The Cosmic Web

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The Cosmic Web: Scientific Field Models and Literary Strategies in the Twentieth Century. 

At this point it must be asked why the classical paradigm is so difficult to give up in toto... the confusion that has for so long been evidenced in discussions about quantum mechanics, and the intense emotions that such discussions can evoke, suggest that more is at stake than simply the comfort and success of an older paradigm.

Evelyn Keller, “Cognitive Repression in Contemporary Physics”

About the time that logical positivism was approaching its heyday in science, D. H. Lawrence set forth a theory that he claims would form the basis for an entirely new kind of science.\(^1\) The basic premise of Lawrence’s “subjective science” was that it is possible to apprehend reality directly from a set of symmetrically arranged “centers” in the body, without mediation from the conscious mind. In this “science,” statements are confirmed not by independent observation or replicate experiments, but by appealing to the intuition of others who will verify statements from their own unconscious centers. When the centers come together in an interactive bonding, they become, in Lawrence’s terminology, “polarities.”

Lawrence’s theory is so obviously at odds with what was known even in his day that it can scarcely be taken seriously as “science” of any

\(^1\)Lawrence’s clearest explication of what he means by his new science is in the “Forward” to Fantasia of the Unconscious, in Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious, ed. Philip Reiff (New York: Viking, 1960), pp. 53–58.
Yet Lawrence was, in his way, wrestling with some of the same issues that were occupying the attention of contemporary science. His "subjective science" is an attempt to define a field of interaction that includes both subject and object. For Lawrence, the "field" is always identified with a breakthrough into what he calls the "unconscious." In order to reach the "unconscious," from which the "field" originates, the body centers of one person engage those of another in a fierce dialectic that ends when the two "polarities" come together in mystical union. Lawrence is evidently adopting his idiosyncratic terminology from the field theory he was most familiar with, Maxwell's theory of electromagnetic fields. As we saw in Chapter 2, Einstein credited Maxwell with beginning a transition in scientific thought which would lead, finally, to Einstein's claim that "the field is the only reality." Though Lawrence is very much following his own path, his attempts to define a psychological "field" clearly parallel these developments in science. Essentially ignorant of post-Newtonian physics, Lawrence nevertheless has a notion of an integrating field and understands that it must, by its nature, resist articulation. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that most physicists would agree (though for very different reasons) with many of Lawrence's deepest beliefs: that reality is a dynamic flux rather than the manifestation of rigid laws; that the observer, rather than being isolated in Cartesian objectivity, participates in that flux; and that certain aspects of reality will always elude deterministic analysis. Though ignorant of much factual knowledge about the new science, Lawrence anticipated the spirit of its principal results.

Beyond this parallelism lies a deeper connection between Lawrence and the new science, a connection illuminated by the strategies of resistance that Lawrence employed to oppose entry into what he ostensibly sought. At the heart of this connection is an intense ambivalence toward the concept of a field that unites subject and object and that hence tends to blur the boundaries between the self and other. In Lawrence, the ambivalence is so close to the surface that it can scarcely

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2James C. Cowan's account of Lawrence's physiology demonstrates that it contradicts even what was known in his day about the workings of the nervous system. Neither the sympathetic nor volitional (autonomic) nervous system can apprehend directly; both send their messages to the appropriate cortical centers for processing. See particularly Cowan's chapter on "Lawrence's Romantic Values" in *D. H. Lawrence's American Journey: A Study in Literature and Myth* (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1970), pp. 15–24.
be missed; among quantum physicists it is less obvious, but no less invested with psychological complexities of the kind that make Lawrence’s encounter with the field concept a potent force in shaping his art.

One indication that quantum physicists, like Lawrence, resist the field concept is their reaction to the Uncertainty Relation. In a provocative article, “Cognitive Repression in Contemporary Physics,” Evelyn Keller notes that after fifty years of debate there is still no single accepted interpretation of what quantum theory implies about the nature of reality. After careful analysis she concludes that the so-called “Copenhagen Interpretation” of the Uncertainty Relation is an umbrella term “under which a host of different, often contradictory positions co-reside.” We saw in Chapter 2 that Bohr and Heisenberg, though taking very different positions on the Uncertainty Relation, are nevertheless perceived by the scientific community as being of one mind on the matter. Even Heisenberg thought they were in agreement (though Bohr knew better). Keller argues that such extraordinary confusions and conflations provide “de facto evidence of defense and evasion.” What is being evaded, Keller suggests, is the recognition that the self exists neither in isolation from the world nor in mysterious sympathy with it. The vocabulary she uses to describe the struggle of physicists to come to terms with a reality in which “the boundaries between subject and object are . . . never quite rigid” is hauntingly familiar when applied to Lawrence: “. . . the capacity for objective thought and perception is not inborn, but rather . . . acquired as part of the long and painful struggle for psychic autonomy—a state never entirely free from ambiguity and tension. The internal pressure to delineate self from other . . . leaves us acutely vulnerable to anxiety about wishes or experiences which might threaten that delineation.” Elsewhere, Keller links the disinclination of scientists to admit to such an ambiguous reality to the process of gender differentiation, arguing that the male child, in our gendered culture, comes to see the mother as essentially different from himself. This gender differentiation then lays the foundation for the scientist’s later objectification of the archetypal

4Ibid., p. 718.
5Ibid., p. 721.
female, Mother Nature. When nature manifests herself as neither objective nor subjective but as a union of the two, therefore, the ambiguity is deeply troubling because it is not simply an intellectual issue, but an emotional crux connected to the deepest layers of the scientist’s self-concept. Keller’s argument thus supposes that there are fundamental and deep-seated connections between the process of gender differentiation in infancy, the subsequent strongly male orientation of scientists (including female scientists), and the resistance of scientists toward the field concept.

Lawrence’s reaction to the integrated field of the “unconscious” is uncannily similar to the dynamic Keller imagines for quantum physicists. Like modern physicists, Lawrence is “acutely vulnerable” to anxiety when subject and object begin to merge; for Lawrence, the anxiety is most apparent when he imagines a son separating from his mother. This chapter will explore Lawrence’s strategies of approach and avoidance toward the undifferentiated field of the “unconscious” and relate them to the process of gender differentiation that was, for Lawrence, the central issue of child development. Placing Lawrence in this context will illuminate his uneasy relation to the intellectual revolution of his time, and will allow us to prove some of the deeper reasons why even to today’s physicists a field view can be threatening as well as liberating.

