first 'language', for example, is random noise in that it communicates a multitude of possibilities to the receiver, usually centering around discomfort in one form or another. The mute individual is in the same difficult position as the child in communicating wants and needs. Without a communication system of some description, the mute individual is unable to participate in his society beyond the most basic levels.

It is difficult to conceive of thought without some structure for holding information and playing it back on demand. Memory is necessary for thinking. We know that part of memory is based on physical sensations that are activated by a smell, a sound, a taste or a visual stimulation but we also know that language is capable of partially retrieving past experience into the present time and space of the individual. In other words, the body is capable of remembering but it is not until language is developed that the actual stimulation of the sensory organs need no longer occur for memory to be activated. Language creates and destroys relationships with objects and people in the world. Memory is, in a sense, the holding tank for the associations that constitute relationships. Memory can be distorted according to the needs of the individual person and the input from others in the social milieu. Memory informs and

deforms according to the criteria of the general social setting that it develops in, given that memory is the individual's personal history. Language functions in much the same way, the two being inter-dependent, but language also opens the doors to the self, establishing the possibilities of being in the world. It provides us with the collective memory called history as it has been lived and communicated by other human beings. It relates the spectrum of human activity that one lifetime never could physically master. The danger is believing that all language carries the same value for knowing the world.

Language is the organization of sounds into coherent and repeatable patterns that can act as substitutes for experience in the world. It is a form of symbolic exchange between holders of the same patterns of sound organization that can transcend the limitations of time and space, given the development of the appropriate technology. Language is the connective tissue between past and present individuals, in itself and in what it communicates. All language is an expression of human relationships with and in the world. Human beings have species-specific needs and behaviours, a fact often overlooked by those societies and cultures who are bent on determining the nature of man from their own limited milieu. Given a time when the isolationist view was a necessary function of survival, that is, that a tribe needed to limit its membership to those people born into the group for ecological reasons of food and shelter supply, it was a beneficial outlook on the world. The environment itself was limited in the capacity of man to control the extraneous factors of his life. Language, in its organizing capacity, would necessarily be limited in its abstractions just as the language of the child contains the language of 'doing' rather than the language

of the 'theory of doing'.

The human environment is very different from the natural environment, the former being a purposeful construction of materials and observations taken from the latter. There are no reasons or questions in the natural environment, it is simply the energy of living things continuing the process of being alive. The environment that the human being lives in is of his own creation through time and space. Without his 'natural' environment, society, man is not what he defines himself as being, a social animal. He must learn to know his social environment through the process of acquiring language because he depends on his language as most animals depend on their senses. The movement into more organized social constructions of exchange and control over the external world causes man to rely on language as a means of being in the world over the other senses that inform him about his world. Technological advances mean that specialization becomes an important factor in human life and, as specialization increases, the common world shrinks.⁸ The need to retain the information of technology through subsequent generations requires language to transmit it across time and, in social relationships, man must rely more and more on language rather than common experience to establish contact with his fellows. Special language is devised for special technologies, social position is verified by the ability to use language in special ways. Language comes to denote the developing hierarchical relationships that dominate social life and it acts as its own reinforcer through repetition. Kings converse with peasants, if at all, in ways significantly different from peasants conversing with kings. In short, man's very survival as a social animal depends on language to tell him who he is, what he can do, where and when he is,

and what he can expect.

The first step toward learning a language is the imitation of those individuals who already possess and use the language. With this first stage much more is learned than the representational sounds for things in the world; the mode in which a society construes relationships in the world is also a part of the language learning process. A society that has the magical method instead of the scientific method as its basis responds to things in the world as if they were alive or potentially alive. Such an attitude indicates a very different relationship to the world and an entirely different set of activities around being or surviving in that world. A child learns the appropriate sounds and the appropriate intonational attitudes required to establish himself as a functioning member of the group through the use of language. He also learns that language gives a measure of control over the external world, the world of objects and the world of subjects - people. At the same time, he contracts for an exchange of control; if he can make others do as he says then he can be compelled to do as they say. It is an agreement that is not stated directly but is implicit in language as one means of communicating control.

The more complex the relationships within a society, the more abstractions become necessary as a means of communicating information that is truly manufactured. We learn to substitute abstractions for lived experience. Abstractions are useful and necessary in the social context because they can be exchanged and assimilated through the processes of intellectualization, thus requiring no physical counterpart to be present to have an effect. They are beneficial and useful as long as the perspective is maintained that they are no more than abstractions -

no weight, no dimensions and no blood running through them. This fact is lost in complex social situations where abstractions come to be treated as real things in the world, when abstractions become reified in the everyday experience of people.⁹ Instead of being short-cuts to social intercourse, they become short-circuits in human experience. Given that a majority of individuals within a society operate and believe that what they say is equivalent to real experience, that words explain the world, it is not difficult to understand how language can be used to mystify the real operation of the social world. Such abstractions appear to be so much greater and more powerful than any individual that acquiescence is the easiest course of action; not merely acquiescence but total commitment of individual identity to the grandiose ideal. If one says that the nation declares war then the individuals who comprise that nation are forced into the position of supporting that declaration with their lives and energies. The fact that the majority of individuals did not declare war has little bearing on the outcome of future events. Nations die metaphorically but only after a significant number of the component parts, individuals, have died in the real world.

To question the language of ideology is to place oneself in a dangerous situation with regard to the majority of people within the framework and, also, the powers in control. One courts isolation and even elimination in the refusal to support ideological constructs for human activity in the world. To see into the mystification carries the same punishment as looking beyond the seventh veil; it is to become different from the others, one marked by the gods and set apart. No one wants to be questioned in the matter of his beliefs because they are, essentially, his own personal equivalent of identity. With his

beliefs intact, he knows how to act and how to respond with his fellows in situations beyond the range of his personal comprehension. The more complex the social structures, the smaller the part of those structures that the individual can be informed of and feel that he has some control over. A dissenter is a dangerous social person, he threatens areas that have already been marked out as being routinized. Such a person awakens the threat of change, a different way of perceiving the world, and therefore he brings out the doubts about identity that have been buried under the weight of repeated reinforcement from infancy to adulthood by way of the ideological language.

Language is the connective tissue between men. It may act as an accelerator or an inhibitor of information that is a necessary part of relating the individual to his social framework. Even in its most clichéd form, language is a creative act because it is a selection of sounds and patterns from a large set of possible sounds and patterns. Studies involving schizophrenic individuals indicate that the breakdown of selective patterns in common use by the rest of the population results from the inability of the schizophrenic to recognize the difference between the metaphor and the thing itself. It is language used at its most personal level.¹⁰ For the schizophrenic, language is what makes him vulnerable, subject to negation from the outside so that he is forced to use language in such a way that he, the individual, can remain in hiding. He is, in one sense, the ultimate dissenter from society. He refuses to agree on social definitions of words and grammar. He is free from the necessity to contain his language so that the other person will understand. It is a desperate world for the schizophrenic but one that he retreats to for protection from his perception of an

even more desperate world called reality.

In the final analysis, language is inextricably interwoven with survival. Language is, however, a double-edged sword. It can bring man into connection by communicating the common history of shared experience. On the other hand, it can be used to mystify the realities of history and life. In this sense, man becomes divided against his fellows and ultimately, against himself.

Notes to Chapter 1

1 Freud's discussion concerning anxiety and the relationship of the struggle between Eros and Thanatos are relevant to this discussion, although Freud has the tendency to see the individual as distinct from his society. See Sigmund Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, (translated and ed. by James Strachey), Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964, pp.135-141.

2 Ruth Benedict, Patterns of Culture. Preface by Margaret Mead, New York: The New American Library, 1960, p.18.

3 In this context, it is interesting to note that Darwin's theories of natural selection evoked an emotional storm of controversy only when his analysis was applied to shedding light on the origins of man. However, as we will argue later, one of the essential qualities of the literature of survival is the demystification of history.

4 Karl Marx, in his humanist writings, clearly recognized the threat to human survival posed by surplus acquisition. For example, "The devaluation of the human world increases in direct relation with the increase in value of the world of things." (Early Writings, trans. and ed. by T. B. Bottomore, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964, p.121.)

5 George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self and Society. ed. Charles W. Morris, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972, p.301.

6 Bronislaw Malinowski, Magic, Science and Religion. New York: Doubleday and Co., 1948, p.27.

7 As Marcuse points out in One Dimensional Man, the ready acceptance of art into the social system removes its original power to express contradiction. "The absorbent power of society depletes the artistic dimension by assimilating its antagonistic elements." (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964, p.61.)

8 The 'shrinking world' does not merely refer to rapid transportation or instant communication via satellite, it also refers to the experience of people in daily activity who are disconnected with vital forces in their lives. In much of the social commentary on the modern world, this process is often referred to as one of 'alienation'. See, for example, Eric and Mary Josephson, Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society, New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1962. This theme is also found in much of the work of Fromm and Marcuse.

9 Marcuse, in Negations, deals critically with the role that idealism plays in diffusing and defusing the frustrations of life as most people live it. See Herbert Marcuse, Negations, (translated by Jeremy J. Shapiro), Boston: Beacon Press, 1968.

10 R. D. Laing attempts to break into the world of those labelled 'insane' by listening to the meaning of their language as it relates to the situation that they are living. See R. D. Laing, The Divided Self, Harmondsworth; Penguin Books, Ltd., 1965. Foucault traces the madman through history and indicates that treatment of the insane in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries involved the explicit rule of silence. See Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization, New York: Random House Inc., 1965.

Chapter 2 Private Skills and Public Uses

Reading

Reading is a private act done with public tools. In order to read, one must be trained in the system of written language which makes it possible to write as well as read. The attempts at expression of lived experience expanded as the population that had interest in the experience grew. To read is to employ energy, memory and imagination in the service of the writer, to integrate his language into a personal relationship with oneself. An interaction must take place for meaning to be transmitted. Reading is a solitary activity that uses all that one knows about how the world function and uses that knowledge to comprehend the information being communicated on the page from one human source to another. Reading engages belief structures in contests for survival because, as one reads, other possibilities of experience are introduced. The reader may be forced into the position of deciding what he can afford to experience in terms of affirmation or denial. Depending on the rigidity of the reader's personal belief system, another possibility may present itself; the material being read may open new ways of seeing old material, change may be introduced into the reader's conception of the world. He is bound to base the experience of potential change on the persuasiveness of the language and connections that it might make with what he already knows but it is in the recombinations of known forms that the power to evoke change occurs.

Reading also allows the dissemination of materials and ideas that would otherwise only have a very small contact with people in the world. As a private activity it does not rely on direct contact with others

to have meaning although discussion with others who have read the same material may expand the reading itself. Whatever change, if any, that reading inculcates in a reader takes place on the inside, in the invisible interior, unless the reader chooses to make known to the outside world that change has occurred. The fact that the literacy quotient in some advanced technological societies is close to the entire number of people above a certain age and intelligence level indicates the importance of reading as a skill for surviving in a complex society.

Reading is not only a means of transmitting information, it may also be used as a means of social control. The ability to read means that one can be directed by signs, instructed in skills necessary for the manipulation of complex machinery, ordered to obey rules and lulled by entertainment material away from individual thinking. It means that direct contact with people in charge is unnecessary for the efficient control of the subordinate individuals.

Once the skill of reading is acquired, the amount of material that can be consumed is greatly increased. A reader has access to information about his world that he could never hope to acquire through personal experience. People from the past communicate their perspectives on a world otherwise lost to present experience. Experiments in the life processes of others can be carried out on paper, so to speak. Reading opens up the world of personal speculation concerning the nature of the general human condition because the reader is not engaged with a single, tangible person in the flesh but with the language of the person. A reader must invest energy from his human sources in order to relate to the language. In the act of reading, the language of the writer becomes a part of the language of the reader; the meanings and associations

of the former attach themselves to the meanings and associations of the latter. Common ground is necessary for the act of communicating to occur.¹

Reading is usually taught within a social structure called formal education, a structure established to standardize the input of information that children must assimilate in order to enter the social order as adults. The purpose of education is to equip each generation for the assumption of the established roles and goals of the society as it functions. The material that fills out the methods used to inculcate skills is, at least superficially, kept innocuous. The child, when he learns to read, also learns to believe what he has read because it comes from a source of authority. The written form of language is a firm and visible representation of the verbal, it appears to eliminate some of the unpredictable elements of the verbal form. In the educational system, however, the equally unpredictable nature of much of the written form is not investigated. The fact that the individual continues to change and re-evaluate the life situation regardless of his direct will or desire is not an aspect of the whole process of education. The static can be controlled whereas the mobile escapes definition and education functions largely on definition. The reader is the dynamic side of the reading relationship and, as such, invests life into the language of the other; life and the possibilities of life.

Reading, as a skill that is acquired after verbal language is mastered, continues the power relationships that were established with the learning of symbolic sounds for experience in the world. Reading becomes internal conversations that may encourage participation by the reader or exclude him according to the presentation of the material.

So-called 'objective' material does not include, or attempts not to include, a personal subject whose private interior is part of the information that is being used to close the process of reading. The reader is being told what he is reading and that speculation beyond the material is unacceptable. Subjective material, be it memoirs or novels, invites and occasionally demands curiosity from the reader. Such material is, after all, personal attempts at crossing over the confines of human communication. It deals exclusively with the human elements of personality as they relate to the social and natural environments experienced by the writer. The reader must employ his awareness of what it means to be human and self-conscious in the service of the writer's language, thus bringing the language back into connection with dynamic life, the life of the reader.

Why, given the circumstances, do human beings read beyond the information that they must have to function as members of a given society? The answer must lie in the fact that humanity is not satisfied with itself either individually or collectively. Obviously the gaps of experience and continuity in the life process within society are sources of interest and curiosity for large portions of the population. If language unites men, links them into a common experience no matter how transitory, then it has that power in the written form as well as in the verbal expression. There is a desire to explore the gaps in experience and find the connections between human beings that a technological society exchanges for efficiency and production. Individuals within such a society are reduced from wholes to parts of the mechanized processes that are the foundations of production and consumerism.

Reading has become a kind of cannibalism whereby the author is

ingested and his power to communicate is briefly assumed by the reader. In terms of modern methods of increasing reading speed, even this potentially 'sacred' ingestion becomes a fast-food outlet. A reader engaging humanly charged material as exemplified by creative literature must suspend other activity in the world, both physically and mentally, if he is to successfully direct his attention towards the language on the page and bring it into contact with his experience. All the reader's powers of perception; his sense of touch, taste, smell, sound and sight, must be applied in the service of the other's reality as demonstrated by the given context and conditions of the written material. A sixth sense must be applied to reform the information given through language into a communications system that intimately involves the reader and his understanding of the world. Energy must be diverted from the daily activities of the reader into the material at hand. The act of reading uses the faculty of imagination in conjunction with the text to evoke responsiveness on the part of the reader. It may be a dangerous activity in that alternate attitudes may be conceived in the meeting of the two language systems - the one belonging to the reader and all of the historical implications of his times and society, the other belonging to the invisible author who is a separate and distinct entity with his own historical imperatives. Contradictions in lived experience have the potential for creating changes in the vital element, the reader, if the material being read extends its implications deeper into the social fabric of attitudes that the reader has learned to believe are the only real possibilities in his life. New perceptions of social relationships pose a threat to the existing structures of power and legitimacy within a given society; an effect that, potentially, can

create a dissident individual on the private scale and, if the pressures of social conformity are sufficiently weak, even on the public scale.

The Writer

Within society there are individuals whose entire lives are concerned with language. Language is the material, the tools and the product of their work. Their professions use language to explore the possibilities of human relationships as they, the mediators, perceive the social and historical realities of their time. They study language for the nuance and the subliminal content it holds, while some of them attempt to reconcile individual variation with the larger social order. Without language they are powerless to act and, without sensitivity to language, they are incompetent in what they do. The best of them have learned to trust their feelings about the sense of language either as they hear it or as they manipulate it to create impact on those who lack the same skill and trust in their feelings. Like the trapper or fisherman, they sense their environment with more than usual perception - their environment being the landscape of men. This is the ocean and the forest that need exploring, the raw material that provides for the existence of language manipulators. The psychiatrist is one such professional whose basic premise rests on the assumption that language can reveal the inner landscapes of individuals and that individual difficulties within the social framework can be alleviated through language. There are the professions of law, teaching and criticism - all of which rely heavily on the power of language to interpret the world at large - but the group that creates a world with language is made up of creative writers.

