

THE QUEST FOR TRUTH BETWEEN D.H. LAWRENCE AND G.K. GIBRAN

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The romantic tradition asserts that this world is nothing but a copy of a real superior one. This world, religiously speaking, is a reflection of the Good, of God. Therefore, as a reflection of the Spiritual world, our world cannot be a world of Evil. The Original Sin is consequently rejected, hence the contradiction between romanticism and the Christian dogma.

Almustafa and the man who died perform some allegorical functions. The major functions deal with the nature of God, the source of life and they represent in some way a parody of Ibn Tufail's (1105-1185) *Hay Ibn yakazan* fable on the one hand. On the other hand, they re-enact the creation of Adam. This theme is related to the nature of paradise, and the notion of good and evil.

In a very romantic tradition, Lawrence follows Rousseau's philosophical frame of the noble savage and Shelley's gothic *Frankenstein* (1818), yet he infuses a different culture and psychology. The creation of a new man, a new Adam follows that tradition. If Lawrence meets with the romantics in the denunciation of invasive industrialization, he certainly disagrees with them on many points regarding the human nature. He joins them in their quest for a perfect man, a perfect society, but breaks down from their pessimistic mood or even the type of return to Nature. Is man good or bad? Then this question inevitably encloses us in the Fall of man.

If Lawrence's writings are about the essence of man, Gibran's are also about man. If he gives, artistically, rebirth to Jesus, it is because he conceives man as either a continuation of Jesus or a new creation. The myth of origins haunts both authors. Their untiring quest for the origins is significant as they are in quest for the present of man and his future as well. They are looking for the essence of man, and this is sacred and needs to be found in some sacred origins. They want to offer man a noble origin to account for his presence on Earth and to see his prophetic mission. It is the reason why Lawrence visited the Pueblo Indians in New Mexico, visited Australia and Italy in quest for the Etruscans. He was certainly behind the primordial man. Gibran's settings are all in nature. The innocence of his characters is beyond doubt apart from the clergymen that he despises. Most of his characters are either unable old men, innocent children or a weak woman, even Maria Magdalene is among his re-creations. She is no more the bad fallen one. The

curse of the new Christian is that he judges the others about their sins. However, the founder of Christianity teaches forgiveness. His character is always good and wise, even the child. Marie Magdalene, describes Jesus as if he were mist-like, vaporous, the Way, part of Nature. "He was not walking. He Himself was a road above the road; even as a cloud above the earth that would descend to refresh the earth." (Gibran, TCW 327)

She knows that He is a sheer allegory, a personification of the Self. She even forgets she was once a prostitute when she meets Jesus.

And because I could bear His light no more, I turned and walked away, but not in shame. I was only shy, and I would be alone, with His fingers upon the strings of my heart (327).

Yet speaking about Gibran's created Jesus, one feels that he is not only a man of good. He hurts and shakes the Hebrew and Roman Order, and according to Caiaphas, "he poisoned the mind of the simple people, and He led them as if by magic against us and against Caesar" (257). Jerusalem, the religious city, and Ponce Pilate the roman, heir of the Greek rationalism that judged Jesus know his danger, 'We and Pontius Pilatus knew the danger in that man, and that it was wise to bring Him to an end' (257). There is no such creation in Nature that does not hold good and bad, even Jesus seems to be doubtful about his nature and Gibran wants to show us that the Son of Man is bound to be good and evil at once. "Was He doubtful of Himself when He said to those who would confound Him with a harlot, "He who is without sin, let him cast a stone"?" (286)

The message is clear to some extent, and according to Gibran, we cannot divide man into good and bad. There is no good man and no bad man concepts on which the whole Christian metaphysical system was built on. The opposition is but one expression of the same basic principles of the same identity. As much as man can be altruistic, abnegates himself, he can at the same time express his ego, the self. Gibran's Jesus is beyond the Hebrew prophets because he expresses his own ideals and his ego too

The prophets of old have spoken to you, and your ears are filled with their speech. But I say unto you, empty your ears of what you have heard."