The question of how anxiety about the “unconscious” shapes Lawrence’s art cannot be separated from what he called his “metaphysics,” for Lawrence saw his creative writing and his polemical tracts as two sides of the same coin. Critics who address the relation between Lawrence’s “metaphysic” and his art tend to fall into two camps: those who, like Frank Kermode, take metaphysic to be central; and others, for example Leo Bersani and Colin Clarke, who see in the fiction a conflation of apparent contraries that wreaks havoc with Lawrence’s metaphysical schematic. To ask which position is correct is to ask the wrong question, for Lawrence’s metaphysic is the cognitive version of a deeper paradox that emerges in a different way in the “confusions” of his fiction. The more fruitful line of inquiry is to ask what it is that is being...

simultaneously revealed and concealed in both the art and "polyanalytics," and what these strategies of approach and avoidance can tell us about the underlying psychodynamics.

That the metaphysic, despite its polemical and revelatory stance, is concealing something is suggested by the instability of its dialectic. Lawrence repeatedly pays allegiance to the belief that reality is a dynamic whole and that we have the means for grasping its nature intuitively and directly. But the approach to this reality proceeds by a characteristic motion that is also a retreat from it. The breakthrough to the "mystic body of reality" is supposed to occur when two "polarities" are locked together in tense, dynamic interplay. With first one, then the other dominant, the "polarities" engage in a "frictional to-and-fro" that could, Lawrence believed, break through to an unbounded space that encompasses all opposites. This dialectic is extremely unstable, however, because one of the two "polarities" is consistently valued over the other. (Lawrence would of course argue that his privileging of the centers of resistance was merely in redress of society's emphasis on the centers of attraction.) Nevertheless, because of the differences in value, there is always an impetus to resolve the tension in favor of the more "dynamic" of the two terms. If the favored term prevails, the dialectic collapses into unity, leading, in Lawrence's terminology, to "rigidity." This incipient collapse can be prevented only if the two terms are subsumed into a larger unity which then becomes the favored term of a new dialectic. When this dialectic also threatens to collapse toward the favored term, it must be subsumed into another, still larger term. Only through successive enlargements can the dynamic be continued, and its continuation implies that its putative goal—the breakthrough into the unconscious—is never achieved.

Paradoxical as it is, this dissolving dialectic is only the first level of a deeper paradox that emerges when Lawrence struggles to move from this abstract scheme to its application in family relationships. According to the metaphysical scheme, the purpose of the dualistic to-and-fro is to reach the unconscious, that part of the psyche which is able to hold opposites in a continuing tension without needing to resolve them. But to enter this realm is also to encounter an experience that psychologists identify with the earliest stages of infantile consciousness: the lack of differentiation between self and other, specifically between the self and mother. The experience that in one sense is the desired culmination of
Lawrence’s “frictional to-and-fro” is thus closely linked with a state he regards with horror, the child’s fusion with the mother. On this deep level, the collapse of the “polarities” is surrounded by intense anxiety; in his psychoanalytic essays, Lawrence associates it with the “ghoul” of repressed incest desire.

Countering the positive connotations with which Lawrence surrounds the breakthrough into the unconscious, then, is an extremely strong anxiety about the loss of individuation this would entail. Read in this way, Lawrence’s insistence in his novels that two “polarities” can fuse into each other and yet somehow still retain their individual autonomy is a strategy for introducing differentiation at precisely the point where it is under the most pressure to succumb to the undifferentiation of the unconscious. Such “confusions,” far from being extraneous to the art, are the enabling strategies that allow it to go forward.

The structure of The Rainbow reveals how these “confusions” emerge and develop. Through the chronicle of the Brangwens, Lawrence attempts to depict modern man’s fall into consciousness.9 The ease with which the plot can be rendered as a schematic of increasing alienation shows how powerful the metaphysic is in organizing our experience of this text. Two patterns are apparent. Within each generation there is a dipolar interaction between the man and woman that is the “entry into another circle of existence.”10 When Tom and Lydia engage in this tense opposition of contraries, for example, they “open the doors, each to the other . . . it was the transfiguration, the glory, the admission” (R, p. 91). Countering this active dipolarity, however, is a linear decline through the generations. As child succeeds parent and as the society becomes more “conscious” and “mechanical,” the partners are less and less able to engage each other in the “frictional to-and-fro” that is the key to the doorway of the unconscious.

This then is the formal pattern, the metaphysical schematic that supposedly dictates the arrangement of the material. In it we can see the instability that is characteristic of Lawrence’s dialectic, as the “to-and-fro” motion is increasingly imperiled by the linear decline. But this instability is not all that interferes with the breakthrough to the “unconscious.” Also present are many details that refute or heavily qualify the

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9Leo Bersani (pp. 175–180) makes this point in discussing Women in Love.
10D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow (New York: Penguin, 1976), p. 91. In further page references to this edition I will abbreviate it R.
notion that such a breakthrough is desirable in the first place. According to whether the reader attends to the schematic or the immediate texture, the text thus can appear as highly determined or inchoate. What we miss when we concentrate on either one alone is the way in which the interaction between the schematic and the "confusions" operates according to a symbolic logic of its own.

The logic is implicit in the to-and-fro which is a retreat from as well as an advance to the unconscious. This approach/avoidance is almost always bound up with a simultaneous identification with and rejection of the parent. As we shall see, such identification is not accidental, because the deeper struggle is between the drive to attain a fully individuated, autonomous state, and the nostalgic desire to fuse with another in a re-creation of the infant's identification with the mother. It is with the second generation, when we see the protagonists as both adults and children—that is, as both fully individuated beings and continuations of the parental consciousness—that the ambiguities surrounding the entry into the "unconscious" really begin to take hold. By the third generation, when the parental images are not one but two layers deep, the to-and-fro dialectic is so "confused" as to be unsustainable.