Historically, there are two main paths leading to the establishment of the creative writer - one is the folk tradition and the other is

the educated, leisured class. Folk literature was, by necessity, oral in form. The material that formed the content of the folk tradition dealt with the significant forces in the lives of the common people, those people who did not have access to formal education. Folk literature linked people with their past in a very different manner from that of conventional histories, partly because it did not change from generation to generation in any major sense and partly because it was held in common throughout the community. The information it contained dealt with the sun and the moon, with the seasons and their changes, the growth of crops, the fertility of animals and with human relationships. It used language as a means of reconciling significant forces of the natural environment with the tenuous existence of daily life. The other path, the one leading from those individuals who had time and leisure to acquire skills of reading and writing, is usually considered to be of more significance than the folk tradition. These individuals whose very life situation depended on the accumulation of surplus and the control of the productive power of the common people had the necessary time for the construction of fictional worlds because the necessities of life were provided without their participation in the process of work. Their art depicted people but people of their own tradition, the tradition of ownership and control. The leisured writer was not adverse to borrowing from the folk tradition but he used that material for his own purposes. In essence, the purposes of both forms was the same, to reassure and connect people with the past, but the important difference was that the two types of language art inhabited very different worlds - the life experiences in each world differed in both quality and quantity.

From the perspective of the leisured class there is the social

necessity for creative speculation as to the possible relationships between individuals as technological and other changes create new social relationships. Without speculation into the future there can be no direction to development. The ability to conceive of different methods of human beings relating in the world means that such relationships might be possible. Without such a concept the activities within a society lose value. When we speak of a better world we are not referring to a better natural environment, that is as it is. We may be referring to our better use of that environment but, generally, we are contemplating a more positive relationship among people. It may be translated as more goods and less work or more control over supply and demand and the means of production but, essentially, it is the individual human experience we aspire to reshape.

There is a tendency to forget that society as we know it in the twentieth century has a very short history of change. Historians divide social development into the categories familiar to textbooks. For the majority of people, however, life styles changed very little throughout historical divisions. The peasant of the seventeenth century differed little from his counterpart in the first century. Only a small number of people experienced any difference in the world in their lifetimes. These are, of course, the ones that are always referred to in the historical texts because our perspectives indicate that they originated our own traditions. The acceleration of social change in the last two to three hundred years has left gaps in understanding the changes and the social traditions that attempt to explain the changes. The majority of the population is not accustomed through time to this situation of social flux, the speed at which society changes allows little breathing room

for evaluation. No sooner does one think of an answer than the question is changed. Technology marches on but the people limp behind.

The coming together of the two sources of modern literature occurred when the general population, that which had been concerned with direct connections with the means of remaining alive, was introduced to the idea of consuming more products than were absolutely necessary for the continuation of life. It was a slow process, given the tremendous increase in the available wealth of surplus made possible through the use of machines and technology to extract the potential of the natural environment. Free time began to be a factor in the lives of more and more of the population. The creative writer became a producer of material for consumption by a growing public readership that extended, to a degree, across class boundaries.

The writer survives in a society only in so far as his product becomes available to the public and is used by that public. He has a commitment to the social structures that surround him in the sense that he must depend on the established systems to provide outlets for his material. To some extent he must compromise himself and his work to the necessities of existence while still providing the expression of human contradiction and human generating power. The average writer is inside the boundaries of his society but the better artist, the one who provides more in his material than can be contained by the social structures, must be outside of his society. It is only from the position outside that the writer finds the freedom to commit his act of creation. Such a writer has been forced to withdraw from the inner circle of society that would crush his expression because it is too stark or painful. Kazantzakis experienced the condition of

exile, as did Lawrence. With the increasing trend towards an automated society, the list of outsiders becomes longer.

Aesthetics

Literature that survives through time and a succession of readers must contain elements that extend beyond the limitations of the given historical epoch in which it was written. The writer may be the original generator of the language but it is the reader who continues to function with the work itself. Such literature must have a quality that escapes the 'there and then' of the original production and connects with the 'here and now' of the experiencing reader. The most common phrase used to describe the power of a work that continues to collect a following is that it is an expression of the 'human condition'. As such, the 'human condition' is often treated as if it were some form of contagious disease that can be observed with a certain amount of clinical distaste and it certainly is not expected to actually touch the reader as he lives and breathes. Everyone else throughout history and across societal boundaries has the 'human condition' but no one wants to personally claim it. It is one of those unfortunate turns of phrase that has become a depository for much trash as well as the meaningful material it was intended to elucidate. A 'condition' implies a state of things as they are, the final statement in a fatalistic world view that allows little or no scope for escaping or alleviating things as they are. The 'so be it' attitude so prevalent in bringing to a close the discussion of questions and issues that have no distinct, clear answers supplies a temporary relief from the anxiety of not knowing what was - is - will be going on for those individuals who sense that there is more than they have been told there is.

Every human being will, at some time in his life, want to know

who he is and what he is. It is both our curse and our blessing that we exhibit self-awareness as part of our biological functioning. Without it we would not relate to the world individually but rather we would function as a part of the whole. There would be no science, no society and no art as we understand them. We would have no use for aesthetic theories because we would not conceive of value, comparative value, nor would objects be invested with greater or lesser meaning except as they applied to the process of remaining alive. Survival for man as a species has come to mean surviving despite the species. We have exchanged our artlessness in the human situation for art. If we have survived as a species (and there is some doubt as to inevitable outcomes of our ecological tamperings and/or our political games) then it is probably due to an irrational element of human nature that has stubbornly refused to turn over complete control to logical progressions based on statistical evidence. The field, however, has narrowed considerably since the time of Alexander the Great. He literally could only destroy as much as he could reach on horseback while maintaining supplies and the stamina of his men. Technology has eliminated much of the boring part of destruction, that which involves getting to where the action will take place.

As a species, we are as fearful now as when we were in the dark caves, only the focus has changed from what was outside and unknown to what is inside and unknown. We used art then to mediate with the great forces of the world out there and we didn't name the artist because he was one and the same as us. We had our shamans and witchdoctors who helped us to know what to do. They, too, were part of us but we have grown out of our caves and we now call our witchdoctors other

names. All we have left of that common assurance of group solidarity is our 'human condition' and the modern artist whom we sense is continuing the ancient practice of mediating the darkness that we all fear.

Always, in the discussion of literature as an art form, there emerge 'schools of aesthetics' to facilitate the study of various genres. Each and every one of them uses a metaphysical basis on which to build the supporting framework of their theories. The base may be taken from economic, psychological or philosophical schools of thought but the catalyst is always the human element in its personal form. While not religions per se, these schools inculcate in their members a limited perspective that occasionally rivals the fanaticism usually associated with fundamentalist religions. Unlike religions, however, no one tries to live out an aesthetic theory - it is merely a tool of the trade, the literary trade. Sometimes pieces have to be hammered into place when putting together the work of the artist with the theory, but every theory has one thing in common with every other theory and that is the attempt to get at the power source behind the literature as it is read, take it apart and find the core, thus explaining the effect as if discovering the magic formula that removes the seventh veil from the artist. When all is transparent then nothing is hidden. When all is known then it is possible to control aspects that might be considered dangerous. Theories become a means of decontaminating the dangerous, the equivalent of the unknown and the unpredictable.

Literature is not like other art forms. Its medium is language and it conveys what language is able to convey, no more and no less. But language is the very heart of man's existence as man. It carries the information of his past, his present and his future. Language

is a human product designed and used to facilitate social interaction so that literature is concerned, not with nature as the background, but with human nature. A theory of aesthetics for literature must deal with that as its primary basis. The power in literature resides in the communication of human nature to those who do not know. One cannot be told what human nature is but it can be learned through the interactions and experiences of other people in the world. Literature is an alternate form of history from the socialized science of enumerating events and circumstances because literature is the precipitate of a human being living the times of history. We cannot merely discuss human nature in terms of literary theories, we are human nature.²

Defining human nature in an absolute way is not possible. All we truly know about human nature is that it varies from the heroic to the base and, while we live intimately with it, we can only theorize about it. We don't know what our potential is, we can only guess, but we recognize that it connects us with others in the world and the world itself. We are responsible for human nature as it is manifested in the world and we are responsible for rediscovering the potential bonding that the possession of a common nature implies. How we accomplish this reflects back on the entire socialization process and the means that are available.

For a large percentage of the world population, literature will never be of any significance in their lives. Literate societies, generally those of the Western world, have a reasonable proportion of their population for whom literature does come to be a factor, if not a significant factor, in their life patterns. Literature, for a small group of this population, becomes an important source of human contact and human history in societies

that have progressed towards isolation and alienation of individuals. Literature does not have the answers to problems of human interaction but it does present some of the questions that must be asked. Such literature, this by no means includes all that is called literature, goes a step beyond aesthetics and creates real questions in the reader's life, questions that arise out of the merging of the reader's knowledge with the information contained in the work. The reader experiences contradictions in the material and himself that have the power to move him into his own questions.

One form of fiction that provides both the forum for contradiction and the spatial and temporal room necessary to engage in human interaction is the novel. It is not a compulsion in terms of form to have characters and situations follow rigid rules of literary conformity but it is generally an intact and on-going process in the novel of human beings acting and inter-acting out of the history as it is presented. The novel is the world of the other person, both the generalized other and the individual other. The reader enters into that world through the language of the writer and implications of the reader's own experience in his world. It is a dangerous action in that the reader cannot know what is contained in the other world that might threaten the belief structures that support his own world view. A reader opens Pandora's Box every time he begins to read a novel. What the reader receives from the novel is not the resolution of its hypothetical problems but what he himself must resolve in terms of his own perspectives on human nature. Not all novels contain the impact necessary to create changes in the reader, nor are all readers willing to invest themselves in the act of reading. Those who will not or are unable to risk their

possible involvement with a novel have given up their responsibility in the social process to the existing conditions of their socialization.

The characteristics of a novel that extend beyond the clichéd experience of the socialized process are to be found in the confrontations that the characters experience as part of the situations presented. No one lives without such experiences yet the tendency is to ignore contradictions as long as possible and live within the illusions that sustain them. It is the refusal to confront contradictions that leads to the impotence experienced by individuals caught in the technological machine. The novels that take the contradictions and explore them, whether or not they are resolved, expand the possibilities of the reader who is willing to engage himself in the novel. It is not an ideology that such novels are capable of forming for the reader, unless one considers empathy for humanity an ideology, but rather they teach extrapolation from the reader's basic experiences of human interaction into the area of choice and responsibility for one's own humanity.³

Novels that contain the germinal element that has the power to contact the reader and bring him to an awareness of the possibilities for changing his comprehension of things as they are go beyond aesthetic principles, they enter the area of survival because they engage human potential with personal principles. Contradictions and conflicts, the milieu of the novel, vary according to the historical context of the plot and the writer, but the contradictions and conflicts are human problems. Characters and novels that continue to collect readers extend beyond the limitations of their times, they are speaking beyond the historical context of any given individual to the common experience of being human and self-conscious. Such novels cannot be decontaminated

by criticism that seeks to explain their constructions in rational terms. They exist through the power of the language of the writer to communicate the essential humanness of their content.

The choice of humanness is essential in historical situations that would eliminate the human content in favour of control over objects in the world. The survival of the species depends on this choice because the creative impulse is always involved with the destructive impulse, something must be destroyed for creativity to occur. If the destruction of the human experience is considered necessary for the development of the predictable and controllable experience of the machine, then human beings must fight to create their own humanness after each assault. The knowledge and awareness that survival depends on other people in the world - that one is potentially both self and other in any human context - means that the selection of human actions from the range of human possibility involves an effect on the self as well as an effect on other people. Increasing the probabilities of surviving intact as a human being means taking responsibility for one's own involvement with the contingencies of the historical process as it exists. Experience, even intellectual experience, provides information about others in the world. Novels that deal with the essential elements of human interaction and manage, through intention or accident, to avoid complete subservience of human content to the established social structures belong in the class of survival literature. Their form and content contain the essentials of human survival in an inhuman world.

There is no formal plan available that will ensure survival. Different circumstances and different personalities require separate decisions. To watch others make decisions and follow them through

the torturous paths of living is to learn something about the process of deciding and the process of surviving. Novels that can be said to contain the experience of human beings surviving in their milieu as human beings and not as automatons of their social environment deserve the name of survival literature because it is not only the survival of characters in situations that is elucidated but also the transference to the reader of that awareness. In the final analysis, it is the reader who must take the next step beyond the novel. The novels of survival teach rebellion in some form or other. They must give form to the formless anxiety that haunts human existence and they must have an element of vision, of possibility, that it is possible to fight for one's humanness against enormous odds. It is not a question of success because to be human is to die; the question is whether one wants to be in a metaphorical state of death during one's lifetime. Abrogation of one's responsibility for being alive means that one has thrown in one's lot with the generalized culture, that one no longer has the right to determine one's survival. The literature of survival must help to rekindle the spark of personal involvement for the reader in his own life, in his own milieu. If one escapes into the fictional world of the novel then one has only retreated and, if the novel does not have the strength to kick the reader out, then the novel necessarily fails to contribute to the survival of anything. One must not be afraid to take the world personally, in fact, the literature of survival teaches that one must take the world personally but not in the narcissistic manner that is generally assumed to be the case. Surviving and being alive are synonymous with being connected; to the world and to other people in the world. Connections are vital to surviving.

Notes to Chapter 2

1 However, as Lukacs points out, the common ground in the case of the novel is illusionary, albeit a necessary illusion: "...the reader does not consciously compare an individual experience with an isolated event of the work of art but surrenders himself to the general effect of the work of art on the basis of his own assembled general experience." (Georg Lukacs, Writer and Critic, ed. and translated by Arther D. Kahn, New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1974, pp.36-37.)

2 Much of this discussion is also developed in Alex Comfort's book, The Nature of Human Nature, New York: Avon Books, 1966.

3 The extension of human possibility does, of course, require moral judgements that go beyond the mere ideological acceptance of the morality of the status quo. Kolakowski, in his essay on the priest and the jester as social representations of the moral system and the alternative side of the question, illustrates the distinction between these two moral positions: "We declare ourselves in favor of the jester's philosophy, and thus vigilant against any absolute.... We declare ourselves in favor of the possibilities contained in the extraintellectual values inherent in this attitude.... Thus we opt for a vision of the world that offers us the burden of reconciling in our social behaviour those opposites that are the most difficult to combine: goodness without universal toleration, courage without fanaticism, intelligence without discouragement, and hope without blindness." (Leszek Kolakowski, translated by Jane Zielonko Peel, Towards a Marxist Humanism, New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1968, pp.36-37.)

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Chapter 3 Kazantzakis, Lawrence and Vonnegut

Nikos Kazantzakis

Born on the island of Crete, Kazantzakis was raised between the cool intellectualism of mainland Europe and the hot sensualism of Africa. There was no denial of history in Crete, it was one of fierce conflicts repeated over and over again involving Greece to the north and Turkey to the east. The agrarian culture remains dominant today as it was for Kazantzakis, the people know their land intimately because it provides them with sustenance directly through their labours. The Cretan people had a physical presence among them that threatened their homes, their families and their culture for generations, a presence that could be touched - the Turks. It is difficult, if not impossible, for those born in a technological society to imagine the life experiences of people whose history does not come out of books but from those people who are alive around them. The Cretan knows who he is, who his grandfather was and what he did in his life, and he knows these things back for many generations. Ancestors are vital links with the past and the present, no less for Kazantzakis than for El Greco, another Cretan.

Love of liberty, the refusal to accept your soul's enslavement, not even in exchange for paradise; stalwart games over and above love and pain, over and above death; smashing even the most sacrosanct of the old molds when they are unable to contain you any longer - these are the three great cries of Crete. ¹

Farther, in the same line of reasoning, Kazantzakis offers his thoughts on what makes men human.

Unveiled to our eyes here is man's thrice-noble origin, for we see how the two-legged beast, in following other

than intellectual roads, succeeded in becoming human. Our journey to the fatal intellectual Golgotha thus becomes more loaded with responsibility because now, looking at the Cretans, we know that if we fail to become human, the fault is ours, ours alone.²

Kazantzakis depicts the Cretan as the essence of humanity, of what it means to be human. They are the people that he knows intimately, they are the material for his art. He is not claiming that we should all move to Crete and take up the simple life but rather that these people have succeeded in being responsible for their humanity. If Kazantzakis pushes our Western technological beliefs too far it is because he is involved historically with the very characters that he creates; they are his friends, his neighbours and his family. The Crete of his experience is subjective, alive and related to all that is alive upon her back. It is a mythological world but it is as real to the inhabitants as our world of objective miracles is real to us; they believe in demons, devils and saints, we believe in dishwashers, detergents and gross national product.