And these words of Jesus, "But I say unto you," were not uttered by a man of our race nor of our world; but rather by a host of seraphim marching across the sky of Judea.

Again and yet again He would quote the law and the prophets, and then he would say, "But I say unto you."

Oh, what burning words, what waves of seas unknown to the shores of our mind, "But I say unto you." (295)

In the same parable, 'Cleopas of Bethroune: On the Law and the Prophets', in *Jesus Son of Man* (1928), one feels that he comes to destroy the Law, and bring another spirit, that would not chain man, the way Paul of Tarsus did. Gibran's Jesus brings another vision to good and evil. In fact, he is the vision as Rachel in the parable 'Rachael A Woman Disciple' thinks. However, he is not only a vision or a phantom 'But in truth He was not a dream' (293). This is the end of Gibran's idealism following Nietzsche's tradition. Good is not in the other world the way Plato states it, and evil is not always evil. Father Samaan who carries Satan on his shoulder and hosts him has but one good intention: the survival of faith. However, is good intention a good thing while using evil means? Is power good and meekness evil? We have seen how he defends a powerful Jesus, but we always need to remember that this is the Jesus of the post funerals of god.

What man uncertain of tomorrow would proclaim, "Your world shall pass away and be naught but scattered ashes ere my words shall pass away"? (286)

The difference might lie here between Gibran and Lawrence who is accustomed to see only meekness in Jesus. Nietzsche's stronghold is unparalleled if compared to his influence on Gibran, but the three of them share the idea that good is linked to freedom and evil is related to slavery. Lawrence does not like the peasants' slave conditions but he cannot help them. The way he despises them, the priestess despises her slaves as nothing good could come out of them "She spoke coldly, for she found slaves invariably repellent, a little repulsive. They were so embedded in the lesser life, and their appetites and their small consciousness were a little disgusting" (Lawrence, CLDHL 148).

Lawrence believes that Christianity and how it came to be interpreted brought about the slave spirit that is in total contradiction with the free spirit of Nature. "The separation was absolute, as yet here at the temple he felt peace, the hard, bright pagan peace with hostility of slaves beneath"(Lawrence, CLDHL 148). Accordingly, the sacred goes with nature and one needs to revolt against the Spirit and the idea of the good in order to be free and sacred. The man who died reveals to prefer the young black slave who revolts with ere against God, as "he raised his arms to heaven in anger as the pigeon wheeled away, naked and angry and young he held out his arms"(Lawrence, CEWDHL 142). This rebellion is also the insidious revolt that occultism was fomenting in the 19th century to end the domination/oppression of the middle and working class, and release the reign of liberalism in England (Owen 23). It was also the consequences of

the Civil War in America to achieve the shaping of modernism, and the nascent culture of feminism, suffrages, trade unionism, and growth in new religious beliefs, especially those

shorn of [their] conventional religious overtones, [were] widely conceived by those with an interest in the new emancipatory movements to have real relevance for the establishment of a society dedicated to the eradication of materialism and the promotion of individual fulfilment (Owen 24).

The spiritual development especially through the theosophical society anoints the political and social agitations with some sacred activity under secularism. There is no wonder to find such Annie Besant, Fabian socialist, championing for man's and women's equality and other social and political reforms. Theosophy is also an abode shelter for many feminists. Thus, theosophist and political reformer Emma Hardings Britten who thinks that Spiritualism can be "the basis of a new religious order" (Horowitz 62), and Mary Fenn Love, spiritualist Andrew Jackson Davis's wife, who is a suffragette activist, "coconvened the first New York State Women's Rights Convention. "Spiritualism has inaugurated the era of woman," Love announced." (62). However, according to Lawrence and Gibran, liberalism means in no way equality, as we will examine below, for a sheer respect of nature.