This argument has been partly anticipated by Colin Clarke, who has written persuasively on Lawrence's simultaneous aversion and attraction to what Clarke calls "reductive energy." Clarke notes that it is increasingly difficult for the reader to make distinctions that the narrator nevertheless insists are crucial: Will Brangwen's vulnerability which is also power; Ursula's "fierce salt-burning corrosiveness under the moon" which is at once freeing and destructive; and the "corrupt African potency" of Skrebensky which is both powerful and depraved. Distinctions which ought to be of "some thematic importance" are, Clarke argues, in the "final effect of the novel," played down. Clarke interprets these "confusions" as Lawrence's first attempts to articulate a holistic reality which cannot be bifurcated into either-or categories. Clarke does not make the identification with the Uncertainty Relation, but it too, of course, also points toward the inadequacy of either-or formulations. If the uneasiness of quantum physicists with the Uncertainty Relation is rooted in early childhood experiences, as Keller sug-

11The quoted phrases are from River of Dissolution, p. 45.
gests, then the consistent identification Lawrence makes between entering the "unconscious" and regressing to an infantile state by implication illuminates the resistance in the scientific community to the Uncertainty Relation.

For Lawrence, when the parent-child duality begins to fuse into a single figure, the ambivalence becomes so intense as to make even an approach toward the "unconscious" untenable. The pattern is apparent in the cycle of births, matings, and deaths that constitute the chronicle of the Brangwens. For Tom and Lydia, who are cast as progenitors and who therefore convey the least sense of being both parents and children, the passage into the "openness" of the unconscious is the least ambiguous. With this couple the values of openness and enclosure are consistent and straightforward: to "open" oneself is to participate in the joyousness of the unconscious, while to be "closed" is to remain isolated within the sterile boundaries of ego consciousness.

By the time the second-generation couple, Will and Anna, mature from children to adults, the passage to the unconscious has become considerably more complex. Though Will passionately wants to "open" himself to Anna, this "openness" is threatening to both of them. Moreover, Anna's refusal of Will leads not to enclosure, but to an apparently different, more sinister openness. In rejecting Will, Anna leaves him a "prey to the open, with the unclean dogs of the darkness setting on to devour him" (R, p. 166). Openness is thus ambiguous, and so is enclosure. We are told that Will always remains aware of "some limit in himself, of something unformed in his very being . . . some folded centres of darkness which would never develop and unfold whilst he was alive in the body" (R, p. 207). The imagery points to a center of "darkness," usually a code word for the unconscious; but this is a "folded" center, a potential openness that nevertheless remains encapsulated. The metaphors image a paradoxical space that cannot be assimilated into the schematic, a space that is at once infolded and open, threatening and liberating, isolated but potentially dynamic.

The corollary to the convolutions of Will's interior space is the inward-turning of Anna's fecundity; "if her soul had found no utterance, her womb had" (R, p. 203). Even though Anna cannot go through the doorway with Will, through their union she becomes a "doorway and a threshold, she herself. Through her another soul was coming, to stand upon her as upon the threshold, looking out, shading its eyes for the
direction to take” (R, p. 193). But this interior space, like Will’s, is paradoxical; it is at once a negation and a fulfillment. Anna locates her identity in her ability to bear children, so for her the womb-space is a highly charged signifier, capable of conferring (and creating) identity. But the necessary and inevitable end of this process is the emptying of that space when the child is born, so that what begins as fulfillment ends in negation as mother and child break apart into separate beings. The contrary claims of autonomy and dependence are so fragile that they can be balanced only at the moment of equipoise, when Anna is both “a doorway and a threshold.” Most of the time, the breakthrough into the “unconscious” has become so bound up with fears of dependence and of an inability to differentiate the self from the other that an unambiguous response is not possible.

By the third generation, when the layers of parental identity are not one but two layers thick, the anxieties become correspondingly intense. When the child of Anna’s womb, Ursula, crosses the womb-threshold and begins the long process of establishing an identity independent of her parents, the ambiguities that had characterized her parents’ relationship deepen for her into contradictions. Ursula attempts to escape the thickening layers of parental identity by rejecting her mother as a role model, insisting that she will not become a fecund mother in her turn. Determined to hold onto her autonomy, the most Ursula can offer or receive from Anton is “a sense of his or of her own maximum self, in contradistinction to the rest of life” (R, p. 301). Though she has not herself become the enclosing parental space, she still pays a price for her freedom, for the narrator tells us she cannot break out of the ego-space of the self, “wherein was something finite and sad, for the human soul at its maximum wants a sense of the infinite” (R, p. 301).

But has Ursula escaped from becoming the mother in her turn? She discovers that the female inheritance is not so easily transcended. Caught in the paradoxes of a freedom that is also an imprisonment, Ursula re-creates the creative/destructive womb-space in her relationship with Anton. Under the influence of the moon that Lawrence identifies in the Fantasia as the cosmic pole of female assertion and autonomy, Ursula drains from Skrebensky, in a fierce kiss, his “distinct male” core (R, p. 321). In another moonlit night by the sea, Ursula finally admits that Anton has no independent existence, and he, in a symbolic return to the archetypal enclosure, curls into the fetal crouch
of the womb. His posture is one way of signifying what Ursula later realizes, that he is her "creation": he "had never become finally real . . . she had created him for the time being. But in the end he had failed and broken down" (R, p. 493).

The conflation of images thus moves into deeper contradiction as the schematic moves toward linearity. The more the end of this mechanical, repetitive society appears predetermined, the more the imagery insists on a merging of contraries that is anything but linear. As the schematic leaves behind the to-and-fro dialectic, the imagery takes it up, folding in upon itself in increasingly opaque convolutions. It is as if Lawrence were compelled to articulate a simultaneous approach to and avoidance of the "unconscious" so that if the metaphorical scheme does not allow for it, the imagery must.

What Lawrence is wrestling with in his use of imagery is part of a more general problem with language. We have seen how the language of The Rainbow bifurcates between an abstract schematic of linear decline, most apparent when one takes a bird’s-eye view of the plot, and a highly stressed conflation of images that is most apparent at the level of textual detail. In the schematic, Lawrence follows the simple formula of imposing linearity on top of dipolarity; the decline across the generations is linear, while the dynamic within each generation is dipolar. But this implies that each successive generation, though it still has some dipolarity within the male–female relationship, is further along the linear scale, and it is left to the imagery, working as it were in defiance of the schematic, to keep open the dual potential of promise and threat inherent in the to-and-fro dialectic. Lawrence attempts to reinstitute dipolarity at the end by having Ursula hope for rebirth; but this attempt to mediate between two contraries—this time his own hope and the hopelessness appropriate to the linear schematic—has struck many readers as an arbitrary, if not desperate, solution.12

Such a solution was bound to be unsatisfactory, for the problem lies not just in the novel’s structure, or in its use of symbol, but in the nature of language itself. On the one hand, Lawrence feels deeply that

reality is essentially mystical and unspeakable, to be experienced rather than understood rationally. On the other hand, he is committed to depicting this ineffable reality in words. The closer he comes to rendering the unconscious in language, the closer he paradoxically comes to destroying its realization, because language is necessarily conscious. In the “scientific” essays, the problem appears in its most acute form. There Lawrence commits himself to making what is already an ineffable mystery not only verbally explicit, but also systematic and rationally plausible. There is thus in the essays a strong contradiction between what Lawrence says and how he says it. According to what Lawrence says, reality is best and most fully apprehended directly through the body’s sensual centers, without mediation from the mind at all; but he makes this claim in the extremely abstract and objectified mode of a “scientific” discourse.