Kazantzakis presents a world that is still peopled by connected families, families that extend into large populations of relatives, so much so, that each person could be said to be related in some way to every other person on the island. This does not, of course, include the Turks or foreigners. The Turks are truly different and distrusted for they have brought their own culture with them to superimpose on the Greek. Foreigners may be accepted if they adhere to the basic principles of the Cretan people but it is partial acceptance at best. It is only when, through time and generations, the foreign origins are forgotten and the new, genetic blood has been absorbed into the mainstream that strangeness disappears.

Kazantzakis makes good use of his powerful sources. The central characters that he creates are larger than the narrator or the reader, yet one still feels that there is a connection. One perceives the distortion that Kazantzakis introduces from his personal bias but the characters remain alive and vital despite it. Kazantzakis knew Captain Michales and Zorba. Captain Michales was based upon his own father and Zorba did work for Kazantzakis in much the same way as described in the novel Zorba the Greek. Freudians could produce reams of material concerning Oedipal conflicts and associations that influenced the creation of these two characters but the reader still has to deal with them from what the reader knows about men and circumstances.

In the novel Freedom or Death, Kazantzakis begins the story with a description of the dominant character, Captain Michales. The title of 'captain' is given to leaders of men as well as to ship's masters. There are no generals or colonels in the Cretan fighting forces because they are drawn from the population at large, each man must prove himself in counsel as well as in battle to earn the respected name of 'captain'. The scene is Crete just before the rebellion of 1889 when the Cretans attempt, once again, to free themselves from the Turkish domination of their island. The rebellion proves unsuccessful in its outcome but it is successful in reaffirming the commitment of the people of Crete towards gaining their freedom. These people who are willing to die for their country are not organized in any official sense, their coherence comes from their shared history. These people live close to their own mythologies, their ancestors and saints still wander the houses and the towns as protectors of the Cretans. These people do not stand quietly in front of God and

beg for his intervention.

There are peoples and individuals who call to God with prayers and tears or a disciplined, reasonable self-control--or even curse Him. The Cretans called to Him with guns. They stood before God's door and fired rifle shots to make Him hear.³

The ancestors trouble the Turks as well as the Greeks, thus perpetuating the struggle for control of Crete that is rooted in history. The Cretans have more invested in Crete than do the Turks but the power lies with the Turks because they are supported by their motherland, Turkey. Grandfathers and great-grandfathers rise from their graves and demand revenge.

The overall conflict of Turkey versus Crete is reduced into the microcosm of the conflict between two men, Nuri Bey and Captain Michales. As young men, Nuri and Michales were attracted to each other in mutual admiration mixed with cultural hatred. A climax is reached when the two men must either kill each other or change the conditions of their co-existence. They choose the latter.

"Not so fast, Captain Michales. It would be a pity...I take back what I said. Yes, by my faith, neither my Mohammed nor your Christ wants that. You're a good palikar, I think, and so am I. We ought to mingle our blood, but in a different way."⁴

Their ancestors have killed each other yet these two men evolve another method of blood-letting that releases their commitments to their ancestors on a personal level. Brothers and blood-brothers have the same obligations to each other. The development of Nuri's and Michales's relationship is not based on similarities of culture or ancestry but on the recognition of each other as men. Given, however, the historical imperatives that surround this relationship, the possibility of maintaining the relationship through time becomes less and less likely

as more of the differences are introduced. Nuri Bey and Captain Michales have reversed their normal relationship but, in doing so, they have brought to bear greater complications within their environment. In terms of what is the reality of Crete, these two have undertaken an unnatural means of reconciliation thus forming a society of two. While they recognize each other as brothers, there is still another contract at work, one which takes precedence.

Kazantzakis does not hesitate to bring contradiction into his characterizations because men are contradictory. The power that motivates his characters is their spontaneous involvement with the world through their senses. The repercussions of these immediate responses to situations lead to inevitable conclusions. The reader is not forced to take the part of the Turks or the Cretans for it is not a matter of right or wrong. The law that governs both factions is passion rather than intellect. The island of Crete is like the man, Captain Michales; it can only stand so much pressure from contradiction before it bursts out in all directions. The Cretans survive because they fight whereas the Turks must fight to survive on the island.

The one law that applies to both parties on Crete is the law of revenge. Primitive passions allow only one way to cleanse oneself, with blood and death. The cry of "We all have to die sometime" lends a fatalistic joy to the pursuit of life. This one cry echoes throughout the novel. Such an attitude in practice is difficult to conceive of intellectually because it is not chosen in the abstract. The man who chooses freedom or death must mean it. Those who make the choice have the ability to turn from shopkeepers and shepherds to tigers overnight. The cry is in the blood and not in the head. Even

Kosmos, the nephew of Captain Michales who has been educated in France and believes that the future of Cretan freedom lies in diplomacy, answers the call of his blood when he finds himself in the mountains confronting the enemy.

Who are these people who fight and die with such passion? How do they justify their passion? Captain Michales sees Crete as a luckless Mother.

Full of pity, his spirit embraced Crete. Crete was to him a living, warm creature with a speaking mouth and weeping eyes; a Crete that consisted not of rocks and clods and roots, but of thousands of forefathers who never died and who gathered, every Sunday, in the churches. Again and again they were filled with wrath, and in their graves they unfolded a proud banner and rushed with it into the mountains. And on the banner the undying Mother, bowed over it for years, had embroidered with their black and gray and snow-white hair the three undying words: FREEDOM OR DEATH.⁵

How many times had Captain Michales seen the image of the sorrowing mother in the flesh, and often sorrowing for his own flesh and blood? The history of Crete was one of invaders and rebellion, the toll for such a history is heavy with destruction and death. Even without human conflicts, Crete suffered the destruction of earthquakes and droughts. To survive in such a landscape required a ruthless and savage commitment to the struggle for life and livelihood. In one sense, the Turkish invaders provided a form that the Cretan people could understand. Unlike the natural elements that seem to contrive against their survival, the Cretans could fight Turks and even hope to drive them out of Crete forever. The forces, however, that drive these people are most easily discerned in Captain Michales.

Against his own will he forced the wine into his stomach, to quell the demons within him. Neither woman nor war nor God could overcome them. His demons were afraid of wine alone, and he drank of it freely whenever he felt

their rage rising in him. These demons were savage voices; most of them were not human voices, but bestial ones, bellowing inside him as soon as the portcullises below opened, letting ancient images spring forth: a tiger, a wolf, a wild boar, and after them the hairy ancestors out of the caves of Psiloritis.⁶

These are not the civilized men and women of Western Europe or North America yet they can display humanity to their poor neighbours, be they Turk or Greek. There are levels of common humanity that the demons of Captain Michales cannot touch and have no power to destroy. For the Cretan, especially Captain Michales, the answer to an insult is death to the insulter or, failing that, death to the insulted - oneself.

The women of Crete have been weakened by the Christian creed. Their acceptance of the new religion has transferred their passions and fire into passive acceptance of situations while hoping that God will intervene on their side. The Circassian woman, the wife of Nuri Bey, still retains the wildness of the desert and the passions of the blood. Michales is attracted and repelled by her at the same time for she epitomizes women while adhering to the Turkish camp. Like the sirens of the Odyssey, she tempts Michales into the circle of her arms, a temptation that would mean Michales's fall from the direction and the spirit of his forefathers. The only actual embrace she receives from him is when he thrusts the knife into her bosom but she has driven him to desert his military post, bringing shame upon himself. It is as if one of the demons that inhabit Michales's inner world have escaped and taken human form. As a Cretan in the historical circumstances the only woman that is allowed to drain off passion is the suffering Mother - Crete.

Crete is the uniting force that takes precedence over the more recent figure of Christ. She is a demanding figure, more pagan than Christian. While there are elements of the Virgin Mary in the associations with Crete, the largest and most powerful influence is from the early Minoan culture, the goddess of fertility and retribution.

Kosmos felt that he was now experiencing the lost meaning of his native country for the first time. Hard of approach, rebellious, harsh was this land. She allowed not a moment of comfort, of gentleness, of repose. One could not tell whether she loved her children or hated them. One thing was certain: she scourged them till the blood flowed.⁷

Crete is the rallying cry and the proving ground for her people. What meaning and affirmation the Cretans have comes through the soil of Crete and the blood of her children. Grandfathers see their sons and grandsons die and they see other sons rise to take their place. The father of Captain Michales, Sefakas, speaks to the group gathered around his death-bed,

"The earth is opening, she wants, it seems, to swallow me. Let her swallow me, let her take her revenge! But she is not swallowing all of me! Look what I'm leaving behind!"⁸

He then indicates his children and grandchildren. Death is not a time for mourning the passage but it is a time for celebrating having been. Sefakas is one hundred years old and the father of a tribe. He has eaten and drunk his fill of the world but there is one thought alone that troubles him, a worm gnawing at him.

"I look back at my life. I look forward at my death. And I think and think. Where do we come from, children, and where are we going? That is the worm that's gnawing at me!"⁹

He asks his old comrades for an answer. The first answers,

"Yes," he said, "you ask me where we come from and where we're going....We're coming out of slavery,

Captain Sefakas, and going into freedom. As slaves we were born, and have fought all our lives to become free. And we Cretans can only become free through killing." 10

The second man to answer is an old sea-wolf, one who has been away from Crete and seen the world.

"We live haphazardly, we die haphazardly, rudderless, with sails bellying. A wind blows. Where it blows, there we go....I've been in great harbors and little ones, I've seen millions of black men, millions of yellow men - my eyes have brimmed over with them! At first I thought they all stank. I said: 'Only Cretans smell good; and of the Cretans only the Christians.' But slowly, slowly, I got used to their stink. I found - I found that we all smell good and stink in the same way. Curse us all!... God made me a wolf and I eat lambs. If He'd made me a lamb, the wolf would have eaten me, and rightly! That's the order of things....And if you ask me about God: He is the big wolf - He eats both lambs and wolves!" 11

The last old man, a schoolteacher as well as a fighter, cannot find any words to answer the original question so he responds with his lyre. He plays of the joy of spring and youth, the clashing of arms and the sorrow of death, finally he plays the aspirations of serenity and peace. The old grandfather is satisfied with the answers because it is obvious that his contemporaries have the same final difficulty that he does: there is no one answer for each man must find and accept his own. These old men are at the end of the road yet none would disown the path that they followed.

The novel does not ask the reader to believe that Crete is peopled only by heroic figures and men like wolves. There is a whole population living in the towns and villages who, for the most part, have the same petty squabbles, false pride and greedy attitudes shared by all humanity. The Cretans know fear but they have a rallying cry that is greater than their fear. They have not lost the spontaneous

elements of their lives. They have the ability to submerge themselves individually into a cohesive pattern for survival. There is a duty that comes before the individual and is present after the individual.

"Water rushes into our ship, we work at the pumps day and night. But the water keeps rising and the pumps are rusty. The wretched things won't work any more, and we go to the bottom. That's human life, and you can yell as loud as you like. What's our duty? To serve the pumps day and night, not to fold our arms, not to complain, not to moan. We ought not to give up shamefully, but to work at the pumps day and night."¹²

The world is always in conflict but the Cretans do not fight against the natural forces, the natural forces are elements of their lives. The Cretans fight against the domination of other men, the control that others would put upon them. It is an uncomplicated pattern that the majority of Cretans experience as their lives. They are born, have children and they die all within the collective pattern of their ancestors and their contemporaries. The complications in their lives are brought about by forces outside of their island. The involvement of political forces beyond the sea forces the Cretans into different patterns of behaviour. They cannot free themselves without the aid of the outside world yet it is the same outside world that keeps them in submission. The Cretans refuse to wait in despair for help. In the words of Captain Polyxigis,

"If we wait, Captain Kambanaros, for the shiploads you demand to be landed and for the Bear [Russia] to set his bowlegs in motion and bring us help from the north, we shall never free ourselves....Whoever receives freedom from foreign hands remains a slave."¹³

The Cretans take their lives and their deaths into their own hands.

Most of the characters of the novel accept their negative impulses, as well as their positive ones, as part of the continuity of life.

They take pleasure when and where they can, and they take pain and death where and when they meet them. Captain Michales is the exception for he is the extreme example of Cretan manhood. He wants desperately to purify himself of any desire that hinders his ability to act for Crete and all that she is for him. Other women must be driven from his awareness. He trusts himself implicitly until he meets the Circassian woman. In this brief encounter, Captain Michales loses his freedom to act without doubt. He refuses to accept his own fall into desire. He tries the old methods of driving out his devils but fails.

You fool, you're fighting for freedom and yet you're still a slave, he cried within himself. Your lips say one thing, your hands another, and your heart means another! Why do you prattle, you hypocrite Captain Michales, and beat your breast because of Crete? Another demon has fixed its claws in you and is your master, you man without honor! And even if you fall in battle and if you storm Megalokastro and set Crete free, you're still without honor. Your heart is after something else, your purpose dwells elsewhere! ¹⁴

The Bey's wife is the force that possesses Michales and drives him to enrage the Turks. Nuri Bey is drawn into the conflict by the dominant social demands of his Turkish brethren. He is the 'Lion of Turkey', the epitomy of the Turkish male, and he must be responsible for answering the insults of Captain Michales directed against the Turks. Forbidden by the law of the blood-oath he took with Captain Michales, Nuri seeks out a surrogate for Michales and finds it in the brother of Michales. Nuri finds Michales's brother in the fields harvesting the soil's bounty. He engages him in a struggle that ends in the death of the brother and the emasculation of himself by the brother's knife. The blood has once more begun to flow throughout Crete for it only requires one death to set off the chain-reaction

that leads to rebellion on the grand scale. Blood must be answered in blood, that is the law that governs the island.

Captain Michales is fighting another battle within himself, a battle that pre-dates the Cretan-Turkish conflict by eons. He is struggling to be either a man or a wild beast. A man would admit his weakness and deal with the failure to be less than singular in purpose, a wild beast could never give in to such a weakness. His whole bearing depends on the strength of his commitment to the ultimate cause. Captain Michales does not wish to explore his demons, he only wants to silence them. He does not talk with other men, he does not laugh but calls them shameless who laugh while Crete is still in chains. Never before has he had to confront forces that are deeper in him than he can control. That is what it means to be a man. The people of Crete needed such men as Captain Michales. He was their torch, their flesh made immortal through his actions. Awesome and fearful though he was, the people could recognize him as one of their own, remembering him the next time that Crete called them to fight. Captain Michales was a connector with the past, a huge monument whose actions were greater than a man would think possible.

"Since the hour I lost all hope, Captain Polyxigis,"
Captain Michales went on, "I've had the feeling,
by the soil on which we tread, that I'm immortal.
Who can do anything to me now? What can death do
against me? Even if the Turks come storming at me,
my ear lobes won't twitch. I am like Arkadi: my
clothes, hair and guts are full of powder, and when
I see that there's nothing else for it, I'll blow
myself sky-high...." ¹⁵

As a monument, Captain Michales no longer shares the human experience. He has divested himself of the connections with family and friends, he has killed the Circassian woman but not before he had committed the

crime of desertion for her sake. He has gathered shame upon himself and must, by his own standards, die for it. He must die for his death will be his expiation to the people of Crete.