Talking about man's nature leads us to investigate the nature of the Self according to Gibran and Lawrence. For the latter, man's nature is evil because "any rule of saints must be horrible. Why? Because the nature of man is not saintly. The *primal* need, the old Adamic need in a man's soul is to be, in his own sphere and as far as he can attain it, master, lord, and splendid one" (Lawrence, AP 20). There is no such a thing called goodness, according to Lawrence. All is about greatness, and that is the only sacred language because purity in one man lies abreast on Nature, respect it with all that it offers. In fact, the more one turns towards pity; there he loses his pride and goodness. This would run even on societies. The more man turns towards democracy and denies the nature in him, he falls in mediocrity, and mediocrity is evil, as he becomes the slave of morals, and this generates evil slavery, would it be religious or political. Unlike Gibran, who stresses on know yourself or "self-knowledge" (Gibran, TCW 133), Lawrence stresses on 'Be thyself' (Lawrence, CLDHL 456). The resurrection of the Christ in the flesh in Lawrence's novella is a regeneration of the self that Gibran accepts as a gnostic too. In fact, complying with a gnostic conception of the

essence of man, he believes in the indissoluble union of soul and flesh, an idea that goes contrariwise to the Christian intellectual conception of man as a spirit. The man resurrected in body and spirit, with pain and hunger, not as a replica as thought by Paul. In fact, even materialist Paul had to use more platonic terms the way the first Christians had an opportunity to introduce Platonic ideals of the soul. In addition, despite some pagan doctrines, Christianity believes in the accountability of the individual so draws more towards individuality contrary to paganism that was rooted in nature. Thus, “humans survive their bodily deaths as individuals and that as individuals they subsequently [are] held accountable for their earthly lives” (Barresi 56). It is reported that modern Western civilization inherited of this vision to individuality. Therefore, for Lawrence, personal identity is the continuation of both spirit and body, and so is Gibran’s resurrection philosophy of Nathan into Ali. The same longings remain, and memories, emotions, and desires survive along with the body although proper names are different. The prophet claims his return in a different body “A little while, and my longing shall gather dust and foam for another body” (Gibran, TCW 160).

Both authors, although in modern times, pose a thorny question that has been discussed by Hellenistic and Christian philosophies over personal identity, and both recognize both spirit and body as an integral part to it. For them, there is no dual vision to personality, but a whole united one because what is life’s function after all if not all the body’s functions? The resurrection surely affects both of them as they recognize themselves. Therefore, both authors are aware and conscious of their identity, perhaps not fully recovered yet, but certainly, they are not spirits or mere souls.

The lost soul of the Christian betrays abnegation of the Self; the gnostic tries to stand both ways between the primitive and the Christian, between the intellect and the flesh. The self, for the gnostic, is reaffirmed with the transformation within the process of knowledge embodied in self-knowledge. It may sound it is a purely intellectual move of the Self and a rejection of individuality in the consummation of the Self in the divine. This might be true to some extent in so much as the Gnostics, within the process of knowledge, are in quest of the real Self. God, in the Christian tradition, would turn towards his child; this is shared with the gnostic. Gibran shows us in different places, where the goddess mother turns towards her son. In his parable ‘The Prophet and the Child’ in *The Wanderer*, the child refers to god as the nurse, the midwife that is going to help his rebirth and regeneration. The theme of midwife is omnipresent in the gnostic

transformation. Jesus, in his illumination is the model to be followed, and the midwife that is going to help for the regeneration (Stroumsa 150).

"I am only myself," said the child, "and my nurse is seeking after me, and she does not know where I am."

Then the prophet gazed into space saying, "I too have escaped my nurse for a while, but she will find me out."

And the child said, "I know mine will find me out too."

At that moment a woman's voice was heard calling the child's name, "See," said the child, "I told you she would be finding me."

And at the same moment another voice was heard, "Where art thou, Sharia?"

And the prophet said, "See my child, they have found me also."

And turning his face upward, Sharia answered, "Here I am." (Gibran, TCW 461)

In fact, for the pagan, the essence is especially identified with the flesh. On another scale, for Gnosticism, the self is an important feminine entity that remains lost unless reunited with the masculine entity of god.