What in the essays exists as a disparity between form and content is still present in the novels, but in the more amorphous form of the fiction, it has not rigidified into anything quite so definite as a contradiction. It would be truer to say that in the fiction it exists as a paradox. It evolves from Lawrence’s belief that real knowledge is always sensual and immediate rather than mental, and his simultaneous endeavor to make us apprehend this through the verbal abstractions and stylizations of art-speech. Simply put, the paradox is this: to know is not to be able to say, and to say is to move from the reality of unmediated knowledge into abstraction. It is a dilemma that Bohr also recognized as fundamental, for to speak is to enter into the “either-or” conceptualizations that quantum theory, like Lawrence, was trying to escape. Further complicating this already complex dilemma is the psychological substratum that links the inability to differentiate between subject and object with early childhood experiences, and consequently with the highly charged issues of identification with, and separation from, the mother. As we saw in Chapter 2 in connection with scientific models, the key to the complexity is language.

Lawrence’s attitude toward language is implicit in the dynamics of linearity and dipolarity that are at work in *The Rainbow* and that continue to figure importantly in his plot construction in *Women in Love.*

In one sense language represents abstraction, the transformation of immediate experience into mental conception. Lawrence’s suspicion of language is reflected in the verbal reticence of his characters. For example, after Birkin and Ursula, in the “Excurs” chapter of Women in Love, come in touch through their lovemaking with what Lawrence calls the “mystic body of reality,” they are reluctant even to acknowledge their experience in words. “It was so magnificent,” Lawrence writes, “such an inheritance of a universe of dark reality, that they were afraid to seem to remember. They hid away the remembrance and the knowledge.”14

Throughout Women in Love, both Birkin and Ursula distrust words; that Birkin demonstrates on occasion an over-fondness for his own words is one of his weaknesses. Ursula is wiser in feeling “always frightened of words, because she knew that mere word-force could always make her believe what she did not believe” (WL, pp. 428–429). Birkin, despite his verbosity, shares her feeling. As Birkin is telling Ursula that they must go beyond the merely personal into some new sort of relation, Lawrence says that “she knew, as well as he knew, that words themselves do not convey meaning, that they are but a gesture we make, a dumb show like any other” (WL, p. 178). Lawrence’s attempt to use language to move beyond language is apparent in the paradoxical imagery, in which language becomes a nonverbal “gesture” or even a “dumb show.” When Birkin turns away “in confusion” because he cannot find the right words, Lawrence editorializes: “There was always confusion in speech. Yet it must be spoken. Whichever way one moved, if one were to move forwards, one must break through. And to know, to give utterance, was to break a way through the walls of the prison as an infant in labour strives through the walls of the womb” (WL, pp. 178–179).

The association of the womb with the need to give utterance is important, for it provides a key link between language and the differentiation of the self from the mother. The informing tension is between the desire to “move forward” and the fear that forward motion in language can be dangerous because it leads away from direct experience into mental experience and therefore to falsity. Lawrence’s response to the dilemma of wanting to go forward and yet fearing the forward movement as a progressive abstraction is to imagine a movement of

speech analogous to the contractions of labor, a rhythmic and tense pulsation capable of propelling one into a new existence. In this pattern the womb metaphor is central; it is an image to which we will return. For the moment, we can note that it is used here to suggest a dipolar rhythm that can counter the inherent linearity of language, thus permitting a forward motion without getting lost in abstraction.

By the time of the writing of Women in Love, Lawrence is articulating the dynamic explicitly. The “Foreword” sounds the keynote for the change. “In point of style,” Lawrence writes, “fault is often found with the continual, slightly modified repetition. The only answer is that it is natural to the author; and that every natural crisis in emotion or passion or understanding comes from this pulsing, frictional to-and-fro which works up to culmination” (WL, p. viii). Through the “continual, slightly modified repetition,” the linear flow of language is partially checked. The result is not straightforward linearity but the “frictional to-and-fro” of repetitive clauses that build through a series of periodic sentences up to the culmination of the single, short declarative sentence which—if the style works—is the point of breakthrough.

The style is an attempt, then, to make language somehow engage in a “frictional to-and-fro” that can break out of the envelope of ordinary perception to a direct apprehension of reality. Here the difference between Lawrence and the quantum physicists surfaces most clearly, for they would never admit such a mystical apprehension as a valid subject for their discipline. Bohr, for example, repeatedly emphasized that science is not about reality, but about what we can say about reality. For Lawrence, almost the opposite is true. For him literature is not what we can say about reality, but about what we cannot say about it; language is important only insofar as it can re-present the reality that lies beyond words.

To prefer words to reality is the mistake Gudrun and Loerke make in their “quips and jests and polyglot fancies.” “The fancies were the reality to both of them,” Lawrence writes scornfully; “... they were both so happy, tossing around the little coloured balls of verbal humour and whimsicality” (WL, p. 460). Lawrence is not interested in this kind of verbal intricacy because he fears that whatever calls attention to a particular verbal formulation can be dangerous, tempting the reader to stay on the verbal surface rather than go beyond the language to the reality to which it is meant to point. So Lawrence, having arrived at
one way of saying something, keeps repeating it until the building tension explodes into what he hopes will be the reader's direct apprehension of the idea. At the same time, the "continual, slightly modified repetition" creates a movement of thought that is designed to minimize the inherent problem of using language by creating an internal tension between the back-and-forth prose rhythms and the syntactical linearity.