In the primitive environment that Kazantzakis uses as his background, the only survivors are those who can change from mouse to tiger and back again. They have the flexibility to survive the social and historical changes that must be lived. The survivors recognize a man like Captain Michales but they do not emulate him. Each wild beast, be he a son or a stranger, must find his own path to the mountain peak. It is a lonely journey without the company of man or God but the beast will drive on because that is its nature. That, too, is part of the story. Each individual must decide if the beast is to have superiority over the human. The savage must be recognized as a part of the whole, the driving force that can go above or below the mark set. In a society such as Crete, there are few external controls over the savage, learning and education are not highly regarded. What one can do in action is the measure of a man. The entry into the society is through the extended family and the expectations are the expectations of generations of forefathers. It is not a society of intellectuals. Thinking hinders action. There are no social movements for higher wages or electoral reform. Guns replace voices raised to heaven and to earth, their message is clear and direct. There are leaders when the people need leaders, otherwise it is the old of each generation that give their blessings and make decisions involving their families. Relationships between men and women are clearly defined and the duty of each to each is apparent. They have ancestors and they have enemies, not of the intellect but of the

flesh. Captain Michales steps out of himself to join the ancestors before he actually dies, sealing himself off from the rest of humanity. He leaves behind him a new generation of children who will begin where he ends. Michales is not a victim in the usual sense of the word because victims do not choose their condition, they endure it. "I am Crete!"¹⁶ cries Captain Michales as his final battle is about to begin. He has broken through the pattern of rebellion and defeat. For him and his few followers, the rebellion is final and irrevocable. They chose "Freedom and death"¹⁷, not the either/or of their comrades-in-arms.

From the point of view of the intellect, these men appear fools and madmen but it is such madness that the Cretan people need to ensure that they will not sink down as slaves to the powers in control. It is not rational thought that keeps those men on the mountain, rather it's their gut response to a historical situation. The forces that exist outside of the island are beyond the control of the Cretan people. Greece, France, Turkey and Russia play out their political games with Crete as the pawn but the Cretans refuse to be pawns on their own soil. Crete is not merely a spot on a map that can be found at a certain longitude and latitude. The Cretans have commitment, history and identity all springing from the same source: the earth, sky and sea that surrounds them. In the case of Captain Michales, death is the ultimate participation in the communal experience. He supports what they all believe in at the final reckoning: that the community continues on regardless. It is to keep that identity of the community intact and strong for which Captain Michales dies. The community at large participates in that last stand by Michales but it does so in such

a way that the community survives while still experiencing the consequences of defying the controls imposed by the Turks.

Kazantzakis explores the meaning of a man within a particular historical epoch and society. The roots of his story of Captain Michales go deep into the soil of Crete and, while the reader may be convinced of the depths of those roots, Kazantzakis also tries to provide a glance into the heart of that society. Few readers have had experience with such intense personalities or political conflicts. It is almost too simple a relationship of identity with the soil. A character that Kazantzakis uses with more effect on the sensibilities of the reader is that of Zorba the Greek.

Zorba has the intensity of a Captain Michales but he has touched more, seen more and accepted more. He is the man who embraces god and his devils as one, his identity is within himself.

"I don't believe in anything or anyone; only Zorba. Not because Zorba is better than the others; not at all, not a bit! He's a brute like the rest! But I believe in Zorba because he's the only being I have in my power, the only one I know. All the rest are ghosts. I see with these eyes, I hear with these ears, I digest with these guts. All the rest are ghosts, I tell you. When I die, everything'll die. The whole Zorbatic world will go to the bottom!"¹⁸

The character who plays a counterpoint to Zorba is the young boss, the narrator. He is the intellectual wanderer looking for meaning and identity. He defines his position in the world very early in the novel when taking leave of his best friend.

And I was listening, passively, as if pain was a dream and life some absorbing tragedy, in which nobody but a boor or a simpleton would rush onto the stage and take part in the action.¹⁹

This is the position of the narrator before he meets that great "boor", the stealer of scenes and scenery. The boss has never contacted real

pain and suffering, his knowledge of such things comes from books. He has been wrapped in cotton wool and sealed away from any real contact with men. It is only when he loses the friend he loves that he feels the presence of real fear. In effect, he realizes that he must take measures to engage the world in some meaningful way and it is then that he meets Zorba. The boss is pounced on by Zorba as he prepares to return to Crete and begin a coal mining operation. He knows nothing of coal mining but he is returning to the land of his ancestors with the hope that he will bring himself to life with their help.

Crete has changed from the time of Captain Michales. It has gained its freedom and settled into the old patterns of living once again. Zorba was there when Crete gained her freedom.

"Have you ever seen a whole people gone mad because they've seen their liberty? No? Ah, boss, then blind you were born and blind you'll die. If I live a thousand years, even if all that remains of me is a morsel of living flesh, what I saw that day I'll never forget." 20

The boss's image of Crete is in direct contrast to Zorba's.

To my mind, this Cretan countryside resembled good prose, carefully ordered, sober, free from superfluous ornament, powerful and restrained." 21

Zorba has had the experience whereas the boss has only his objective language; he keeps trying to change the world into spirit with words, to finalize it and explain himself in relationship to the fixed pattern that he has discovered through his mind. To conquer the body and commit the spirit to an ideal is the purpose of the boss's language, even the telling of Zorba's story. He fears not being in control. Zorba revels in being out of control; he does not read poetry, he lives it.

Zorba is sure of himself because he acts from a center that has never been doubted; his ideas of women and men are based on experience of people, not what he has read about people. Zorba sees God as being bigger, stronger and more wild than he personally is but he uses himself as the standard for creating God. That is a God that one can deal with and even threaten because He is personal. The boss must contend with Buddha and the Christian Controller. How does one ask them for anything? How does one curse them and at what level? Zorba's God is a kind of relative, a brother rather than a father. One can fight and argue with a brother as long as no blood is spilled. The boss fails to find any god to deal with.

The mystic fervor of my early years had degenerated into an aesthetic pleasure. Savages believe that when a musical instrument is no longer used for religious rites it loses its divine power and begins to give out harmonious sounds. Religion, in the same way, had become degraded in me: it had become art.²²

Religion has become the excuse for the forces that drive the boss to question everything about himself and the world he lives in. It's always the higher principle he aspires to capture in his language. It is a game he plays, just like the game of going to Crete to dig lignite. He has, until the meeting with Zorba, managed to hold the world at arm's length with his language, the tricks he has learned through education. Even the murder of the widow, the woman who had brought back his sensual life, is transformed into manageable pieces by the use of words.

I lay down on my bed, turned out the lamp and once more began, in my wretched, inhuman way, to transpose reality, removing blood, flesh and bones and reduce it to the abstract, link it with universal laws, until I came to the awful conclusion that what had happened was necessary. And, what is more, that it contributed to the universal harmony.²³

The price he pays for keeping the world off is the inability to act and feel as a man.

These two men, Zorba and the boss, occupy different worlds altogether. Zorba's world is age, experience and ignorance of a historical and intellectual process that has surrounded him since birth. He is his history and he continues to be his own history. It is written in his blood and on his body. In a letter to the boss, Zorba says,

Seeing as how I have no time-limit clauses in my contract with life, I let the brakes off when I get to the most dangerous slopes. The life of a man is a road with steep rises and dips....I did away with my brakes altogether a long time ago, because I'm not at all scared of a jolt.²⁴

Zorba is not a prophet or a philosopher, he merely lives his life as he conceives it. The storyteller, the boss, senses the joy in Zorba's life and the precipitate of the human in all that Zorba does. Zorba has subtracted things from his life until he feels free, "rescued" from his country, the priests and from money. At last he only travels with his 'santuri', his soul with strings. The one thing he never turns his back on is man.

"Nowadays I say this man is a good fellow, that one's a bastard. They can be Greeks or Bulgars or Turks, it doesn't matter....And as I grow older - I'd swear this on the last crust I eat - I feel I shan't even go on asking that! Whether a man's good or bad, I'm sorry for him, for all of 'em. The sight of a man just rends my insides, even if I act as though I don't care a damn!"²⁵

Zorba recognizes the brotherhood of worm-meat. The boss is trying to purify his flesh and turn it into spirit to cheat the worms but Zorba wants to turn his flesh into a feast for the worms, a gourmet treat of meat that has done everything it could and felt everything it had

time for in the world. Zorba has broken through into the immediate experience of being alive, that is why he sees everything for the first time. He lives his life with such vitality because he believes he will die every minute. Zorba goes through life touching men and women as deeply as he knows how. The contact does not mean that he commits himself totally to the other person; people have limitations to their contact. Sometimes Zorba stretched beyond the limits of the relationship and sometimes it would be the other person. It's touching that is important.

Zorba's world is more primitive than the world of the boss; what Zorba takes from the earth he takes with his hands. He becomes the coal he is mining. The world takes on the vitality that Zorba pours into it and sends it back in kind.

He was completely absorbed in his task; he thought of nothing else; he was one with the earth, the pick and the coal. He and the hammer and nails were united in the struggle with the wood....He sparred with the mountain-side to obtain its coal by cunning and force.... And, as he appeared then, covered and plastered with dirt, with only the whites of his eyes gleaming, he seemed to be camouflaged as coal, to have become coal itself, in order to be able to approach his adversary unawares and penetrate its inner defences.²⁶

When Zorba does take up with machinery and science, the brief encounter ends in economic disaster. It is Zorba's way of looking at the two major tools of modern development and progress that climax the novel. Zorba extends himself into the modern mode and fails utterly to control his creation but he does provide a magnificent display of sparks and unleashed power. He is beaten but not defeated; it is only the mechanism that lies in ruins; Zorba remains Zorba.

The boss's world is filled with books and paper and aspirations.

He depends on the strength of his books to contain the devils and the gods he feels within himself.

I hurriedly opened Dante, my travelling companion, in order not to hear and to exorcise the fearful demon.... I went freely about hell, purgatory and paradise, as if in my own dwelling. I suffered, I awaited or tasted beatitude, carried away as I was by those superb verses. 27

The boss does not want real trouble from man, woman or himself. He refuses to engage himself in the lives of others for fear that he will be exposed and vulnerable.

My life had got on the wrong track, and my contact with men had become now a mere soliloquy. I had fallen so low that, if I had had to choose between falling in love with a woman and reading a book about love, I should have chosen the book. 28

This man who has wrestled all the academic devils now must deal with a flesh and blood devil, a devil who is both his servant and his master. The longer he lives with Zorba and engages in Socratic dialogues, the more he realizes the hollowness of his language. He had reached the stage of Buddha in his search for a meaning and a direction: the life of the complete ascetic who feels nothing, needs nothing and finally is nothing. Zorba drags the boss out of his forest and places him among the trees. The boss has made the error of believing his language, not his experience. It is not until he experiences the murder of the widow and his own close escape from the collapsing mine that the boss begins to turn away from the world of words back to the world of men, a world that he tried to escape. He does not succeed in making a clean break. As Zorba says early in their relationship,

"I hope you don't mind my saying so boss, but I don't think your brain is quite formed yet. How old are you?"
"Thirty-five."
"Then it never will be." 29

And Zorba is right. The boss frees himself partially from the limitations of his intellect but he is also a modern man who must step back into the flow of history. He has formed habits through time that will not disappear by wishing them gone. He makes the difference between Zorba's use of language and his own apparent:

I weighed Zorba's words - they were rich in meaning and had a warm earthy smell. You felt they came up from the depths of his being and that they still had a human warmth. My words were made of paper. They came from my head, scarcely splashed by a spot of blood. If they had any value at all it was to that mere spot of blood they owed it.³⁰

Despite the changes brought about by his contact with Zorba, despite the fact that he learns to dance and understand the language of Zorba's dance, the boss cannot free himself from the necessities of his own times and his own development. The boss will only dance once with his body and soul, the rest of the time he will attempt to make the language do his dancing for him. He cannot become Zorba anymore than he can become Buddha but he recognizes that Zorba is closer to him than the Buddha. For one brief moment he realizes his liberty.

I had rarely felt so full of joy in my life. It was no ordinary joy, it was sublime, absurd and unjustifiable gladness....This time I had lost everything - money, men, the line, the trucks; we had constructed a small port and now we had nothing to export. All was lost.³¹

For one fleeting moment the boss is free. He understands "what tone" a man should use when addressing "powerful but blind necessity". The moment beyond this vital experience brings the boss back to himself as death brushes by him on the wings of a raven. In his receptive state he receives the knowledge that his beloved friend, the one who left him to undertake a patriotic mission, is dead. The shock drives him back into himself.

The dance is ended. The boss withdraws from the island of mythos where he had gone to escape his isolation. He has learned, finally, that his reason is like a grocer, keeping accounts and balancing profit and loss. He cannot cut the string.

All that Zorba said was true. As a child I had been full of mad impulses, superhuman desires, I was not content with the world. Gradually, as time went by, I grew calmer. I set limits, separated the possible from the impossible, the human from the divine, I held my kite tightly, so that it should not escape.³²

The disappointed child has turned into the disappointed man. He returns to the 'real' world of political intrigues and books. Zorba continues his wanderings in less complicated settings. These two worlds are as separate and distinct as they were when the two first met. Zorba could not survive in the world of the boss, anymore than the boss could continue to survive in Zorba's world. For the boss, the encounter with Zorba was like meeting an ancestor but one cannot join the ancestor without becoming one. The other possibility is to learn from the ancestor. The rest of the boss's life will be spent in trying to reconcile the world he inhabits with the world of Zorba. When he knows in his soul that Zorba is dying, he writes the story of Zorba.

I worked like the sorcerers of the savage tribes of Africa when they draw on the walls of their caves the Ancestors they have seen in their dreams, striving to make it as life-like as possible so that the spirit of the Ancestor can recognize his body and enter into it.³³

With the tools that he knows best, the boss becomes the creator of a mythology, he changes Zorba into words. It is his attempt to synchronize the cacaphonous elements of his experience into the song and dance of Zorba because the boss needs that reconciliation in order to survive.

Zorba is the great tempter because of the joy and sorrow that he gives off in his contact with the world. He is a reminder that the world is always present and that it has the potential for direct contact. His one commandment comes from an old Turkish neighbour.

"Listen, little one: neither the seven stories of heaven nor the seven stories of earth are enough to contain God; but a man's heart can contain him. So be very careful, Alexis - and may my blessings go with you - never to wound a man's heart!"³⁴

This is the law that governs Zorba, he not only believes it but he also lives it. Zorba lives the undisguised rapture of all living things, unclouded by science and philosophies. Zorba affirms survival for the sake of surviving. He draws his energy for creating the world anew each moment without hope and without despair for he is the source of the life around him. He kicks a stone down a slope and feels that he has given it life, that he has aroused the passive life of the stone. His interactions with the boss are a series of kicks. Sometimes they land directly and sometimes indirectly but they all come to the same conclusion as the kick to the stone: the stone stops rolling when the slope runs out and gravity takes control; the boss stops rolling when his slope runs out and his language and philosophies take over. The boss is alive but he never becomes self-generating; he never quite overcomes the hills of his education.

Kazantzakis introduces the reader of his novels to characters that are part mythology and part real. They are from the primitive past, the world of tribes and wild beasts. The historical necessities are overcome by the force of the more ancient necessities of blood and connection with the earth, the soil. One must accept and understand the possibilities of one's past to understand one's present and

acknowledge the possibilities of the future. Zorba and Captain Michales are a species of wild men, the ones who revel in the world, either seriously or joyously. The civilized reader, like the boss, can only capture and contain parts of these men but they are the parts that call for a response from the primitive sources of the reader. Embracing the ancestor does not mean becoming the ancestor, as the boss in Zorba the Greek makes clear. The ancestors are not there for harmony, they are there for discord because it is only in conflict that change can occur.

Kazantzakis was both fortunate and unfortunate in being close to primitive sources. The society he grew up in reflected the ancestors with such force that Kazantzakis was forced to deal with them in his literary work, to bring them outside for mediation. The other choice would have been to be haunted by them as he wandered throughout Europe.

"Every age has its own face; the face of ours is a savage one; delicate spirits cannot confront it; they swerve their eyes in terror; they invoke the noble and ancient prototypes; they cannot look directly at the contemporary, prodigious, and dreadful spectacle of a world in painful birth. They want an art work cut in the pattern of their desires and their fears. They watch contemporary life exploding before them every minute with a world-destroying demonic power, and yet they do not see it...." ³⁵

Kazantzakis attempts to strengthen those "delicate spirits" so that they can face the reality around them. His language and his characters are attempts at releasing the devils and the gods. It is not to invoke terror and fear in the reader that compels Kazantzakis to display human heads severed from their human bodies. The world is composed of flesh and blood, such events happen and have happened. If the reader can accept the flesh and blood of the human world of others then he

is closer to accepting his own. Survival depends on it. Flesh and blood have possibilities of pleasure and pain, life and death; they also have the potential for reaching across the bridge of skin and recognizing themselves in others who are composed of the same matter. Without the ancestors to guide one, the power of the civilizing social structures will overwhelm the neophyte in the struggle to feel and experience the world in any way other than the accepted, insulated one. Kazantzakis recognizes a conspiracy in the making as he realizes the growth of forces and powers that have left the human being far in the rear. He offers his personal attitude in what he calls 'The Cretan Glance', a glance that looks out over the Abyss without hope and without despair.