Both writers remain optimistic although Gibran's writings bear a pessimistic note for narcissistic reasons. However, their whole philosophy is the philosophy of hope and trust in the soul of man and in his future illumination despite the ontological foundations of evil within nature and man. It is as sacred as good, and one has to respect it. In fact, for both of them, Nature is the realm of mysteries and the unknown; it is overwhelming and man has feared it since the dawn of humanity. However, to understand the nature of man, life, nature, and the cosmos one has to go through initiation.

An initiate journey tells the spiritual trip of the consciousness and the acquisition of knowledge, most of the time secret and available only to the initiators or those initiates. It is sacred as it is religious and occurs within symbolic forms, patterns, and environments. The goal is the participation in the creation of the universe, some sort of cosmo-genesis, or the recreation and rebirth of the individual into another one, more accomplished and perfect. It is the anthropo-genesis. Initiation is always compared to the death of the initial Self and rebirth into another one. In the case of *The Prophet*, the three stages initiating journey starts from the mountain, sailing or going to the inferior regions and ends up in the mountain. They correspond to death, baptism/initiation, and resurrection of the Self.

Following the structure of both stories, both the man who died and Almustafa take the sea to leave with a hint to come back. Thus, Gibran's the Chosen decides to sail after he sowed the truth among his people.

So saying he made a signal to the seamen, and straightaway they weighed anchor and cast the ship loose from its moorings, and they moved eastward. And a cry came from the people as from a single heart, and it rose the dusk and was carried out over the sea like a great trumpeting.

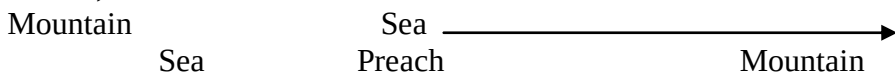
Only Almitra was silent, gazing after the ship until it had vanished into the mist" (162).

The man who died did likewise and sailed after he had sowed his imperishable words suggesting that he would come again. "The man who had died quickly seized the boat and stepped in, and pushed off. The oars were yet warm with the unpleasant warmth of the hands of the slaves. But the man pulled slowly out, to get into the current which set down the coast, and would carry him in silence (Lawrence, CEWDHL 163).

Very interestingly, Jesus has his own parable that was introduced by Matthew (13:1-23) entitled 'The parable of the sower', and in which Jesus tells his parable on a boat. It was a parable about him. He was the Sower. The first paragraphs of Matthew's chapter 13 are self-revealing about the influence:

1. The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the [sea](#)side. 2. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. 3. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow...(Cogliano 565).

Therefore, the structure for both novellas is as follows:



However, the sea comes right from the beginning after the mountain we can at this level almost stress that the structure is: Sea – Preach - Sea. Both stories then find a cyclical narrative structure. The beginning is the end. In the case of Lawrence's novella, we know that the protagonist rises from the dead. Therefore, death is the departure point of his journey. Gibran's Almustafa arises from a symbolic death or rather a rebirth. Let us see how he feels when he comes to the world:

And in the twelfth year, on the seventh day of Ielool, the month of reaping, he climbed the hill without the city walls and looked seaward; and he beheld the ship coming with the mist. Then the gates of his heart were flung open, and his joy flew far over the sea. And he closed his eyes and prayed in the silences of his soul (Gibran, TCW 97).

Ielool corresponds with the months of August/September, the date of Gibran's own birthday. We can see how coming from the void makes the 'gates of his heart open, and his joy flew'. Therefore, another diagram (Figure 1, The Cycle of Life) is not to be ignored:

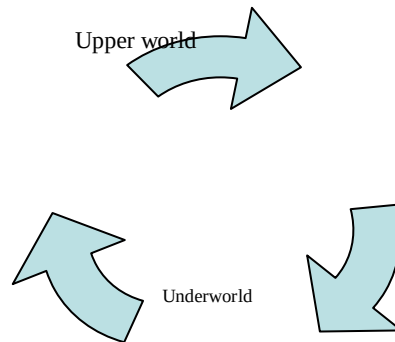


Figure 1: The Cycle of Life

*This figure displays the cyclical aspect of life that both Gibran and Lawrence use as structure to their novellas.