An excerpt from *The Rainbow* will illustrate how Lawrence anticipates the technique that was to find its full realization in *Women in Love*. The passage describes Ursula's confrontation of Anton under the cold moonlight of her uncle's wedding. Too long to quote in its entirety, the passage builds for several pages to the following climax:

If he could but have her, how he would enjoy her! If he could but net her brilliant, cold salt-burning body . . . net her, capture her, hold her down, how he would enjoy her. He strove subtly, but with all his energy, to enclose her, to have her. And always she was burning and brilliant, and hard as salt, and deadly. . . . She took him in the kiss, hard her kiss seized upon him, hard and fierce and burning corrosive as the moonlight . . . cold as the moon and burning as fierce salt . . . destroying him, destroying him in the kiss. And her soul crystallized with triumph, and his soul was dissolved with agony and annihilation. So she held him there, the victim, consumed, annihilated. She had triumphed: he was not any more. (*WL*, p. 320)

Ursula's "triumph" is ironic, since it destroys the possibility for a dynamic equilibrium between them. It is this potential, even more than Anton's "core," that has been "annihilated." The struggle begins with Anton's attempt to enclose Ursula; Ursula responds by "consuming" him. Both stances imply an imbalance that would eventually lead to unmitigated linearity. An unimpeded flow of language would represent what Ursula unwittingly achieves when she destroys Anton as an independent polarity: an inherent linearity that will eventually become trapped in its own abstractions. But the strong, rhythmic pulsations of the prose help to offset this linearity, so that the language achieves what the characters cannot, an inner tension that can come to climax without being condemned to linearity as a result. If the dipolarity between the character fails, the dipolarity of the language is successful; the climax is searing in its intensity.
In this passage Lawrence manages to depict linearity without becoming condemned to it because the structure of the language preserves a sense of dipolarity that works against the triumph of linearity between the characters. Lawrence is in control of the dynamic in this passage because he allows space for both the approach to and avoidance of the "unconscious." It is when he tries to evoke one term of this ambivalence without allowing space for its contrary that he slips from paradox into contradiction or, worse, into didacticism. Given the obvious impossibility of what he hoped to accomplish, it is surprising not that Lawrence occasionally failed, but that he so often succeeded in crafting verbal illusions that are faithful to both the potential and the threat he felt in the integrating field of the "unconscious." In his most successful novel, *Women in Love*, Lawrence is able to integrate both polarities of this ambivalence into a coherent schematic that is also artistically powerful.

By the time he wrote *Women in Love*, Lawrence had so refined the dynamics of linearity and dipolarity that virtually the entire action of the novel serves to delineate their complexities. Pairs of characters come together, engage one another—on the surface through dialogue and argument, underneath the verbal surface by symbolic interplay between the unconscious of each—then move apart as they begin to experience the consequence of the dialectic they have set in motion between them. With the language insuring a continuing tension, both linearity and dipolarity can be fully explored as psychological dynamics. The to-and-fro movement has expanded to include permutations only vaguely implicit in *The Rainbow*; we are made to see more clearly that the to-and-fro can be destructive as well as synergistic. Meanwhile, the results of a relationship degenerating into linearity are also more fully represented.\(^{15}\)

Within the to-and-fro motion in *Women in Love*, three possibilities emerge. The first, and happiest, possibility is that the couple will use the to-and-fro to break through to an unmediated apprehension of reality. As in *The Rainbow*, to achieve the breakthrough one must have a

\(^{15}\)I will not have space here to do more than outline the general nature of the scheme, to show how it develops from *The Rainbow* and anticipates the essays. The reader who wishes more detail is referred to Howard Harper, Jr., "Fantasia and the Psychodynamics of *Women in Love*," in *The Classic British Novel*, ed. Harper Edge and Charles Edge (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1972), pp. 203–219.
partner willing to serve as the doorway—in Lawrence’s terms, a partner willing to make an irrevocable commitment to an “impersonal” union. It is thus that Ursula and Birkin serve one another. Each is reluctant at first to make the commitment, Ursula because she wants a personal love that stops with Birkin’s adoration of her, Birkin because he cannot make the final break with Hermione. Each helps the other to see that the break with traditional relationships must be made. Birkin must detach himself from the “vomit” of his relationship with Hermione, and Ursula is vital in helping him finally to make that break; Ursula must not fall into the trap of merely personal love (which *The Rainbow* explores exhaustively in the relationship between Will and Anna), and Birkin is instrumental in helping her to see this. Neither Birkin nor Ursula, it seems, could make the breakthrough without the other. It is their basic complementarity and their commitment not only to each other but to the “greater reality” that allows them to engage each other in a synergistic dynamic.

There are also other, more sinister possibilities. One starts appearing after Gerald draws back from the essential commitment, first with Birkin and then with Gudrun. When Gerald and Gudrun fail to make a real commitment to each other, they become locked into a closed system, so that what fills one empties the other. Gerald comes to Gudrun in her room, pouring into her “all his pent-up darkness and corrosive death, and he was whole again” (*WL*, p. 337); but Gudrun “lay wide awake, destroyed into perfect consciousness” (*WL*, p. 338). As the conflict deepens after Birkin and Ursula leave them alone together in the Tyrol, both Gudrun and Gerald subconsciously realize that the dynamic between them condemns them to the closed economy of a system in which energy is conserved rather than generated. “Sometimes it was he who seemed strongest, whilst she was almost gone, creeping near the earth like a spent wind; sometimes it was the reverse. But always it was this eternal see-saw, one destroyed that the other might exist, one ratified because the other was annulled” (*WL*, p. 436). In the end it is Gerald who succumbs. His failure to break through to the dynamic flux of reality ultimately proves fatal, his frozen carcass symbolizing his final collapse into stasis. Though Gudrun survives, her victory is only another form of defeat. She will continue along the path of dissolution, exploring the further stages of depraved sensuality with Loerke.

The third possibility is the least firmly sketched of the three “fric-
tional” motions; it is a to-and-fro in which the oscillations back and forth become increasingly violent, eventually leading to the permanent fragmentation of a bifurcated psyche. The emergence of this kind of motion illuminates why Lawrence should insist, in the essays, that the opposing body centers are united into a mystical whole by an interconnecting field. In retrospect the notion of a holistic field can be seen as an attempt to avoid having the to-and-fro motion degenerate into an aimless oscillation that eventually leads to dissolution of the psyche and death.