Zorba and Captain Michales do not need to develop an instinct for being alive and for being men. They are alive and they are men. They were born with their instinct, grew with it intact and they die without it ever deserting them. Captain Michales is committed to his roots and his soil, the sources of his manhood. Zorba stretches out to embrace all men with ears to hear and feet to dance. He is exceptional in his time because the creeping inertia has already begun to set into the historical process surrounding men. When he dies, the whole Zorbatic world does indeed die with him.

In other, more primitive and creative ages, Zorba would have been a chief of a tribe. He would have gone before, opening up the path with a hatchet.... In our ungrateful age, Zorba wanders hungrily round the enclosures like a wolf, or else sinks into becoming some pen-pusher's buffoon.³⁶

Zorba is both the buffoon and the wise man, he is not made into either by Kazantzakis or the reader. He is a man and a man is not easily

defined. Zorbas look for trouble and the Zorba that survives in every individual, if he has survived, is the trouble-maker, the unquiet one who will not be put to sleep by contemporary strains of social platitudes. The time has gone when one could act as Zorba and Captain Michales act. Each new birth has an original scenario but the script remains essentially the same. The final difference always depends on the translation and the ancestors at work under the skin.

D. H. Lawrence

Man is his own measuring-stick but he should never know how long the stick actually is or how it is graduated. D. H. Lawrence also explores the question of what a man is and concurs in Kazantzakis's desire to portray what is alive in a man. "All things that are alive are amazing." ³⁷ anticipates Zorbatic delight in being alive. Lawrence is from another era, another historical and social setting, than Kazantzakis. Lawrence is the "boss" without an island of ancestors where he might go to simplify his existence and make contact with another human being. The coal mines of Lawrence's youth are not the places where Zorba descends and becomes one with the coal, nor is the capitalist seen as a friend. In Lawrence's world, profits mean more than men. The Industrial Revolution takes place in the north where men can be forced into factories by difficult environmental conditions. In the south, while the standard of living does not appear high, the climate and the soil provide a minimum of security in the necessities of life. The development of intensive industry means that the people leave the land, the root of their existence, and converge in cities. The necessities of life are bought at the price of selling oneself as an object of use. The average Englishman is fortunate if he knows who his grandfather was. The connected family falls further and further from the center of social life as differences in work and aspiration become more apparent. In Lawrence's world it is necessary to develop "an instinct for life, if you will, instead of a theory of right and wrong, good and bad." ³⁸

Lawrence refuses to be implicated in the historical processes that are extracting the life from the population around him. He refuses to use his education to perpetuate the mythologies of the machine and

the nation. Lawrence stands in direct opposition to the proposition that all men are created equal. The rightful question is 'equal to what?' Lawrence's concept of man is that all men are essentially different and distinct from one another. Not that one man is better than another, although that might be the case, but that each is separate in himself; relationship comes about through the acceptance of difference and respect for it. In the relationship between men and women, Lawrence feels the connective tissue to be the phallic source, the carnal self. He allows for the recognition but not the merging of individuals.

There is a strong element of the primitive in Lawrence that finds its expression in his novels. His fascination with the mysterious forces of the earth leads him back to the original sources; what he conceives the original sources to be.

It must have been a wonderful world, that old world where everything appeared alive and shining in the dusk of contact with all things, not merely an isolated individual thing played upon by daylight. ³⁹

Lawrence wants to tap the sources of ancient experience in order to revitalize the decay he sees as contemporary civilization. Everywhere he looks, he sees stultified individuals weaving their way through the maze of history. They do not comprehend their situation or the implications of not understanding their history.

Spectres we are to one another. Spectre you are to me, spectre I am to you. Shadow you are even to yourself. And by shadow I mean idea, concept, the abstracted reality, the ego. We are not solid. We don't live in the flesh. Our instincts and intuitions are dead, we live wound round with the winding-sheet of abstraction....We walk and talk and eat and copulate and laugh and evacuate wrapped in our winding-sheets,.... ⁴⁰

There is a preacher's sense of urgency in all of Lawrence's philosophical writings. He is addressing the amorphous public that has lashed him for

telling his tales with vital energy and human contact. Lawrence portrays himself as the sentinel watching over the herd of mankind, whereas his society brands him as an outcast. The two definitions reduce to the same thing; the image of a man outside. The freedom that this position gives him is the power to say explicitly what he knows, and to say loudly and fervently what he believes.

Lawrence returns to primitive sources but he utilizes them in the world of his own times. The sources have been transformed by the development of the modern world; the people who are to survive in that world must recognize and understand the old bonds in the new settings. The Rainbow has the simplicity of a folk-tale in the beginning but it gradually leads the reader into the complexities of the modern world. Lawrence produces his own kind of Bible as the novel. The Rainbow is the Old Testament a la Lawrence. In the beginning there were the heavens, the earth and the Brangwens.

They were fresh, blond, slow-speaking people, revealing themselves plainly, but slowly, so that one could watch the change in their eyes from laughter to anger, blue lit-up laughter, to a hard blue-staring anger; through all the irresolute stages of the sky when the weather is changing.⁴¹

These people are connected with the earth and the sky, even as it is reflected in their eyes. Their world is not isolated from the emergent industrial world that slowly moves into the pastoral setting, changing it and the people irrevocably. The women are the first to feel the attraction of the 'new' world as they begin to discern the differences between men. The women learn to aspire towards a greater intensity of experience, if not for themselves at least for their sons. The 'snake' in the Brangwen women's 'Eden' is the man with clean hands

and a frock-coat, the vicar or the lord of the manor. A canal is cut across their land, money is exchanged without Brangwen labour. The Brangwens have their first taste of the new order where one does not necessarily labour to bring forth profits. They must affirm the forward-sweeping movement or be submerged by it.

The first generation of Brangwens is swept along with the tide. From parents who are "vitally connected, knowing nothing of each other, yet living in their separate ways from one root", the children move off into connection with the forces around them. Alfred, the second son, is sent away to school and eventually becomes a lace designer. Drawing is the one skill he masters yet he perverts his talent by limiting its scope.

But at drawing, his hand swung naturally in big, bold lines, rather lax, so that it was cruel for him to peddle away at the lace designing, working from the tiny squares of his paper, counting and plotting and niggling. He did it stubbornly, with anguish, crushing the bowels within him, adhering to his chosen lot whatever it should cost. ⁴²

The emphasis is placed on the 'natural' skill out of alignment with the applied environment. Finding himself out of step with his natural understanding, Alfred turns to female strangers as a means of relieving his frustrations. He becomes a part of the social machine, marrying well and living in town, while still looking for that which has escaped him. His older brother disappears completely from the family, engulfed, no doubt, by the outside world. The roots of the Brangwen family extend into the world, some to shrivel and die, others to become gnarled and stunted as in Alfred's case. One daughter marries a collier, bringing the family into an awareness of industrial forces. Another son becomes a butcher taking a necessary farm labour and turning

it into commercial enterprise. Tom, the youngest child, is the one who has the strongest chance of surviving as a whole individual. He maintains his integration with the farm and the soil which provides him with a sense of identity and accomplishment. He is sent to school so that he might fulfil his mother's aspirations and become a gentleman. Tom's difference is apparent as he stumbles through a mechanical environment that he cannot comprehend.

But he knew all the time that he was in an ignominious position, in this place of learning. He was aware of failure all the while, of incapacity. But he was too healthy and sanguine to be wretched, he was too much alive.⁴³

His failure to make a reasonable showing at school returns Tom to the environment that suits him but he returns slightly changed in his perspective. At school Tom has learned to admire things that are beyond his understanding, he has learned to want more than he can grasp.

As Tom develops into maturity, he finds that reality and his desires seldom agree. The new world of education, of ideas foreign to the land and the life that he knows, creates a tension in him that cannot be easily resolved. Women eventually come to mean satisfaction of physical needs combined with a mystery that is pleasing and frightening at the same time. Combined with this sexual definition are women as mother and sister, havens from the confusion surrounding the meaning and purpose of existence. This combination moves Tom toward the woman who will complete his life. She is a foreigner, a Polish woman named Lydia Lensky. Her blood-ties extend beyond the farm into the world of the aristocrat. She is familiar with political upheaval, suffering and violent, unexpected

death. Tom connects himself to a larger world than the farm when he marries the woman. Her child, Anna, is also a part of unknown but, in Tom's view, "infinitely desirable" world.

These two individuals, Tom and Lydia, are the beginnings of a new generation. Their marriage is an uneasy coming together of two worlds, one that is instinctively sure of itself and the other that has learned to protect itself from the attacks of the external world. Lydia had withdrawn from a world that seemed to offer her nothing but pain and death, her comatose state made it possible for her to tolerate her position as a homeless refugee. The daughter kept her from deserting life altogether. Brangwen is the element that brings her back to full life.

Her impulse was strong against him, because he was not her own sort. But one blind instinct led her, to take him, to have him, and then to relinquish herself to him. It would be safety. She felt the rooted safety of him, and the life in him. ⁴⁴

She and the child take hold in the soil of the Brangwen farm. Anna is grafted on to the stock of the Brangwens through her contact with the strong sources within Tom. She links Lydia and Tom together until they find firmer ground for their relationship. When Tom discovers that Lydia cannot be approached bluntly, when he finds that she is beyond him in some mysterious way, he turns to the child for solace. Tom cannot intuit Lydia's past because it comes from another world. Lensky was a man who,

...kept still his great ideas of himself, he seemed to live in a complete hallucination, where he himself figured vivid and lordly. ⁴⁵

No Brangwen had experienced such narcissism up to that point in time. Tom has no hope of understanding the relationship that preceded him in

Lydia's life but the child is someone Will can understand instinctively. She joins in his life and he has control over her; he has a hand in her shaping and adores her for it. Anna becomes a part of his history and he is a strong, creative part of her. It is not until Lydia and Tom make good their confirmation of each to each that the child is free to begin exploring/beyond the histories of either parent.

Anna is the next stage in a kind of evolutionary process that will continue until it has acquired power enough to enable it to be in the world without annihilation by the world. Evolutionary processes take time to outfit new and struggling creatures for survival in a hostile world. Anna grows up in the safety of the Brangwen home.

They were a curious family, a law to themselves, separate from the world, isolated, a small republic set in invisible bounds.⁴⁶

The two parents have stepped out of the evolutionary process. They are satisfied with what they have found in each other, the possibility of renewable contact within their relationship. Anna shares an intimate relationship with each parent but she is never allowed to be a part of their personal contact. She understands them individually but she is confused as they move together in their own relationship. Outside of the family she is never certain what people are but she is excited by the possibilities that other people present. She knows that Lydia and Tom share a secret and she feels that other people might have the capacity for bringing her into the secret but, in this, she is disappointed. The older she becomes the more irritated she is by the inarticulated relationship between her mother and her father.

Many ways she tried, of escape. She became an assiduous church-goer. But the language meant nothing to her: it seemed false. She hated to hear things expressed, put into words. Whilst the religious feelings were inside her they were passionately moving. In the mouth of the clergyman, they were false, indecent. She tried to read. But again the tedium and the sense of the falsity of the spoken word put her off.⁴⁷

Anna recognizes the strength combined in her parents and she wants it without knowing what it is she wants. She is seeking the quasi-religious fervour she senses exists between Lydia and Tom, she is searching for a means of re-creating the atmosphere of her own home for herself. Finally, it is Will Brangwen, her 'cousin', who becomes the means of transporting her beyond her isolated existence.

In him she had escaped. In him the bounds of her experience were transgressed: he was the hole in the wall, beyond which the sunshine blazed on an outside world.⁴⁸

Together they kindle a sensuous experience that is new to both of them, an experience dependent on each other. The energy generated by the physical contact creates a new relationship of love and conflict. Anna is confident of her instincts and her sensitivity to the world; the social order has touched her but lightly whereas the man she chooses to live with is looking for the sources of his being outside himself. He is confused and fascinated by Anna's unconscious life.

But still it troubled Will Brangwen a little, in his orderly, conventional mind, that the established rule of things had gone so utterly. One ought to get up in the morning and wash oneself and be a decent human being.⁴⁹

Will is fascinated by the Church for the passions that it can evoke in him without realizing that Anna wants those passions for herself. She resents the implications of the church and the effect that it has over her husband. He escapes into a subterranean world that

Anna cannot enter. She, too, has brought out in Will powers that he had no knowledge of before he met her. She is struggling to retain the radiant and uncomplicated vision she had when she first met Will. In the face of the passions that arise out of the marital relationship, Anna can only preserve her ideal world by withdrawing from the conflict.

The answer to Anna's dilemma is found in the children. With the birth of the first child Anna and Will's relationship changes shape. The struggle for dominance and control of the relationship has exhausted both of them. Because they are from the same 'family', Anna and Will have similarities that do not contribute towards a full contact of two individuals, the one male and other female. After she visits the Baron Skrebensky, Anna recognizes the path she didn't take, she realizes the essential difference between the Baron and her husband.

Anna realized how different her own life might have been, how different her own living. Her soul stirred, she became as another person. Her intimacy with her husband passed away, the curious enveloping Brangwen intimacy, so warm, so close, so stifling, when one seemed always to be in contact with the other person, like a blood-relation, was annulled. 50

The struggle between Anna and Will is one of trying to discover where the one begins and the other leaves off. They are too close to each other. The Baron is distinct and separate from his wife as he is from all women. Anna is attracted to the detached male in him that she cannot see in Will.

Anna looked at his lean body, at his small, fine, lean legs and lean hands as he sat talking, and she flushed. She recognized the quality of the male in him, his lean, concentrated age, his informed fire, his faculty for sharp, deliberate response. He was so detached, so purely objective. A woman was thoroughly outside him. There was no confusion. 51

Anna has been raised by Brangwen standards but she is also aware of her true origins; the life of the Skrebensky's is the first alternate view of living that has ever appealed to her. It is like a return to the first Brangwen women looking over at the Vicar and wanting that difference of life for their men. Anna took a wrong turn when she tried to find fulfilment in Will because they were already linked by their family connections. The next generation must make another attempt at finding completion through connection with social beings who appear to be beyond the Brangwen sense of life.

What Anna does with the life she has chosen conditions the future generation's response to the world they encounter. Anna has altered Will's ability to experience the ecstasy of passion that he had with the Church.

Strive as he would, he could not keep the cathedral wonderful to him. He was disillusioned. That which had been his absolute, containing all heaven and earth, was become to him as to her, a shapely heap of dead matter - but dead, dead.⁵²

With that experience denied him, Will transfers part of his passion to Anna and the children while he attempts to retain a small part of his relationship with the Church. He repairs broken parts of the small church next door to his home, while his real desire, before his conflict with Anna, was to create beautiful objects for the glorification of the Church.

His life was shifting its centre, becoming more superficial. He had failed to become really articulate, failed to find real expression. He had to continue in the old form. But in spirit, he was uncreated.⁵³

Will's sense of unfulfilled spirit becomes a significant contribution to his relationship with the children, especially Ursula. Anna resigns from the struggle to find deeper connection in life, she is satisfied

with bearing children as she falls into the "trance of motherhood".⁵⁴

The birth of Ursula marks the beginning of another generation of Brangwens. To this point in time the survival of the Brangwens has sustained itself within very limited circumstances. The 'farm' has remained a solid bit of ground in the heritage of all the Brangwens, a focal point they may return to for renewal. Will is present in body at work but he is absent in himself, waiting for the time when he can rejoin Anna and the family. The one institution that gripped him has been brought to earth by Anna's clear perception of the relationship of inert stone to living person. They have very little contact with anyone outside of the immediate family, especially anyone who has any influence on them. The collier-world and the business-world are realities but the intense business of living is done within the family.

With the birth of Ursula the Brangwens become a family unit. Her birth is followed as quickly as nature allows by two more. Will must change into a father before he has quite gathered together the meaning of "husband".

The burden of so many lives depending on him wore the youth down. He had his work in the office, which was done purely by effort of will: he had his barren passion for the church; he had three young children.⁵⁵

Ursula develops under the intense attentions of the father. Anna is preoccupied with the children, leaving Will alone. He assumes the task of teaching Ursula to understand the world. She becomes so dependent on him that it borders on pain.