This diagram is better sustained by the cyclical structure of both narratives. In the last chapter entitled 'The Farewell', Almustafa waits for regeneration and rebirth. From the upper world, he goes eastward towards the inferior regions. "A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind, and another woman shall bear me" (162). The man who died awaits another day "So let the boat carry me. To-morrow is another day". (Lawrence, CEWDHL 163). Similarly, mystery religions performed their own secret initiation ceremonies too. They were meant to be a bridge to meet the divine. In the Egyptian tradition, the initiate was given the rank of 'prophet', and "only by being initiated by as the servant of god ... can one enter into the temple as the 'living servant of Ra' ... in order to see all forms of god and all secret things" (Uzdavinys 36).

Orpheus, according to Algis Uzdavinys, is the first initiate to "reveal the meaning of the mysteries and rituals of initiation" (Uzdavinys 38). However, to understand these mysteries, one has to go through initiation as,

Besant reports; it is the religious structure of the rhythm of destruction and recreation. Lawrence, according to C.M. Burack, must have been acquainted with initiation rites as early as 1908 “from his reading of theosophy and cultural anthropology and discovered that initiations aim to engender a spiritual rebirth in the novitiate” (Burack 06). This kind of rite breaks down the chains of the profane. So, the imagery is not Christian but theosophical and mason. Likewise, Gibran must have learnt all the rituals from both Frazer and theosophy.

Freemasonry has its own secret initiation. Leadbeater describes this process of death and life in his book *Hidden Life in Freemasonry* (13). The neophyte has his eyes banded, symbolically coming from darkness, and seeking light. The symbolism of the sight, that we are going to find in both Lawrence and Gibran for their initiation in quest of light, is appealing. Theosophists, through Annie Besant, claim that through initiation, a disciple can reach the state of godliness, and that Jesus and Buddha are but saviours, sons of god and initiates of the same mystery. Gibran regards in initiation, the doorway to death and resurrection, the final step towards godliness too.

And what is to cease breathing, but to free the breath from its restless tides, that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered? (Gibran, TCW 150)

Initiation is considered a rehearsal of the primordial times, and an imitation of the mystery religions when dealing with death and life, regeneration and rebirth. It is the resurrection of a new self within the novitiate. Initiation is at focus lenses in *The Plumed Serpent* although important in many other Lawrence's novels. Initiation is the gate for the transfiguration of the individual, and the evolution gradates in sacredness while man connects erotically. Lawrence articulates initiation as a technique to involve the reader in his sacred world. Anthropologists and theosophists alike explain its meaning. Annie Besant claims

that the culminating point of initiation in many Western esoteric societies and eastern religions is “when the Initiate became a God, whether by union with a divine Being outside himself, or by the realization of the divine Self within him (Burack 07).

The destruction of the older self is a necessity that goes through initiation, and this both Gibran and Lawrence know it. In Gibran's *The Prophet*, death is the initiation. There is no wonder that death is the last sermon, the last step before rebirth. Death is nothing but the beginning of life, and as such, it deserves an initiation. The passage from one state to another requires it. We have seen how the initiate, in any religion or fraternal secret society, seeks

knowledge. "In the depth of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond" (Gibran, TCW 150). If Gibran's prophet screams in the beginning of the story and wants to cast his skin like a serpent, after his initiation he is in communion with the organic principle of life, the enlightenment. He claims in his sermon that "We are the seeds of the tenacious plant, and it is in our ripeness and our fullness of heart that we are given to the wind and are scattered (153).