The clearest example of a to-and-fro that leads to fragmentation appears not in the published version of *Women in Love*, but in the “Prologue” that Lawrence deleted from the finished novel. In this “Prologue,” Lawrence relates how Birkin shuttles between an empty sensuality and a depraved spirituality in his union with Hermione until he becomes “nothing but a series of reactions from dark to light, from light to dark, almost mechanical, without unity or meaning.”\(^{16}\) So damaging is this arid, meaningless to-and-fro that Birkin recognizes that he is “not very far from dissolution” (“Prologue,” p. 107). The same kind of destructive oscillation appears whenever the spiritual and sensual centers are too far sundered to join even in the loose affiliation of a “dipolarity.” Its principal example in the published text of *Women in Love* is the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Crich. Mrs. Crich’s mind, in reaction against her husband’s Christian ideals, has become deranged so that she exists only at the animal level of the senses; Mr. Crich has kept his mind and will intact, but his body is undergoing dissolution.

To Lawrence, linearity is merely the extreme continuation of this destructive oscillation. Linearity results when one of the poles of a natural polarity is so far gone that it is altogether suppressed. Then, instead of a diverging to-and-fro that becomes an ever-widening oscillation, there is motion in one direction only. Linearity implies that the compensating, opposite movement has been altogether obliterated.

In “The Industrial Magnate” in *Women in Love*, Lawrence traces the progress of this linearity with devastating clarity. First comes the exaltation of the spiritual centers, the “ideal” in Christianity, at the expense of the dark sensual centers. Under “idealism” the natural to-and-fro mo-

tions of the body are perverted, resulting in the dominance of the conscious mind. The next stage after the Christian glorification of the ideal is the industrial worship of the machine. The two stages have in common the suppression of the sensuality that should balance conscious thought. Because the machine crushes the natural equilibrium between contraries even more brutally than did Christianity, it is the more linear, representing the next, further stage of development. Hence Mr. Crich’s Christian benevolence is inevitably superseded by Gerald’s efficiency. The next stage goes beyond Gerald. It is the mechanization of the body by the mind that Loerke expounds, with the pole of sensuality exploited by the contrary and now completely dominant pole of the conscious mind merely to furnish it with “sex in the head.”

Lawrence’s most explicit description of the process of reduction in a closed system occurs in the penultimate chapter, “Snowed Up,” as Lawrence explains why Gudrun prefers Loerke to Gerald. Between any two people, Lawrence writes, “the range of pure sensational experience is limited” (WL, p. 443). Once these limits are reached, “there is no going on. There is only repetition possible, or the going apart of the protagonists, or the subjugating of the one will to the other, or death.”

Gerald had penetrated all the outer places of Gudrun’s soul. He was to her the most crucial instance of the existing world. . . . In him she knew the world and had done with it. . . . But there were no new worlds [to conquer], there were no more men, there were only creatures, little, ultimate creatures like Loerke. The world was finished now, for her. There was only the inner, individual darkness, sensation within the ego, the obscene religious mystery of ultimate reduction, the mystic frictional activities of diabolic reducing down, disintegrating the vital organic body of life. (WL, p. 443)

The opposite to expansion into the infinite, then, is the reduction of the enclosure. Trapped within the finite world of sensation and conscious ideas, the “frictional activities” of engaging the other become a “diabolical reducing down,” a cannibalistic feeding on the interior life of the self because one has failed to break out of the confines of self.

It will be apparent from this summary that Women in Love articulates the various possibilities of combining linearity and dipolarity much more precisely and fully than The Rainbow does. But despite this success, Lawrence is no more able than he was in The Rainbow to depict the
ultimate goal toward which the “frictional to-and-fro” is supposedly tending—that is, the breakthrough into the creative unconscious. *Women in Love* is superior to *The Rainbow* in showing how and why the characters fail to reach this holistic reality, and in coordinating these individual failures with the larger failures of industrialized society. But it is less successful in actually rendering the experience of entering an undifferentiated reality. Ursula and Birkin’s momentary breakthrough into the unconscious pales beside the fierce intensity of the relationship between Tom and Lydia in *The Rainbow*. It is dissolution and degradation that dominates *Women in Love*, not the fragile rapprochement that the married couple find.

The progression suggests that Lawrence is maturing in a very different direction than we might have predicted on the basis of *The Rainbow*. Rather than becoming more skilled at representing a holistic reality, he is becoming more adept at finding ways to represent fragmentation. Despite what Lawrence says about the “creative unconscious” being the source of true wholeness, if we judge the unconscious solely on the basis of how it appears in his work, it is an even more powerful medium of estrangement. The characteristic narrative pattern in *Women in Love* is for two characters to come together, rub each other raw so that the powerful forces of the unconscious come increasingly to dominate their actions, then break apart as the unconscious forces thus set in action begin to take their course. Very rarely—only once, in fact—does this “frictional to-and-fro” break through to the holistic reality that Lawrence celebrates in the union of Tom and Lydia Brangwen. Much more frequently the unconscious forces lead to violent antagonisms and radical bifurcation.

In the “scientific essays,” we return to the inchoate ambiguities of *The Rainbow*, and with it, to a renewed, revealing tension in the relationship between child and parent. The earlier configurations persist—linearity and dipolarity, enclosure and openness—but now they are subsumed into a single term that is posited against the Freudian theory of repressed incest desire as the other polarity. In one sense Lawrence is condemned to giving scope to this hated term, lest the dialectic collapse into stasis; in another sense, Lawrence’s theories take their vitality precisely from this opposition. As he struggles to articulate the crucial relationship between his theory of the unconscious and the parent-child dynamic, the underlying forces that we have been tracing in the fiction
erupt into new “confusions,” and the result illuminates not only Lawrence’s art, but also the deeper anxieties that can accompany the encounter with undifferentiated reality.

At the heart of Lawrence’s “scientific” theory is his version of infant psychology. Lawrence explains an infant’s development in terms of symmetrical pairs of interacting centers. The first center to awaken in the child is the solar plexus, from which comes the infant’s response toward his parents. The second center to come into play is the lumbar ganglion in the lower back, the seat of the infant’s reaction away from the parents. Connected through a “polarity,” plexus and ganglion interact to form a field that expresses both the need to reach out to the other and the need to experience the self in autonomy and aloneness.

According to Lawrence, the next two centers to come into play are in the upper body, through the cardiac plexus in the chest and the thoracic ganglion in the shoulders. As with the lower centers, the plexus is polarized toward the parent, whereas the ganglion is a center of volition and autonomy. But the upper centers are distinct from the lower because they operate in what Lawrence calls an “objective” mode, seeking direct knowledge of the object. The lower centers by contrast are in a subjective mode, knowing the other only through its relation to the self. With four centers in existence, there occurs the possibility of interaction along the vertical plane. Not only can the plexuses interact horizontally with the corresponding ganglia to establish a polarity, but the two ganglia can interact together, and the two plexuses. Thus incarnate in the human body are two great tensions: the polarity between the spiritual and sensual in the vertical plane; and the polarity between union and autonomy on the horizontal plane.