When he was disagreeable, the child echoed to the crying of some need in him, and she responded blindly. Her heart followed him as if he had some tie with her, and some love which he could not deliver.⁵⁶

She feels inadequate because she is so small and helpless, while these are the very qualities that actually draw her father towards her. He is in control of her, sure of his love from her. She supplies, as Anna once supplied for Tom Brangwen, a sense of the missing communion with the mother. In the same way that Will loses the battle with the mother, he also loses the contact with Ursula. As she grows and develops her own existence in the world, her father fails to grasp the sensitive being that is forming under his gaze. She is his flesh and blood but he fails to realize that she is more than that; she is separate and distinct from both her parents.

As the relationship between Ursula and her father swings further away from the intimate circle they once shared, Ursula grows more independent and less of an appendage of Will's. Will tramples through the sensibilities of young Ursula as she once tramped through his garden.

So very soon, she came to believe in the outward malevolence that was against her. And very early, she learned that even her adored father was part of this malevolence.⁵⁷

The final experience that seals Ursula off from her father is the incident on the swingboats at the fair. Will deliberately frightens Ursula in a fashion that is almost a compulsion to see how far he can push her.

And as the child watched him, for the first time in her life, a disillusion came over her, something cold and isolating. She went over to her mother. Her soul was dead towards him. It made her sick.⁵⁸

Will turns to carnal experiments outside of the family once he has lost control of Ursula. It is as if he must go down into the depths of his being where love and death meet to finally free himself from his destructive impulses. The man that emerges from these experiences becomes a public man. The 'new' Will,

...turned with interest to public life, to see what part he could take in it. This would give him scope for new activity, activity of a kind for which he was now created and released. He wanted to be unanimous with the whole of purposive mankind. 59

Ursula appears to be at the back of Will's mind when he starts the night school venture.

Brangwen involvement with the outside world is becoming more intense. The old life is changing and the Brangwen's attitudes must change with it. Ursula retreats to her grandmother's house for the peace and serenity it offers, a far cry from the organized anarchy of her own home.

She clung to her grandmother. Here was peace and security. Here, from her grandmother's peaceful room, the door opened on to the greater space, the past, which was so big, that all it contained seemed tiny; loves and births and deaths, tiny units and features within a vast horizon. That was a great relief, to know the tiny importance of the individual, within the great past. 60

Ursula is growing up in the shadow of forces that make one feel insignificant. The child is delighted in the ability to avoid conflict and confrontation by becoming invisible, but the woman she is becoming must give up the games of invisibility and escape if she is to satisfy her own questions. Ursula is keenly aware of her distinctness from others as she begins to realize that the old paths no longer lead anywhere. She recognizes authority but rebels against it.

She felt she could always do as he wanted if she managed to avoid a battle with Authority and the authorized Powers. But if she gave herself away, she would be lost, destroyed.... This strange sense of cruelty and ugliness always imminent, ready to seize hold upon her, this feeling of the grudging power of the mob lying in wait for her, who was the exception, formed one of the deepest influences of her life. 61

She explores the possibilities of religion, rejecting the sacrifice of Christ as it is expressed in church doctrine. She doesn't want to

feel responsible for the blood of Christ or His death. It is too personal, almost obscene, to be made to feel obligated to pay a debt one does not have any experience of having incurred. Ursula realizes that the guilt she has been made to feel does not begin within her own centre. She learns to live within the confines imposed from outside of herself, to succeed in school and the outside community by appearing to believe in the standards of others. She is in retreat rather than abjectly submissive to the will of the social context she must live.

As Ursula moves into womanhood, she feels the weight of self-responsibility settling about her.

She became aware of herself, that she was a separate entity in the midst of an unseparated obscurity, that she must go somewhere, she must become something.... Why, oh why must one grow up, why must one inherit this heavy, numbing responsibility of living an undiscovered life? 62

Ursula comes to the realization that what one cannot experience in everyday life has no meaning; the fanfare of idealism does not bridge the doubts and fears she feels as she prepares to enter the world a vulnerable and sensitive person. Ursula knows that she must tentatively begin to touch others. The family relationships have only been the preparatory groundwork; the outsiders are the ones that Ursula must come to terms with and, through them, also come to terms with herself.

An echo of the old world imposes itself on the Brangwen world. Young Anton Skrebensky enters into Ursula's life and introduces the possibility of another life for her. He is part of the outside world and he, at least his family, are a part of the Brangwen history. She admires what she sees as his directness and his ability to be self-assured at all times. He attracts her curiosity but he is not what he seems.

He seemed more and more to give her a sense of the vast world, a sense of distances and large masses of humanity. It drew her as a scent draws a bee from afar. But it also hurt her. ⁶³

Ursula is still dependent on her visions of things rather than on the things themselves. Anton is the tinderbox that will set fire to the remaining images that Ursula has assimilated from her society. The sensual Ursula, who had visions of a snow-white Christ and knights riding into the sunset carrying her before them, disappears under the strain of the vitality that real sensual experience brings out. She has an instinctual centre that cannot be overwhelmed by the apparent worldliness of Anton. In a discussion with Anton about his chosen profession as a soldier, Ursula makes clear the vitality and sensitivity that is her core.

"But we aren't the nation. There are heaps of other people who are the nation."

"They might say they weren't either."

"Well, if everyone said it, there wouldn't be a nation. But I should still be myself," she asserted brilliantly. ⁶⁴

Later, in the same conversation, Anton declares that he would fight for the nation because he belongs to the nation. Ursula replies,

"It seems to me," she answered, "as if you weren't anybody - as if there weren't anybody there, where you are. Are you anybody, really? You seem like nothing to me." ⁶⁵

It is the spontaneous self that protects Ursula from becoming swallowed up in the certainty of the social milieu. She refuses to be one of common masses, to submerge herself to mechanical forces. This is her quality of survival, a quality that Anton lacks so greatly that he has no core inside that he can use for support. Always living outside with strangers, sent to school as soon as he was old enough, Anton has no vitality of connection. The old aristocracy that Anton comes from has

thinner blood than the Brangwens. Ursula's instinct for staying alive in all aspects of her being is the legacy of her forefathers. She knows things in the blood that cannot be articulated in language. What is more important is that she trusts those things. Anton comes to be all that is against Ursula's vitality. His philosophy of life is his life.

The good of the greatest number was all that mattered. That which was the greatest good for them all, collectively, was the greatest good for the individual. And so, every man must give himself to support the state, and so labour for the greatest good of all. One might make improvements in the state, perhaps, but always with a view to preserving it intact.⁶⁶

The departure of Anton to fulfil his ideology and return hardened in it is the beginning of another growth for Ursula. The battle between the two is incomplete but they will return to finish the necessary struggle at a time when they have both encountered more of the world external to both of them.

Ursula comes into contact with a woman called Miss Inger who introduces Ursula to the world of the intelligentsia, the world of self-abused and abusing people.

Ursula was introduced by her friend to various women and men, educated, unsatisfied people, who still moved within the smug provincial society as if they were nearly as tame as their outward behaviour showed, but who were inwardly raging and mad....It was a strange world the girl was swept into, like a chaos, like the end of the world.⁶⁷

The contact with Miss Inger is finally broken when Ursula introduces her to Ursula's coal-manager uncle. They are both 'dead' people, well suited for each other. The environment of the coal town touches Ursula deeply.

The place had the strange desolation of a ruin. Colliers hanging about in gangs and groups, or passing along the asphalt pavements heavily to work, seemed not like living people, but like spectres. The rigidity of the blank

streets, the homogeneous amorphous sterility of the whole suggested death rather than life....There it lay, like the new foundations of a red-brick confusion rapidly spreading, like a skin-disease. ⁶⁸

In this little town Ursula learns a lesson she has never truly experienced before; the hopelessness of a large portion of mankind who must fit themselves to their work, become their work, so that they might continue to live.

No more would she subscribe to the great colliery, to the great machine which has taken us all captives. In her soul, she was against it, she disowned even its power. It had only to be forsaken to be inane, meaningless. And she knew it was meaningless. But it needed a great, passionate effort of will on her part, seeing the colliery, still to maintain her knowledge that it was meaningless. ⁶⁹

Miss Inger and the young Tom Brangwen are a good match for each other. Ursula senses this and relieves herself of Miss Inger's world at the same time she rejects the machinery world of her uncle. He and Miss Inger are the inertia creeping around Ursula that must be removed from her contact. The marriage of these two people means that Ursula has freed herself from both of them, they have been neutralized for her. Until now she has been a girl living off the good will of others, a pawn in the hands of those who appear to have more control and power in the world. Now she must take responsibility for herself, engage the world on its terms, armed as she is with vestigial idealism and a sense of reality she has acquired with her experience of the world. She knows that sexuality exists and has form, both male and female. She does not, however, have the awareness of how difficult it is for the individual to overcome a social and historical process in others that has gathered strength and force through time. It is something she must learn, both for herself and for the others she becomes connected to.

Given the limited scope for women in terms of employment, Ursula

becomes a teacher. She takes a position within her own community but in the poorer quarter of town. Here she must mingle with the common people, at least the children of the common people, and she muses on her impact on these children. Her idealism is still at work.

She dreamed how she would make the little, ugly children love her. She would be so personal. Teachers were always so hard and impersonal. There was no vivid relationship. She would make everything personal and vivid, she would give herself, she would give, give, give all her great stores of wealth to her children, she would make them so happy, and they would prefer her to any teacher on the face of the earth.⁷⁰

She is forced out of her dream very early as she realizes that she has neither the skills nor the force of personality to break through the years of brutalization that the children have experienced. Ursula must resort to violence simply to resist the brutality of the children and the system that she has engaged in a battle for survival. She cannot win, she can only survive. She must come to know that a man, the principal of the school, will exert his power over her to make her submit to his authority for no other reason than to protect the integrity of the system engulfing both of them.

Mr Harby stood so strong, and so male...such a man, with strength and male power, and a certain blind, native beauty. She might have liked him as a man. And here he stood in some other capacity, bullying over such a trifle as a boy's speaking out without permission. Yet he was not a little, fussy man. He seemed to have some cruel, stubborn, evil spirit, he was imprisoned in a task too small and petty for him, which yet, in a servile acquiescence, he would fulfil, because he had to earn his living.⁷¹

While hating the system she finds herself in, Ursula doggedly persists in fulfilling the obligations of her new independence. She will not give up the work and admit that she must rely on others, her family or anyone, to survive. She has the hope of completing her teacher's degree

and moving into a better teaching position where the children will not appear, at least, to be as negative as the children she deals with in the present. Ursula finds that she can subdue the callousness and cruelty around herself but the cost is great, it is false in her.

Still searching for the elusive safety that she feels must exist somewhere, Ursula enters university as if she was entering a nunnery to meet and speak with God.

At first, she preserved herself from criticism. She would not consider the professors as men, ordinary men who ate bacon, and pulled on their boots before coming to college. They were the black-gowned priests of knowledge, serving forever in a remote, hushed temple. They were the initiated, and the beginning and the end of the mystery was in their keeping.⁷²

She senses the same elements in the university that she found in the colliery town at work to maintain and control the people in their power.

The life went out of her studies, why, she did not know. But the whole thing seemed sham, spurious;....It was a second-hand dealer's shop, and one bought an equipment for an examination. This was only a little side-show to the factories of the town. Gradually the perception stole into her. This was no religious retreat, no seclusion of pure learning. It was a little apprentice-shop where one was further equipped for making money. The college itself was a little, slovenly laboratory for the factory.⁷³

A conclusion has been reached in Ursula's life, she rejects the respectable social motifs that run through the majority of people's lives. Always she is refusing what she has found outside of her family home and always she is striving to find something positive to live by. This side of Ursula has not been allowed to expand itself. She does not realize, at first, that her rejection of alternate patterns of life is positive because it frees her from the necessity of conforming to rigid standards of being in the world. She is learning to trust herself in remaining alive by refusing the answers to living supplied

by others.

The return of Anton is the final episode in Ursula's growth cycle in the novel. She has clung to the memory and the promise that his young sensuality seemed to give her. She was a girl moving into womanhood and he was a strong, vital connector between the two. He brought her sexuality out without ever touching her deeply. The unfinished business of Anton must be completed before Ursula can be free to go beyond Anton. Their first meeting after the long separation is quite different from what Ursula expects.

She knew, vaguely, in the first minute, that they were enemies come together in a truce. Every movement and word of his was alien to her being.⁷⁴

They have an affair that leads to their engagement. Ursula acquiesces out of curiosity and a vagueness of purpose in her life. She thinks that perhaps this will be the answer, to have another physical body at her disposal and to feel safe in the sanctity of marriage. She tries to break the engagement but finds herself compelled back by pity for him. Ursula realizes that she is in control of Anton, that he lives for her direction and she shrinks from the contact. She realizes that what the relationship offers her is responsibility for him as well as for herself. She refuses the burden.

The epilogue to the Anton and Ursula affair is her pregnancy. Once more the social forces close down on Ursula. The coming child forces her into a submissive attitude. Absorbed by the many questions in her mind, Ursula wanders into a field of horses. The environment turns black and threatening and she finds herself trapped by the power of nature. It is the last lesson. She had agreed, in part, to become one of the victims by submitting to the social order. She escapes from

danger by her will to survive. By using the last of her strength she frees herself from the horses, refusing to submit to natural law, and she frees herself from Anton. The child is aborted literally and metaphorically, the embryo that was to be born and the child that she was. The new Ursula is freed, at last, from the past and the implications and expectations of the social world. She is a product of the earth, strong and dark. She knows that she has power and must trust to the living core of herself for direction. The struggle is still incomplete, as it always must be, but she has the knowledge that she will not go under the water not to come up again. She wins through at this stage and is prepared for more. What that 'more' will be is a mystery that both frightens and delights her but she knows it is there, just beyond. For her, at least, there are still possibilities.

She knew that the sordid people who crept hard-scaled and separate on the face of the world's corruption were living still, that the rainbow was arched in their blood and would quiver to life in their spirit, that they would cast off their horny coverings of disintegration, that new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new germination, to a new growth, rising to the light and the wind and the clean rain of heaven. 75

The fact that Lawrence keeps reiterating the ardent hopes of a new generation of men does not detract from the fact that he creates characters, particularly Ursula, who have the ability to change and adapt to the new circumstances of the world without losing their connection to an order of humanness. His characters are sensitive and vital people who are not overcome by the brutality that surrounds them. Lawrence's ancestors are not as clearly articulated as those of Kazantzakis but they are essentially the same. Lawrence calls on the powers that are in the blood to help in keeping one clear from the murkiness of social institutions that would have one controlled

and devitalized. There is a dangerous element to Lawrence's portrayals of men and women. They cannot be classified or made finite by an act of criticism. The language of Lawrence eludes finalization partly through its indistinctness and partly through its Biblical quality. Lawrence is a preacher of sorts but he does not preach the brotherhood of man. He preaches the essential humanness of men and women. A reader can find in Lawrence's writings the power to understand Lawrence on a less articulate level than language allows.

We must give up our assurance, our conceit of final knowledge, our vanity of charted right and wrong. We must give these up forever. We cannot map out the way. We shall never be able to map out the way to the new. All our maps, all our charts, all our right and wrong are only records from the past. But for the new there is a new and for ever incalculable element.⁷⁶

Here Lawrence is not appealing to the individual in the sense of that individual's ego-centre, he is appealing to the commonality of flesh and blood and unrecorded history. The problems of man, as Lawrence sees it, come about through the interference of the intellect and the ego. The ego has been taught to exclude itself from others while giving the appearance of being for the others. The one who can act to control others in the world with the greatest facility is the perverted leader, the dehumanizer of man and himself. Lawrence saw men turned into objects by the forces around them, the coal mines created a new consciousness among the elite. Class distinctions become species distinctions when the owner of the mine recognizes no connection between himself and the men who work and provide for him.