The transfiguration is the epitome of the forbidden fruit. Certainly, that Gibran's occult influence stirs such a choice for the organic life. "Like a giant oak tree covered with apple blossoms is the vast man in you" (154). The move from the state of impurity to that of purity is primordial in any initiation and a requisite in the occult, as if moving from the state of profane to the state of sacred, from man to god. Most of his characters in quest of the higher selves need to leave their earthly impure pygmy self to transcend to higher realms. He uses the word 'purity' only once in his *The Prophet*. Purity is a gateway like water and sacrifice. It is an on-going eternal repetition in daily life to make it sacred and step into the Heaven through the eternal return of the seasons.

And let your board stand an altar on which the pure and the innocent of forest and plain are sacrificed for that which is purer and still more innocent in many.

When you kill a beast say to him in your heart,

"By the same power that slays you, I too am slain; and I too shall be consumed. For the law that delivered you into my hand shall deliver me into a mightier hand.

Your blood and my blood is naught but the sap that feeds the tree of heaven."

And when you crush an apple with your teeth, say to it in your heart,

"Your seeds shall live in my body,

And the buds of your tomorrow shall blossom in my heart,

And your fragrance shall be my breath,

And together we shall rejoice through all the seasons."

And in the autumn, when you gather the grapes of your vineyard for the winepress, say in your heart,

"I too am a vineyard, and my fruit shall be gathered for the winepress,

And like new wine I shall be kept in eternal vessels."

And in winter, when you draw the wine, let there be in your heart a song for each cup;

And let there be in the song a remembrance for the autumn days, and for the vineyard, and for the winepress (112).

Even language does not pretend to escape sacralisation. For Gibran, the language is that of parables and symbols, and not all people can have access to this 'truth' apart from those who are initiated. Language, in fact, is far from representing the wholeness of man's thoughts and heart secrets. Language is the source of man's divided self, alienation and self-exile.

You talk when you cease to be at peace with your thoughts;

And when you can no longer dwell in the solitude of your heart you live in your lips, and sound is a diversion and a pastime

And in much of your talking, thinking is half murdered (113).

Lawrence specifies even the language of the intellect, and he thinks that knowledge would come from the dark sides of the human being because the deep secrets of life cannot be accessed through the cerebral. Greek, in his novella, stands for the intellect that he despises

She advanced across the outer chamber of the temple, and the man, becoming aware of her, stood up. She addressed him in Greek, but he said:

"Madam, my Greek is limited. Allow me to speak vulgar Syrian." (Lawrence, CEWDHL 148)

For both Gibran and Lawrence, the deep union between feelings, the organic and nature do not come through the intellect. Even their knowledge does not come from higher and conventional spheres of the intellect but from caves and dark spaces. The cave in Lawrence's novella is almost an archetype for an endless rebirth before reaching the ultimate final Godlike rebirth. "And the man who had died said to himself: "Unless we encompass it in the greater day, and set the little life in the circle of the greater life, all is disaster." Ecstatic practices happen there, in caves too. They are the source of knowledge even for Gibran. Strange enough, the word 'cave' in the whole novella is associated with good and evil. "Verily when good is hungry it seeks food even in dark caves, and when it thirsts, it drinks even of dead waters (Gibran, TCW 139).

Gibran's organic vision to the universe reaches the human relations too.

And there are those who have the truth within them, but they tell it not in words.

In the bosom of such as these the spirit dwells in rhythmic silence.

When you meet your friend on the roadside or in the market place, let the spirit in you move your lips and direct your tongue.

Let the voice within your voice speak to the ear of his ear;

For his soul will keep the truth of your heart as the taste of the wine is remembered

When the color is forgotten and the vessel is no more (137).

Lawrence would share such an opinion in as much as his characters oftentimes move as if in trance. However, it would be wrong to think that he is a mystic although much of the atmosphere of his writings is drawn from a religious background. It is, however, almost certain that he is concerned with man's happiness and the quest for truth, two main attributes of a mystic.

Lawrence believes that the sacred does not belong to a coming kingdom of God, or an afterlife. The sacred is rather now and for the moment. In his long poem "Manifesto", he makes it clearer at the very end with a mystical resonance

We shall not look before and after.

We shall be, now.

We shall know in full.

We, the mystic NOW (Lawrence, RBO).