At puberty, Lawrence says, four more centers come into play; later in life, yet four more. The details of the scheme are less important than the overall symmetries of the resulting polarities. Two points particularly should be noticed. The first is the twofold symmetry mentioned above, the tensions between the spiritual/sensual and sympathetic/volitional. The second, entailed by the overall symmetries, is the curious fact that the genital center has its symmetrical counterpart in the upper center of the throat. The significance of this vertical symmetry will be apparent later. For the moment, I wish to consider the horizontal (sympathetic/volitional) symmetries and their relation to the “confusions” of the fiction.
Evasion: Lawrence

In his theory of infant development, Lawrence preserves what was perhaps the central fact of his childhood: the reaction toward one parent, balanced by the reaction against the other. Significantly, Lawrence gives to the father the role of calling the volitional centers into play; the mother, he remarks, will be more likely to arouse the sympathetic centers. There is little doubt that Lawrence felt spiritually very close to his mother; but the autobiographical Sons and Lovers suggests that there was also considerable anxiety in that relationship, arising, the title implies, from a fear of incest. Lawrence begins Psychoanalysis with an attack on Freudian psychology because Freud, he believes, makes incest desire into "part of the normal sexuality of man." "Once, however, you accept the incest-craving as part of the normal sexuality of man," Lawrence writes, "you must remove all repression of incest itself. In fact, you must admit incest as you now admit sexual marriage, as a duty even" (Fantasia, p. 7). In Lawrence's theory, the opposing centers guarantee that an unqualified motion toward the mother is "unnatural." For every motion toward the mother, Lawrence implies, there should be an equally natural and necessary motion away. On one level, then, Lawrence's attack on Freud is a protective strategy designed explicitly to deny that unqualified attraction toward the mother is healthy or natural.

Beneath the surface, however, is a deeper protective strategy. More threatening to Lawrence than an incestuous, genital coupling with the mother is what he calls "spiritual incest," that is, a fusing of identity characteristic of the child's pre-Oedipal attachment to the mother. Freud's theory of infant psychology differs from modern developmental theories primarily in the stress that Freud puts on the Oedipal stage of development; by contrast, current work emphasizes the pre-Oedipal period. The differences in perspective are profound, because if gender identity comes not in the identification with the father but in the identification with/differentiation from the mother, identity is less a function of the Oedipal conflict than it is of the drive to differentiate oneself from the mother. When Lawrence speaks of "spiritual incest" as the malaise of our time, he anticipates the modern view, and consequently diverges significantly from Freud's theories.

Curiously, in Lawrence's essay this crucial difference is made to appear as if it were a part of, or at most an extension of, Freud's Oedipal complex. This suppression of a crucial difference is the more curious
because Lawrence is very explicit, to the point of shrillness, about other differences between Freud's theories and his own ideas. Lawrence's conflation of his "spiritual incest" with Freud's Oedipal theory suggests that he is evading some recognition that distinguishing between his theory and Freud's would force him to make. By confusing the two theories, Lawrence is able to displace his anxiety about a "spiritual" union with the mother onto the less threatening (because easier to control) prospect of a genital coupling. He even names "spiritual incest" in such a way as to imply that it is merely another form of "incest desire," so that his idiosyncratic terminology serves further to conflate the two theories.

These "confusions" notwithstanding, Lawrence is not primarily concerned about "genital" incest. More fundamental for him is the child's inability to differentiate himself from the mother. The importance Lawrence places on the father as the parent who awakens the centers of resistance in the child is suggestive of the deeper strategy at work, for it is when the child engages in a relationship with the father that he moves from the earlier mother-centered stage to the phallic orientation of the Oedipal stage.

When Lawrence turns to consider "spiritual incest" explicitly, however, these strategies can no longer control the anxiety, which then erupts into new "confusions." When a woman is unfulfilled in her marriage, Lawrence writes in Fantasia, she turns to her son for satisfaction (just as Mrs. Morel does in Sons and Lovers). Concentrating all her love and sympathy on the son, the mother prematurely awakens him to adult consciousness. According to Lawrence, the child who is thus awakened will be unable to be satisfied by an appropriate mate later on, because he has become fixated on the mother. Lawrence comes close to recognizing the pre-genital nature of this attachment when he locates it not in the genital centers, but in the upper throat centers. "Spiritual incest" arises when mothers "establish a dynamic connection between the two centres, the centres of the throat, the centres of the higher dynamic sympathy and cognition. They establish that circuit. And break it if you can. Very often not even death can break it" (Fantasia, p. 158). This recognition is crucial, for as we shall see, it establishes a direct link between the Lawrence's "subjective science" and his art.

We have seen that Lawrence, through the "frictional to-and-fro" of his style, creates a tense and rhythmic movement of language that he
likens to the contractions of labor. By imaging his speech as the act of birth, the quintessential moment when one becomes a mother, Lawrence implies that through his art he can metaphorically become the mother. Through this strategy, the part of one’s self that seeks fusion with the mother is satisfied, for it imagines a possession that is at once more symbolic and more complete than a genital coupling could ever be, representing not merely possession of the body but appropriation of the essence.

We can now also understand why the genital and throat centers are connected in Lawrence’s theory. The displacement of genital bonding by bonding through the throat is appropriate (and even necessary) as a reinforcement to the artist-becoming-the-mother, for the throat is, of course, the place from which speech issues. Readers of *Sons and Lovers* have long recognized that the tie with the mother is one of the deep springs of Lawrence’s art. The “scientific” essays confirm and extend this insight by showing how, for Lawrence, the yearning to possess the mother is symbolically transformed, in a rich alchemy that produced the early novels, into the need for artistic speech.