Man is anything from a forked radish to an immortal spirit. He is pretty well everything that ever was or will be, absolutely human and absolutely inhuman. If we did but know it, we have every imaginable and unimaginable feeling streaking somewhere through us.⁷⁷

It is when one selects feelings from the assortment and says, 'This is me and no other thing will I admit,' that the problem of connection occurs. Survival in the changing world relies on connection and affirmation from without and within the person. Lawrence lays claim to the lower centres of the body as the sources of that affirmation and connection. In a world where articulation is becoming more and more the source of identity, the lower sensibilities have, paradoxically, less ambiguity than the intellectual ones. It is here that Lawrence tries to establish techniques of comprehension through direct feeling and the ability to trust what one experiences. As Lady Chatterley says,

"Why should I believe you, Clifford, when I feel that whatever God there is has at last wakened in my guts, as you call them, and is rippling so happily there, like dawn. Why should I believe you, when I feel so much the contrary?"⁷⁸

Survivors must learn to trust their sources as well as their sensibilities.

Lawrence offers another way to remain free of the hindrances and destroyers of sensitivity in man: know the social forces at work to capture and contain one and evade them through an awareness of deeper feelings than they allow. The language of Lawrence can stir the reader to acquire ways of surviving but they must be, as Lawrence says, new ways from old sources. Lawrence has the vision of free men and women who could act and interact with strengthening certainty among themselves but he could not formulate exact rules and regulations that would lead to this condition. To do so would give the lie to his basic premise. Remaining alive in an inert world means one has responsibilities to one's possibilities.

The Rainbow is one of Lawrence's more optimistic novels. His basic prognosis for mankind and womankind is less than hopeful. Ursula

is left intact but only after a significant struggle with the forces that surround her, social conformity and pressure to 'do what's right'. Lawrence does not want Ursula to fail, he needs her character as he has created it for a further engagement with Birkin in Women in Love. The Rainbow directs all of Lawrence's power of persuasion towards the women to the defeat of the men. It will require a significant figure such as Birkin to subdue Ursula into some form of social contract, to bring her out of her vision of the last scene from The Rainbow. All of humanity has a dark side and the question is whether or not to try and reject it or to learn to live with it, to allow the dark side its room for expression. The Rainbow negates many in the process of bringing Ursula to light and it might well be that those individuals deserved no more concern than they received. Lawrence was not adverse to scathing those whom he felt deserved it. In his art, Lawrence was released from the consequences of his characters' actions upon each other. They fade, they cease to exist. Anton ceases to be a part of the novel by his marriage and his appointment to India. Ursula alone remains as the significant figure in The Rainbow. She has won her first round; she has eluded capture and nullification. By refusing to join in the social conformity that surrounds her, Ursula has expressed the very human right to say 'no'.

Kurt Vonnegut

If D. H. Lawrence is addressing the dark sources of the body, Vonnegut is asking for some sensibility and sensitivity from sources closer to the surface. Other than hope, the last resort of a desperate population may be in the laughter it can generate. Lawrence occasionally used humour in an attempt to pierce the deadening influences that he saw growing around people, but he had an element of the superior laugh--satiric cynicism--which was his own personal method of surviving in a world that refused to give him space to live. Vonnegut's laughter is less vitriolic, but it is just as piercing as Lawrence's and, perhaps, more forceful because it is less pretentious. Laughter, too, can come from the dark sources within. Psychology claims that laughter is an expression of confusion that is suddenly channeled by the punch-line, be it verbal or physical. The act of laughing is the resolution of conflict created by an incongruous experience. A dignified gentleman slipping on a banana peel can be funny by virtue of the incongruities that surround the event and the elements that go into the event itself. It may be the juxtaposition of unrelated elements brought together in an unconsidered relationship such as the dignified fellow and the peel. In a sense, it is a new way of viewing old material.

The meaningful difference between man and animals may not be that man can laugh, but that man can laugh at himself. Laughter can be an element of destruction or of survival, depending upon how and to what it is applied. The unusual characteristic of Vonnegut's writing, which distinguishes him within the literature of survival, is that he does not create elaborate distortions of his raw material, but rather that

he simply extends institutional relationships and reduces the elements inherent in them to their very logical conclusions. An example from God Bless You Mr. Rosewater illustrates the point:

"In every big transaction," said Leech, "there is a magic moment during which a man has surrendered a treasure, and during which the man who is due to receive it has not yet done so. An alert lawyer will make that moment his own, possessing the treasure for a magic microsecond, taking a little of it, passing it on. If the man who is to receive the treasure is unused to wealth, has an inferiority complex and shapeless feelings of guilt, as most people do, the lawyer can often take as much as half the bundle, and still receive the recipient's blubbering thanks." 79

Kurt Vonnegut is in no way a dangerous writer. The readers of his material are only startled into an awareness of things they already knew through experience, but which they never allowed to reach the surface. The one thing the reader will become, if he recognizes even a small portion of the material as being his own unexpressed feelings, is a better survivor. What the reader himself does after reading Vonnegut may or may not be dangerous to the social system. Vonnegut only serves as the microwave transmitter picking up and magnifying signals from the environment. The signals are always there, but sometimes it is necessary to learn how to pick them up for oneself.

The Player Piano exemplifies Vonnegut's magnification of the signals emanating from industrial society. Here, industrialization has reached its apex of power over the abilities of man. Machines control the manufacture of goods without the intervention of man at all. The essence of a master machinist has been captured on tape, and that tape controls the mechanical actions of the machine:

This was the essence of Rudy as far as his machine was concerned, as far as the war effort had been concerned. The tape was the essence distilled from the small, polite man with the big hands and black fingernails; from the man who thought the world could be saved if everyone read a verse from the Bible every night; ... 80

The only people who have any place in the vast complex that is the Ilium Works are the managers, the meter watchers, the decision makers, and their subordinates. Paul Proteus, the manager of it all, is not quite one with the society of managers. He is attracted to living things and to old things. He tries to introduce a cat into the Works as a controller of mice: the one creature small enough, insignificant enough, and tenacious enough to have survived the building of the Works. These little creatures can destroy machines and the smooth operation of production simply by nibbling at the coverings of electric wires and short-circuiting the lines. Paul also refuses to have the old part of the Works, where Edison first experimented with his toys, re-done. The managers and their wives live in a very separate and distinct world from the masses of unemployed that live in Homestead. Moving upward across class lines can be accomplished only by computer decreed potential; in other words, intelligence quotient. The majority of people are not only locked into a slightly sordid existence as consumers, they also have no meaningful work to engage in. The government offers two choices for employment: the army or the Reeks and Wrecks (more formally known as the Reconstruction and Reclamation Corps). In the army, the soldiers are not even given guns unless they are posted outside of the country. The Reeks and Wrecks do minor repair work on public works that does not warrant the use of a machine. It is an orderly and well-controlled world, much cleaner and healthier than the old one for all concerned.

However, the desperate attempts of the people of Homestead to be involved in a meaningful way with the forces around them indicate that something is wrong somewhere.

Into the solid orderly life of Paul Proteus comes trouble in the form of Finnerty, a mad Irishman who is also brilliant and therefore tolerated by the upper class:

It was an appalling thought, to be so well-integrated into the machinery of society and history as to be able to move in only one plane, and along one line. Finnerty's arrival was disturbing, for it brought to the surface the doubt that life should be that way. Paul had been considering hiring a psychiatrist to make him docile, content with his lot, amiable to all. 81

The eventual outcome of Finnerty's involvement with the life in and around the Ilium Works is a rebellion of the Homesteaders. An organization called the Ghost Shirts is formed; named after the Indian rebellion of the same name. For the Indians, it was one last attempt to overcome the white men who were taking over their land and killing off their source of livelihood. The Indians believed that their ancestors were with them and would protect them from the bullets of the whites. This proved to be a fatal belief. The only thing that could be said for the Indians' attempt at freedom was that it beat sitting around waiting to be annihilated. Paul's attempt at freedom is expressed in his becoming the leader of the rebellion, and later as a spokesman at his trial. His experiences that culminate in the trial reflect a disillusionment with the system he has spent his entire life supporting. The great dream of American know-how and efficiency has ended in the nightmare of machines taking precedence over everything human. At the trial, Paul states,

The main business of humanity is to do a good job of being human beings, not to serve as appendages to machines, institutions, and systems. 82

That is truly Paul's belief, even if he himself doesn't know how to do the job.

The rebel Ghost Shirt Society is, of course, a failure. Rhetoric will never overthrow institutions as easily as it maintains them. The powers that be are too great and powerful. Up to the last moment, Paul is not even sure whether he is being manipulated from the managers' side or from the rebels' side. The reader is never quite sure either. The one moment in which Paul sees with clarity the whole milieu and his place within it is when he is accused by the prosecutor of joining the Ghost Shirts because he hated his father. Paul's response to this is,

What the prosecutor has just done is to prove what everything about this world we've made for ourselves seems determined to prove, what the Ghost Shirt Society is determined to disprove; that I'm no good, you're no good, that we're no good because we're human. ⁸³

At that moment, Paul knows that it doesn't matter if others think they are in control of him or that they have used him for their own ends. He knows that he has made an important breakthrough and exposed the essence of his society. Machines are not the malevolent element. They are simply machines doing what machines are supposed to do. It is the supporting system that elevates the importance of machines for productivity and efficiency that is malevolent and destructive to human beings, particularly to those human beings who have the greatest intimacy with it.

Player Piano has another expression of sense in it. During the growth of Paul's dissatisfaction with his society, the Shah of Bratpuhr visits the United States, and insists on calling the people that he sees there 'Takarū,' or slave. Halyard, the Shah's personal guide, tries to explain to him that the people are not slaves, but citizens.

The Shah still insists that people who live and act as he sees them doing must be slaves. The Shah is not taken in by Halyard's rhetoric, or by the apparent omnipotence of the great computer EPICAC XIV. The machine fails to answer the Shah's question and he calls it 'Baku,' or false god. The question is a riddle that has religious implication for the people of Bratpuhr. Kashdrahr, the personal interpreter for the Shah, explains:

"Our people believe," he said shyly, "that a great, all-wise god will come among us one day, and we shall know him, for he shall be able to answer the riddle, which EPICAC could not answer. When he comes," said Kashdrahr simply, "there will be no more suffering on earth." 84

The machine has been touted as doing just that in America, but the falseness of that mythology is only emphasized by the Shah's obvious contempt for it. America is willing to give Bratpuhr all the aid and machines and classification systems it needs to become more civilized, but the Shah is wary of the intention behind this:

"Shah says," said Kashdrahr, "before we take this first step, please, would you ask EPICAC what people are for?" 85

At this moment, the limousine in which they are riding becomes involved in the rising rebellion in Ilium. There is no doubt that the Shah would not accept such an offer when he has no respect for anything that he has been shown. Before the simple logic of the Shah, the towers of industrialism crumble into the dust. The ultimate industrial revolution, which promised to extend man, has only reduced him.

The great rebellion of the Ghost Society fails. The smashed machines are even repaired by the hands that destroyed them. There is a restless urge in the men from Homestead to build, even out of the

ashes. The leader and instigator of it all, a man called Lasher, knew it was bound to fail, but the rebellion served his purposes. As the leaders turn themselves over to the authorities of the old regime to save bloodshed, he toasts the group.

"To all good Indians," he said, "past, present, and future. Or, more to the point - to the record." 86

Paul follows suit but he already sees the eagerness of those rebels to rebuild in the same patterns they attempted to destroy. Another leader gives Paul the only hope there is.

"This isn't the end, you know," he said. "Nothing ever is, nothing ever will be - not even Judgment Day." 87

It is small comfort, but so far history has proven the gentleman right. Paul should be the first to realize that his changing involvement from ruling class to rebellion can be repeated time and time again. The essence of being human - the one thing the machines do not have - is unpredictable behaviour.

Vonnegut goes on to explore other future possibilities of human and inhuman action, leaving the choice to the reader. In Cat's Cradle, he depicts a world where all of the water has been turned into ice, a special kind of ice called Ice-9. This is, of course, the end of the story, the end of humanity and the end of the world. How and why the original crystal of Ice-9 came into existence forms the beginning and the middle.

Vonnegut is always introducing new religions into his novels aware, no doubt, of the intensity of the religious experience and the depth it provides for people who live an otherwise painful and superficial life. In Player Piano it was literally the worship of the machine. In Cat's Cradle, the new religion is called Boknonism.

Some of the religious beliefs of Bokononism are: that all individuals are divided into groups called "Karasses", a kind of family whose members become involved with each other for no apparent reason or purpose; that when circumstances prove too engulfing and elude understanding one should repeat the phrase "Busy, busy, busy" as an appropriate explanation of the cosmic process; and that the touching of the soles of the feet places people in a harmonious contact with each other.

John, the narrator of the story and one of the last survivors, begins the story with his research for an article on the fathers of the atomic bomb, that intimate group of the Manhattan Project. He finds himself entangled with the entire surviving members of the family of Dr. Felix Hoenikker, one of the scientists involved in the development of the atomic bomb used on Hiroshima. In terms of Bokonon, the three surviving children are members of John's karass. Each of these children, now adults, has a piece of Ice-9, the final legacy of their father. The smallest fragment of Ice-9 has the capacity for destroying the world and, as it turns out, the United States and Russia also have this ultimate weapon. The only reason Dr. Hoenikker had for producing the icy substance was simple curiosity, like a child that is given a puzzle to solve. Science triumphs once more over humanity, for Dr. Hoenikker took no responsibility for anything.

The humanity in the novel revolves around the sayings of Bokonon:

"Beware of the man who works hard to learn something, learns it, and finds himself no wiser than before," Bokonon tells us. "He is full of murderous resentment of people who are ignorant without having come by their ignorance the hard way." 88

Bokononism is the religion of a people who have nothing to live for but who continue to live. Its center is San Lorenzo, the Barracuda Capital

of the World. The religion grew out of an agreement by the co-founders of San Lorenzo to try and alleviate the misery of the people they found living on a barren island.

"As the living legend of the cruel tyrant in the city and the gentle holy man in the jungle grew, so, too, did the happiness of the people grow. They were all employed full time as actors in a play they understood, that any human being anywhere could understand and applaud."⁸⁹

The religion does offer solace to a population that has nothing to hope for in life but it has a disastrous affect on the two men who begin it. "We become what we pretend to be, so we must be careful what we pretend to be."⁹⁰ The two men find themselves becoming the tyrant and the holy man in reality, two roles that they assumed almost jokingly. They provide relief for the people but they find that they have no alternative but to continue to be what they have said they are. The religion is outlawed in San Lorenzo because the people can direct their misery into a secret sect that makes them feel more powerful, more in control. The first words in the Book of Bokonon are: "All the true things I am about to tell you are shameless lies."⁹¹ The "shameless lies" that Vonnegut tells are for a purpose as well.

The possibilities of human nature and the possibilities of future histories are the "shameless lies" that fill the pages of a Vonnegut novel. Survival is dependent on understanding the past so that one can live and expand in the present and even play with the future. The absurdities of Vonnegut's novels serve to illuminate the absurdities that everyone carries about with them as protection against the stark cold of a world without human interaction, a world possessed by the larger conclusion of cold logic and objectivity. Cat's Cradle runs out of possibilities, Ice-9 puts an end to dialogue, to conversation

and to life on the planet Earth. The introduction of Ice-9 to the environment is an accident; no one deliberately destroys anything but, by its very existence, the destruction of life is already half-accomplished.

When one listens to the military and political leaders of the present day discussing the positive effects of the neutron bomb as opposed to the nuclear bomb, one must ask oneself just how absurd Vonnegut actually is in his description of San Lorenzo or the Ilium complex. The island 'paradise' turns into the apocalypse, the American dream becomes the nightmare of dehumanization. What price are we willing to pay for progress when the price always includes the quality or the quantity of human life? The rebels in Ilium and the rebels in San Lorenzo have something in common; they have nothing to live for without their involvement in countering the oppressive forces that surround them. If one doesn't care about the human then one has tendered one's resignation to humanity. The lowest common denominator in survival is caring about surviving. Without that, the rest is null and void and one cannot care about oneself without implicating the rest of humanity, that is, if one admits that one is human.

Notes to Chapter 3

1 Nikos Kazantzakis, Report to Greco, trans. P.A. Bien, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1965, p.59.

2 Ibid. p.441.

3 Nikos Kazantzakis, Freedom or Death, Ballantine Books, Inc., New York, 1965, p.73.

4 Ibid. pp.32-33.

5 Ibid. p.259.

6 Ibid. p.114.

7 Ibid. p.435.

8 Ibid. p.443.

9 Ibid. p.444.

10 Ibid. p.449.

11 Ibid. pp.450-452.

12 Ibid. p.450.

13 Ibid. pp.319-320.

14 Ibid. p.323.

15 Ibid. p.394.

16 Ibid. p.489.

17 Ibid. p.486.

18 Nikos Kazantzakis, Zorba the Greek, Ballantine Books, Inc., New York, 1965, pp.64-65.

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20 Ibid. p.29.