Happiness is with and through the senses rather than in ideas and ideals. The problem for him is twofold. Christianity is dualistic and laid her foundation on good and bad. On the other hand, Western civilization has gone too far on the cerebral side. The sin comes from the Christian myth of Adam and Eve, according to him. Instead of eating from the tree of life, they ate from the tree of knowledge. The consequence is that they stripped man from nature, and man has become different from the rest of nature, a superior creation that is on earth to take advantage and subdue nature.

Lawrence's quest for a better world was physical as he moves to Italy, New Mexico, and Australia. He was in quest for happiness and he tried many cultures and explored how they account for man's happiness. His own culture has lost the essence of life. "When I hear modern people complain of being lonely then I know what has happened" (Lawrence, AP 30). It is certainly this relation to the cosmos, that modern man has lost and that Lawrence tries to renew through the senses. What brings man to "truth" is certainly not the cerebral side of man, but his senses. His mysticism is so different then from that of a real mystic. He wears the gown of a mystic merely to denounce both the dualistic vision to the universe and the savage materialism of his age and the sneaking industrialization. However, the mystic does not interest Lawrence except from the intention to unite with the sacred. Though unlike the Christian that is confined to a dogmatic religion, the mystic is a free spirit that finds his peace in the union with the

cosmos and the divine. The only reproach Lawrence has for the mystic is that he lives in his own world, a world of the spirit, a world that is as degenerate as the Christian's one. The curse sounds like the mythical apple of Adam and Eve, knowledge in other words. A mystic is just a liar in Lawrence's poem "The Mystic". Both the mystic and Lawrence may share the communion with the cosmos, but means are certainly different, and perhaps for this reason it might be difficult to accept Lawrence as a mystic poet. The journey of the mystic is spiritual, but Lawrence wants the participation of all senses.

They call all experience of the senses mystic, when the experience is considered....

If I say I taste these things in an apple, I am called mystic, Which means a liar (Lila).

Gibran does not really seem to be a mystic and he clearly rejects his approach through his parable 'The Greater Sea' in his *The Madman*. The narrator goes to bathe with his soul (two entities), but she does not want to bathe in front of the mystic

Then we came where we saw a man tracing his shadow on the sand.

Great waves came and erased it. But he went on tracing it again and again.

"He is the mystic," said my soul, "Let us leave him." (Gibran, TCW 37)

Christian mysticism lays its foundations on the eternal battleground of spirit and flesh, and the dualism of good and bad. Although the concept is brought from older religions and pagan beliefs, the Christians would want the spirit to rise over the flesh if not to separate between them. Pre-monotheistic religions consider sacred both the spirit and the flesh. Nature is but one. It is though strange that sometimes Lawrence's characters act like primitives and are devoid of any cerebral powers yet, just like mystics, perhaps semi – unconscious, participate in the great phenomenon of life and the cosmos. However, it is participation for the sake of life, and for the sake of its celebration. This kind of life urges Kate in his *The Plumed Serpent* to leave the modern world and live with the Pueblo Indians who reject the mental knowledge, the platonic ideal or Christian spirituality. Ramon clearly displays Lawrence's vision when saying to Kate "I will not serve an idea, which cracks and leaks like an old wine-skin" (Lawrence, TPS 61). It is the same idea expressed in different words in Gibran's *The Wanderer*, parable entitled 'Body and Soul'. The wanderer knows that love does not come through ideas and dreams.

And the man said, "I love you. You are a beautiful thought, a thing too apart to hold in the hand, and a song in my dreaming."

But the woman turned from him in anger, and she said, "Sir, please leave me now. I am not a thought, and I am not a thing that passes in your dreams. I am a woman. I would have you desire me, a wife, and the mother of unborn children (Gibran, TCW 464).

In the same parable cited above 'The Greater Sea', the soul with the 'golden hair' does not want to bathe near an idealist.

And we walked on, till in a quiet cover we saw a man scooping up the foam and putting it into an alabaster bowl.