How then are these strategies related to the doorways and enclosures that are central metaphors in Lawrence’s fiction? When Lawrence recreates the quintessential moment of becoming the mother in his art-speech, he is simultaneously appropriating for himself the mother’s power of creation and freeing himself from her dominance over him; his art defines him as an artist with the power of creation, rather than as a son who is the creation of his mother. But since he has also in some sense become the mother, liberation and dependence are deeply entwined. Hence the characteristic conflation of enclosures and doorways, and their archetypal expression as wombs and vaginas. When the power struggles between male and female characters in Lawrence’s early fiction are most intense, they invariably erupt into these images. Recall that Anton, in the long passage quoted earlier from *The Rainbow*, is trying to “net” Ursula, to “enclose”, and “capture” her. Ursula’s corrosive energy, too strong for Anton, breaks through these bonds and instead captures his “core.” Thereafter he is her creature, something she has “created.” What we are witnessing in this scene is the reverse of a birth, the regression of Anton from the independence of the adult to the complete dependence of a child in the womb. This is the ultimate horror that Lawrence through his art-speech can re-create and, through
the act of re-creation, also escape, although he never entirely loses the sense that the freedom and enclosure, escape and capture, are two alternate faces of the same spectre.

Lawrence's ingenuity in transforming "spiritual incest" from a confining enclosure to the openness of the creative act is matched by his honesty in admitting that the transmutation is only partially effective. When he wrestles explicitly with the "ghoul" of incest desire, the strategies of transformation are stressed to the breaking point. One such point of stress is the passage in *Fantasia* on the interpretation of incest dreams. "It is always wrong," Lawrence writes, "to accept a dream-meaning at its face value."

Sleep is the time when we are given over to the automatic processes of the inanimate universe. Let us not forget this. . . In the case of the boy who dreams of his mother, we have the aroused but unattached sex plunging in sleep. . . We have the image of the mother, the dynamic emotional image. And the automatism of the dream-process immediately unites the sex-sensation to the great stock image, and produces an incest dream. But does this prove a repressed incest desire? On the contrary. (*Fantasia*, pp. 196–197)

In this argument, Lawrence sets up terms which, if extrapolated to their obvious end point, lead to the reasonable conclusion that incest dreams are an indication of incest desire. But then he reverses the line of argument to say that the opposite conclusion is true. As Lawrence struggles to keep his defenses intact, the language becomes highly stressed. "The truth is," Lawrence writes, "every man has, the moment he awakes, a hatred of his [incest] dream, and a great desire to be free of the dream, free of the persistent mother-image or sister-image of the dream. It is a ghoul, it haunts his dreams, this image, with its hateful conclusion" (*Fantasia*, p. 197). Even as he writes this painful truth, Lawrence is trying to escape the "hateful conclusion" by another abrupt shift in direction. The actual cause of the incest dream, Lawrence says, is not the mother but the wife. Then, again, the painful return, the implicit recognition: "But even though the actual subject of the dream is the wife, still, over and over again, for years, the dream-process will persist in substituting the mother image. It haunts and terrifies a man" (*Fantasia*, p. 197).

In these and surrounding passages, linearity and incest come together
with the image of the machine. The dream image of the mother, Lawrence says, “refers only to the upper plane.” When the “automatic logic” of the dream unites this upper image with lower genital desire, it is not an authentic connection but a “piece of sheer automatic logic.” To proceed in a straight line is to act like a machine, not a living being. Because life is not linear, the linear logic of the incest-dream that connects the upper spiritual desire with genital lust only proves that a man’s living soul could not be implicated in this mechanical conclusion. Lawrence thus derives the contradictory result that an incest dream proves not the presence of incest desire but the “living fear of the automatic conclusion.” The mother image, Lawrence writes,

was the first great emotional image to be introduced into the psyche. The dream-process mechanically reproduces its stock image the moment the intense sympathy-emotion is aroused . . . the mother-image refers only to the upper plane. But the dream-process is mechanical in its logic. Because the mother-image refers to the great dynamic stress in the upper plane, therefore it refers to the great dynamic stress in the lower. This is a piece of sheer automatic logic. The living soul is not automatic, and automatic logic does not apply to it . . . the living soul fears the automatically logical conclusion of incest. (Fantasia, p. 198)

The reasoning in these passages is so tense, so nonlinear, in a sense, that even Lawrence admits his argument “may sound like casuistry.” If it is casuistry, however, it is no less significant because of that. To proceed linearly means that one remains trapped within a lifelong desire for the mother; it also means that one acts not like a person but like a machine. One can avoid this linearity by speaking, by using language in a to-and-fro dialectic that has the power to break free of enclosures. The nexus between linearity, the machine, enclosure, and incest thus emerges in a way that allows us to see how it could be connected with Lawrence’s need to speak, as well as with the highly stressed metaphoric patterns in the art speech.

Though Lawrence’s art remains most powerful in its rendering of an ambivalent approach to/avoidance of the undifferentiated field of the unconscious rather than an entrance into it, at its best it achieves a remarkable transformation of private concerns into patterns of universal significance. The universality of this dynamic can be appreciated when we see it in a discipline as far afield from Lawrence as quantum mechan-
ics. Lawrence shares with quantum physicists an early attachment to the mother as primary caretaker, and a process of gender differentiation in which the mother is posited as quintessentially different from the self. Thus for both artist and scientist a subconscious equation is made between the autonomy of the self and the objectification of the other. For the scientist, this early objectification of the mother is transmuted into a later objectification of Mother Nature, whereas for Lawrence it is changed into the complex tensions of his fiction and essays. So when Lawrence imagines in his art an integrated unconscious “field” in which the boundaries between self and other are blurred, he is exploring the same kind of anxiety that a quantum physicist feels in the presence of a scientific model that similarly blurs the boundaries between subject and object. For both, the anxiety is linked with the deepest levels of identity and is bound up with the drive to achieve an autonomous identity independent of the mother.

Lawrence’s art, then, though it is based in part in his own personal relationships with women, transcends the merely personal. At its best, it is a complex and sometimes tortured exploration of the anxieties and ambivalences that can occur whenever one encounters a field model of reality, whether in fiction or in quantum mechanics. The irony is that Lawrence himself was almost completely unaware of these parallels. He saw in modern science merely the tendency to objectify reality, without realizing that it too was undergoing a radical transformation in the face of modern field theories. The larger terms of Lawrence’s dissolving dialectic are thus Lawrence and the science he did not understand. Believing that the most fruitful interaction comes not from consensus but from passionate struggle between contraries, Lawrence made science into the essential other term necessary to begin the dialectic, thereby transforming his sense of alienation from it into an asset. If Lawrence’s theories are finally mystical rather than scientific, intuitive rather than logical, they assign to science the essential role of the “other.” It is fitting that this binary opposition itself blends into a complicated field of the kind that Lawrence reached out toward, but could never entirely grasp.