21 Ibid. p.39.

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23 Ibid. pp.227-228.

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- 26 Ibid. pp.125-126.
- 27 Ibid. p.40.
- 28 Ibid. p.116.
- 29 Ibid. p.64.
- 30 Ibid. p.311.
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- 32 Ibid. p.335.
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- 34 Ibid. p.310.
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- 39 D. H. Lawrence, Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places, Penguin Books Ltd., Harmondsworth, 1971, p.167.
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- 43 Ibid. p.17.
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- 45 Ibid. p.51.
- 46 Ibid. p.103.
- 47 Ibid. p.106.
- 48 Ibid. p.114.

- 49 Ibid. p.149.
- 50 Ibid. p.200.
- 51 Ibid. p.198.
- 52 Ibid. p.205.
- 53 Ibid. p.206.
- 54 Ibid. p.220.
- 55 Ibid. p.220.
- 56 Ibid. p.221.
- 57 Ibid. p.224.
- 58 Ibid. p.226.
- 59 Ibid. p.238.
- 60 Ibid. p.260.
- 61 Ibid. p.270.
- 62 Ibid. p.283.
- 63 Ibid. p.293.
- 64 Ibid. p.311.
- 65 Ibid. p.311.
- 66 Ibid. p.328.
- 67 Ibid. p.343.
- 68 Ibid. p.345.
- 69 Ibid. p.350.
- 70 Ibid. p.367.
- 71 Ibid. p.387.
- 72 Ibid. p.431.
- 73 Ibid. pp.434-435.
- 74 Ibid. p.442.
- 75 Ibid. p.495.

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78 D. H. Lawrence, Lady Chatterley's Lover, New American Library, New York, copyright 1962, p.220.

79 Kurt Vonnegut, God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater, Dell Publishing Co., Ltd., New York, copyright 1966, p.9.

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81 Ibid. p.41.

82 Ibid. p.297.

83 Ibid. p.299.

84 Ibid. p.121.

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87 Ibid. p.320.

88 Kurt Vonnegut, Cat's Cradle, Dell Publishing Co., Ltd., New York, copyright 1975, p.187.

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Chapter 4 Conclusion

We begin to understand art and literature only when we begin to understand ourselves. The great western movement of civilization has been towards the depersonalization of the world at large. Sanitation, sterilization and vaccination are the great triumphs of progress. Few people raise their own food, build their own houses, make their own clothing or come to their own conclusions about how the world is running or where it is going. Democracy places the individual at the apex of the political system yet who has heard of a majority of one? Governments require numbers instead of names as identifying codes for individuals, whether or not they are in prison. We are all implicated in this world. If we accept it without question, we become the numbers assigned to us.

On the outside, it appears as if western society and the individuals within its boundaries are surviving well, yet one small incident such as the shortage of gasoline in the United States is enough to engender a series of irrational acts, physical violence and a melodramatic plea from the federal administration. The cracks are beginning to show in the social structures that support the ideology of more and more commodities in lieu of human connections. We can even buy the 'future' now - goods and services that would otherwise be unavailable unless we worked 'x' number of hours - through easily repayable credit plans, easily repayable only in so far as we sell our future work for pleasure now. The price of our dehumanization keeps going up as we 'need' more and more pleasure now so that we can ignore the unpleasantness of tomorrow.

How does one stop the game and yet still remain in contact with the world? The realization that there is a game going on and that

one is dissatisfied with the game plan leads to further speculation around how one might better live. The refusal to play the game is the first act of rebellion whether or not it is recognized as such. Faced with the disruption of what one considered to be the way the world operated, one must go back to the very first occupation that one ever held; the occupation of being human. Everything else that one becomes throughout life is still rooted in humanness, a factor not to be forgotten. One of the basic problems for people is in believing and respecting humanness as the most basic element of human life. Every person deserves respect on the basis of humanness, it is the only true quality that all humanity shares. Experiences and histories will differ but the root is the same; one must respect that root or lose all meaning in being human.

Survival, once one has broken through the veneer of socialization, becomes a different thing from survival when one was a somnambulist. It is difficult to sleep when alarms keep ringing in one's head. Survival means that one must find confirmation, information and the possible means of remaining wholly alive. We cannot live without assurance from others that we are alive. The act of rebellion is initially a solitary act; it must be personal refusal to accept the conditions and the expectations of the social milieu because they, in some way, negate the individual's right to be human. We may be standing alone on the edge of the abyss but it is our human right to say where we go from there. The existentialist would, by inclination, jump down into the pit but the rebel, committed to surviving and bringing others into rebellion, would attempt to leap across the abyss. The inevitable is the inevitable but the great difference in living remains in what one

tries to do. The rebel who wants to survive is celebrating the ecstasy of living, whereas the alternative jump celebrates the ecstasy of death.

The act of rebelling is a creative act in that something must be confronted and destroyed. The rebel destroys his previous responses to a given situation and he must create new ways of relating to that situation. His world becomes tentative, apprehensive and alive. One never feels so alive as when one does not know what the next moment will bring. The appeal of such one dimensional characters as James Bond to the general public is an expression of this feeling but, again, the public experiences only the vicarious thrills of living creatively. We have existed too long without danger, without doubt, without real contact with our fellow humans. Human beings can be a dangerous lot but one must sort out what makes them dangerous and under what conditions they become threatening.

We know that, in the world of our experience, it is impossible to gather a complete picture of the world as it exists. There is always too much information for sorting so we select what we think we require for our needs. Formal history supplies us with a simulation of unity and cohesion in a changing and elusive world. The world as we know it is constantly slipping into the past, moving away from us even as we try to grasp it. The creative novelist does much the same thing as a formal history book attempts to do but he makes no apologies to the external world for the truth of his vision; it only needs to be real. The novelist who accomplishes his plan for creating a unified and self-contained world is expressing his humanity in the creation. Here is the other side, the rebel's side, the human side. The act of creation destroys the old world and focuses the new world with human eyes.

The fictional world that the writer of survival literature creates is of human proportion. It is of a size that can be understood on a personal and human level. Individuals are submerged in the great movements, the great figures that have dominated historical landscapes. History as it is taught means that the only significant figures are those that are so much larger than life. It is the inversion of importance in the novel that opens its history to people; small people matter, they are the movers and the carriers of experience. The novel has the potential for affirming the existence of the individual and for making the individual life significant. It is out of this knowledge and assurance that one can find courage to act in the real world, to break through the veneer of socialization into responsibility for oneself.

Rebellion must contain more than rejection, it must also have an assertion directed at creating more connection in life. The rebel assumes a heavy burden of judgment because one must decide for oneself how to live. There is no escape into irresponsibility when one fully realizes the burden. One must accept the freedom with the guilt that accompanies that freedom, there is no one else to blame. The only choices available are to survive with uncertainty as a human being or to survive as part of the machinery of history.

One must be able to recognize the machinery of history and there is no better place than in the novel where the world is miniaturized and contained. The novelist lies if he tries to manipulate the energies that flow through characters living the world of the novel. Kazantzakis uses only what he knows about men and their relationships to the landscape and the powers in control. There is little doubt that Kazantzakis knew little about women; he presents them in a stylized suffering role or

as the eternal harlot waiting to devour men. Kazantzakis's world of his novels is the condensation of his own history, his own experience. His world was a borderline between western technology and eastern philosophy. There is no doubt, however, that the characters he creates are alive and vital within their environment. His major characters, Zorba and Captain Michales, rebel out of the desire to create more vital connections for themselves. Michales wants to climb too high, his rebellion ends up in being against himself. The rebel should not want to be a god, that is to deny human connection and human suffering. Zorba, on the other hand, embraces both the light and the dark and creates his own life against his peasant beginnings. One never loses sight in the novels that there are other human beings present and that the death of anyone in the novels is the final defilement of humanity. Michales and Zorba did not spring fully formed from the head of Kazantzakis; they have a history that brought them to the point of confrontation and exultation in the novels. The thin red thread that connects everyone is clearly visible, the source of being human. The complex technological world does not exist in the landscapes of Kazantzakis; his vision is free from the nuances of cultural and technical innovations. As such, Kazantzakis provides a good primer for the reader who wants to know how to regain connection and responsibility.

D. H. Lawrence, on the other hand, is closer to the intimations of the reader's present. In contrast to Kazantzakis's willingness to dig fingers deep into the soil, into the peasant's life, Lawrence has an unwillingness to engage the social classes he considers beneath him. Lawrence expresses the hidden fear that somehow the lower classes are dirtier, more apt to carry disease, than the educated classes.

It was not that they were not as he was but, rather, that they were not quite as he was. The Indians of Mexico, the long dead Etruscans and the New Mexican Indians were more to his liking, they were definitely different. Still, while he might express some dislike for the common folk, Lawrence does not reject them as human beings. The artist who attempts perfection inside and outside of his work is lying, there is no such condition in human life. Ursula's classic giving away of her necklace to the boatman's child is done without guile as spontaneous homage to the little living creature. Lawrence recognized vitality in others, in spite of his class prejudice. The rebellion in Lawrence's novels is limited to personal passage through the social impediments to being alive. Ursula struggles with male domination and power, she engages the educational system and remains vital and, finally, she confronts sexuality and the moral code she is supposed to follow. Her refusal to conform is an act of rebellion against the forces that want to control her. The darker side to Lawrence is that there is no hope of winning back humanity, of joining hands, of touching, yet his very act of creating the novel gives the hope he seems to want to destroy. Birkin, the cynic, states that he would like to see the face of the earth licked clean of men and women yet he manages to act in contradiction to that fatalistic view. His marriage to Ursula and his attempt at establishing a relationship with Gerald contradict his premise that there is nothing for the living to do but die. In his philosophy, Birkin is clear and concise but he betrays his human side when, in direct opposition to his statements, he seeks and partially manages to be connected. Survival, in the Lawrence novel as in Kazantzakis's, is fighting against forces that seek to subdue the human. Lawrence betrays his own love,

his own desire to break through the bonds he has been brought up in, by the act of his creation. Lawrence wants guarantees of survival yet he constantly risks his involvement and the involvement of his characters with each other. Lawrence's novels survive, as the characters survive, because there is a passionate love of being alive and being connected contained within them. The characters who fail to survive, Gerald in Women in Love and the grandmother in The Virgin and the Gypsy as examples, have already joined the 'dead' in their lifetimes. Gerald knows that he is a condemned man, partly for killing his brother and partly for his sensitive nature which makes him realize the hollowness of Shortlands without being able to keep himself out of the 'death in life' experience engendered there. Survivors, for Lawrence, could not be locked into the patterns of their lives, this would admit defeat and acquiescence in perpetuating the mythology of the 'living dead'. Survivors must be willing to say 'no' whenever and wherever necessary for their continued existence as independent, self-responsible individuals.

Lawrence intends to take those people who listen to him deeper than they have ever been. His attacks on and his distrust of humanity only serve to demonstrate the intensity of his longing to find some real connections. The preacher threatens his flock, destroys their preconceptions, with the hope that he will create change in his congregation. Lawrence doesn't name his dark sources - although he calls them 'dark gods' and 'blood knowledge' - he attempts to bring them forth through the incantations of his language and he derives the power of resurrecting those sources especially from the sexual context, the intimate and more than intimate touching of male and female. The context, the content and the outcome of sexual contact is the summation of life and death,

creation and destruction, possibility and the inevitable. To be a man is a great and mysterious thing but only if one allows the mysterious room to expand. To be a woman is a strange and mysterious thing but only if one refuses to surrender one's sources. Submission to the forces that are greater than the single individual is not the same as submerging oneself in the other person. Ursula will not be 'bullied' into becoming responsible for the other person; she does, however, come to be responsible to Birkin. The desire of Lawrence is obviously for connection and it is his frustration at not being able to fulfil his desire that leads him into vituperative composition against men.

The reader must hear both voices, the one that is most loud and the one that is underneath the breath. In much of Lawrence's writing, the hope and the despair mingle in the single expression of 'struggle'; struggle to get free of the superimposed legacy of society, fight to release the intensity of being alive that is constantly threatened with extinction and struggle to make contact, connection, with others in the world. Listen for the human voices because they exist, they have not been snuffed out completely. They may be more sound than meaning, as much of Lawrence's language is, because they involve less articulate expressions, more powerful and universal expressions, than precise defined words allow. Survivors cannot be too optimistic because that leads to careless exposure. The world is dangerous and unpredictable, one must exercise caution if one is to survive. Men and women can be very dangerous but it is the only world and the only company we have. Surviving is sensing the dangerous elements before the fact and not after. In this sense, Lawrence, as both preacher and teacher, warns the reader while encouraging the reader to continue risking himself

despite the odds. That is all there is in remaining truly alive and vital, the possibilities of renewing connections with others and with oneself.

Surviving means being able to recognize the great and the small, the cruel and the gentle, everything, in fact, that can be called human potential. One cannot expiate the sins of mankind by attempting to balance the scales with mankind's virtues. One must be able to feel sadness without pity because, as Aristotle knew well, pity releases the tension of participating in tragedy. The world no longer can afford catharsis, catharsis is provided in the media newscasts, the television soap-opera and newspaper headlines. One becomes inured to suffering on the global scale that is repeated and repeated. Pity is an inappropriate response from someone who is implicated in the whole process of dehumanizing others in the world. Vonnegut's conception of the world of technocrats exists now but it is not, perhaps, as evident as he presents it. We recognize the machine of history but does the machine of history recognize us? Should we lie down in front of the machine of history and do we have the right to push others beneath the rollers? Vonnegut demonstrates the potential for the species of man to age overnight into the tired all-knowing creatures of a species that has gone beyond its time. Old things die, species without the potential for change also die if they cannot meet the challenges of the changing environment. Vonnegut is also preaching but, unlike Lawrence, he is not in a pulpit but he is standing in front of history; the list of victims gets longer as the machine approaches. Vonnegut provides a mirror that reflects the possible future back onto the present. The Church of God the Utterly Indifferent and Bokononism both reflect the submerged voices

of the past and present, the voices of the doubters who dared not speak. Vonnegut creates a society where everyone is equal because they wear handicaps determined by the government to reduce their abilities and skills to the lowest common denominator. At the same moment that one is struck by the absurdity of these conceptions, one also realizes that there is little to support the view that they are not possible.

The 'absurd' is powerful, not because it is impossible in reality, but because it is too possible. The absurd world is the one that is seen from the corners of one's eyes in the peripheral vision. One suspects that it is really there, just waiting for the opportunity to assume control. How rational is a society that destroys its own environment for profits and spends millions trying to find ways of saving it; how realistic is it for that society to spend billions on research for war and not on research in medicine? One must be able to recognize the absurdities in what is called the real world. In this, Vonnegut leads the reader to recognize the absurdities of the American Dream. He exposes the fact that the competition for more power and things in the social hierarchy is destructive to the connections between people; he indicates how team spirit is really individual submission of autonomy. He lets the reader know that it is not only possible to fight personal history, group expectation and social conditioning but that it is absolutely vital to fight back. What one struggles against is not personal in the slightest, which is precisely why it must be fought.

All people are afraid but it is possible to face that fear when one realizes that one is not alone. The system relies on the sense of the individual that he or she is alone to effect control. The individual

must be willing to hear the voices before he can participate in them. Survival depends on listening for the voices at the lower end of the scale. The magnificent visions of a world free from poverty, hunger and disease destroys the view of today. People would rather look at a castle than a slum because the one heralds success and the other speaks for failure. The small voices are not the voices of the great heroes and dreamers of humanity but the whispers of the faceless crowd. We belong to the crowd and the crowd belongs to us. The writer who brings the voices out in his material is writing survival literature because it keeps alive the connections that exist. Every human being is implicated in humanity but it is only to those who are aware of their personal implication that the literature of survival will matter. The literature of survival disturbs complacency, it does not reinforce it. The first lesson that must be acknowledged is that there can be no resolution in life, 'death' is the only resolver in the struggle to survive. Secondly, while one might despise one's fellows for their actions, one cannot deny them their humanness without denying one's own. Thirdly, one must acknowledge that it is still possible to be creatively human against all the odds. The literature of survival provides a means of exploring that possibility.

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