"He is the idealist," said my soul, "Surely he must not see our nudity." (37)

Probably just like Lawrence, Gibran has chosen the present life against the other one that would dwell in the Ideal. However, his realm is the realm of angels, prophets, apostles, hermits, ordinary men, women, and children. His realm does not belong to fragments, and fragmented selves, but it belongs to the sacred holistic Greater Self, the Great Sea. They all recreate the sacred through overcoming the duality of man's condition. His parables and aphorisms provide an abundant thought about his philosophy of duality. To me, the best that displays the marriage of dichotomies is that parable entitled 'Satan' where the clergyman heals Satan injured as he needs him to preserve Christianity or the parable named 'the blessed city'. In the latter, Gibran denounces Christianity and insidiously shows us that we need evil as clergyman Samaan needs Satan. In 'The Blessed City', inhabitants had only one eye and one hand. He asked for the reasons, and the following one was put forth:

And one of their elders stood forth and said, "This doing is of ourselves. God hath made us conquerors over the evil that was in us."

And he led me to a high altar, and all the people followed. And he showed me above the altar an inscription graven, and I read:

"If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that the whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell (Gibran, TCW 29).

The irony is worded here. Gibran rejects the dogmatic Christianity, the surface literal understanding of people, but also the misunderstanding of the duality that runs the Christian theological system. That is the reason why,

Gibran left Christianity the way his young man left 'The Blessed City'. 'And when we had come out of the temple, I straightway left that Blessed City; for I was not too young, and I could read the scripture' (30). It is what Gibran calls 'the stupidity of man' (31) in another parable entitled 'The Good God and the Evil God'. Modern man is incapable to overcome his dualistic vision to life or even his own dual self.

Both Lawrence and Gibran's quests are not only determined by their resentment of Christianity, but of the modern world, and its philosophical approach to life. They feel that man has lost some deep knowledge and the priest is somehow responsible for this loss as he deprives man from having access to it. Gibran claims it through his prophet "And there are those who talk, and without knowledge or forethought reveal a truth which they themselves do not understand" (137). Those priests' religion offers man dogmatic Christianity without questioning; impose a system of rewards and punishment while real knowledge of life is denied. As a result, man has not yet reached the ultimate point of development. Both writers look for that man, and the Platonic ideal though despised is present in their waiting period. Man's ignorance has imprisoned his will, spirit and knowledge. However, what is this knowledge that man is missing according to both writers? It is the deep secret of the mystery religions, that which lays its foundations upon sex and the overcoming of the duality. Initiation will certainly help both the prophet and the man who died dissolve their profane state into a sacred one, trespass the ordinary to the realm of the gods. This sacred initiation is not only erotic but also organic as it connects man to man, and man to nature. Its function is to provide awareness and consciousness to the neophyte about the sacredness of the phase he is moving to while merging with the divine. Let us remember how the priestess of Isis anoints the man who died to remove the scars of the cross and the 'cruelty' of the spirit.

Let me anoint you!" the woman said to him softly. "Let me anoint the scars! Show me, and let me anoint them!"

He forgot his nakedness in this re-evoked old pain. He sat on the edge of the couch, and she poured a little ointment into the palm of his hand. And as she chafed his hand, it all came back, the nails, the holes, the cruelty, the unjust cruelty against him who had offered only kindness. The agony of injustice and cruelty came over him again, as in his death-hour. But she chafed the palm, murmuring: "What was torn becomes a new flesh, what was a wound is full of fresh life; this scar is the eye of the violet (Lawrence, CEWDHL 157).

Therefore, there is an intimate relation between knowledge and faith. Both Gibran and Lawrence remain nostalgic for that old time when, instead of being dogmatic, the priests combined between their theological duties and erudition as part of only one duty, which is penetrating the mysteries of the deity and the universe. Sciences, paths of knowledge, were not secular, but sacred moments being an important part of worship, and to understand Nature and the cosmos, the movements of the planets were an inseparable moment to understand God, as it leads to freedom.

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