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PATTERNS OF DICHOTOMY IN D.H. LAWRENCE'S *"STUDIES IN CLASSIC AMERICAN LITERATURE"*

D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* has been either admired or derided by critics in the United States and in Europe. Many found it difficult to swallow the *Studies* as a whole but, taken to pieces, the book proved nourishing to generations of Americanists. With his sweeping generalizations, diffuse interests, and the quality which John Middleton Murry identifies as empathy for his subjects; writers as well as books (1931: 273–302), Lawrence is one of the rare prophetic minds whose ideas it is possible to use without feeling particularly indebted. Leslie Fiedler's attitude in *Love and Death in the American Novel* is typical in this respect. While praising Lawrence as a pioneer in the field of American literary studies, Fiedler rather tentatively acknowledges his own debt; Lawrence confirms Fiedler's suspicions, but he is not a source of inspiration:

Of all the literary critics who have written about American books, the one who has seemed to me closest to the truth, even at those points where I finally disagree with him, and who has brought to his subject an appropriate passion and style, is, of course, D.H. Lawrence. His *Studies in Classic American Literature* attempted for the first time the kind of explication which does not betray the complexity or perilousness of its theme; and in the pages of that little book I found confirmation of my own suspicions that it is duplicity and outrageousness which determine the quality of those American books ordinarily consigned to the children's shelf in the library. (1960: xiii)

The main objective of this paper is to focus on the "duplicity" of American literature, as reflected in the basic dichotomies on which Lawrence's *Studies*, as well as the earlier versions of his essays, seem to hinge. The first section of this paper deals with the distinction between the highbrow English essays collected in *The Symbolic Meaning* and the lowbrow American *Studies in Classic American Literature*. The second section points to the national opposition as the framework of the

earlier versions of the essays. It is claimed in the third section that the contrast between England and America is outweighed in the *Studies* by the juxtaposition of childhood and adulthood, which Lawrens seems to perceive as a characteristic feature of the American mind. The final section discusses the "millennial" quality of the *Studies*, and considers the plausibility of Lawrence's treatment of Whitman as the Great Divide in American tradition. There are too many loose ends in Lawrence's *Studies* to build a coherent argument out of his revelations. Yet, his insights are often so powerful that an attempt to systematize them seems justified.

I. *The Symbolic Meaning* and *Studies in Classic American Literature:* Highbrow versus Lowbrow

In 1962 Armin Arnold published a collection of the early versions of Lawrence's essays entitled *The Symbolic Meaning*. In the Introduction, which unfolds the history of the *Studies*, Arnold distinguishes between: version 1, consisting of the twelve original essays written in Cornwall in 1917–18, out of which eight were published in the *English Review*; version 2 of the essays, after they had been revised in Sicily in 1920; and version 3, consisting of the twelve essays written in winter 1922–23 in the United States (1962: 4). With the exception of the chapter on Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast*, of which only version 3 survives, the collection edited by Arnold consists of the essays which had been obliterated by Lawrence's American experience.

The difference between *The Symbolic Meaning* and the *Studies* is not merely a matter of rewording and rephrasing. To a large extent, the two are divergent texts. Although both extant collections of the essays deal with the same authors, they are written in a different way. In his book entitled *D. H. Lawrence and America*, Arnold explains the difference in terms of insufficiency or fault. He claims that version 1 is spoiled by Lawrence's philosophizing, which has little to do with American literature, and that version 3 is spoiled by its hysterical quality. Arnold argues that version 2, of which only four essays survive, was "probably the best one, to conclude from the essay on Whitman in »The Nation and the Athenaeum« and from the extant manuscripts of essays on Melville and Hawthorne". Arnold finds version 2 preferable because it was purged of "the philosophical passages", and it was not yet "hysterical about America and Americans". (1959: 101) The golden mean is, apparently, as attractive to the critic as it is also inaccessible.

The essays collected in *The Symbolic Meaning* prove that Lawrence could appear polite and professional in front of the informed audience while enlarging upon the cosmic rationale of the two opposing principles identified as the Fire and the Waters, or Heaven and Earth, or plexuses and ganglia, or the spiritual and the sensual. Paul Delany describes this project as the "mystical geography of the body". (1978: 367) Searching for analogies between the cosmos and the individual psyche,

Lawrence asserts in "The Two Principles" and elsewhere in the early versions of his essays on American literature that "life depends on duality and polarity". (1962: 186) The essays are enveloped in the atmosphere of prophecy, but the style of argumentation does not diverge from the accepted highbrow norm, and hence does not attract critical attention.

By contrast, the *Studies* have always been admired or condemned for their style, as well as for their content. Lawrence's rejection of gentility in the *Studies* was a revolutionary act which brought his essays closer to his fiction. The reader of both *Women in Love* (1921) and the *Studies* faces a writer whose "passionate, awkward, harsh, jocose, violent, often offensive" manner of speech (Arnold repeats these adjectives after Conrad Aiken in *D.H. Lawrence and America*, 1959:93) verges on sensatio-nalism. On the stylistic level, one recognizes a comparable staccato of short sentences and short paragraphs. The self-confident "I" appears so often in the *Studies* that the book acquires an autobiographic aspect. Richard Swigg's claim that "the Americans experience of disintegrated consciousness both informs and confirms Lawrence's moral intuition in *Women in Love*" (1972: 345) could also be applied to the *Studies.*

In Lawrence's case, the difference between criticism (the first version) and fictionalized autobiographic criticism (the third version) coincides with the distinction between the highbrow and the lowbrow. The robustness of the *Studies* may well be attributed to its lowbrow quality. Although a book of literary criticism, it shares the vitality of the novel, the low form which, as Mikhail Bakhtin pointed out, "inserts into other genres a certain semantic openendedness" and makes them "more free and flexible". But the book's otherness may also be ascribed to its self–conscious Americanism. The *Studies* was meant to be an American book; it was revised, in fact rewritten, in the United States; it was first published in the United States, and only later in England. Stuart P. Sherman, the first American reviewer of the *Studies*, acknowledged Lawrence's effort "to be a genuine *Americano*...to master the idiom and actually to write his book in the vernacular". (Draper, 1970: 208) Much later another critic, John Worthen, corroborated this view claiming that "the abrupt and pithy style" adopted in the *Studies* was "a direct response to the America in which he now lived and worked". (1989: 118) Lawrence took it for granted that his audience consisted of straightforward, plain–spoken people. He defined Americans succinctly as extremists and geared his manner of speech to the needs of such readers. He was wrong. Stuart P. Sherman thus ridiculed Lawrence's American pose: "as to Mr. Lawrence's latest stylistic vesture, I suspect that our younger *literati* will tell him that this coal–heaver style was quite the thing ten years ago, but that it is now regarded as rather out of date". (Draper, 1970: 213) Sherman's resistance to Lawrence's conception of America is worthy of attention. Lawrence implies that it is American to be lowbrow, to which Sherman replies in a polite, and, in places, affectedly refined English way. Lawrence assumes that Americans have a tradition of fiction, but not much achievement in criticism. In response, Sherman offers

a meticulous scholarly evaluation of Lawrence's book. Ironically enough, both Lawrence's assumed Americanism and Sherman's assumed Englishness prove the mutual interdependence of the European and the American literary tradition.

II. *The Symbolic Meaning*: English versus American

The juxtaposition of American and English literature is the recurrent motif of *The Symbolic Meaning*. In the first essay Lawrence seems to subscribe to the "natural" English belief that American literature is merely "a small branch or province of English literature", but he also suggests that "the American art-speech" possesses "a suggestive force" and an "alien quality" which belong to the American continent itself. (1962: 16) Referring to the "American continent", as if the borderlines had not yet been drawn, and to "the American art-speech", as if the American literary tradition were oral, Lawrence appears to be engaged in recovering the American prehistory, the time before the clash of cultures. A clear analogy to the Norman Conquest would be welcome, but the comparison does not work. First of all, the races did not mix in America; Lawrence made this point in the *Studies* when he voiced his doubt about the possibility of "any real reconciliation, in the flesh, between the white and the red". (45) Secondly, the American classic authors, as well as Lawrence's contemporaries, seemed to find little use for such prehistoric heritage.

The idea of the Indian sources of American writings remains, nevertheless, attractive. Therefore in the essay entitled "America, listen to your own", Lawrence exclaims: "Let America turn to America, and to that very America which has been rejected and almost annihilated". He argues further that "America must turn again to catch the spirit of her own dark, aboriginal continent...They must pick up the life-thread where the mysterious Red race let it fall...There lies the real continuity: not between Europe and the new States". He closes with the exhortation: "To your tents, O America. Listen to your own, don't listen to Europe". (*Phoenix*, 90–91)

Since more than one link with American prehistory is missing, Lawrence usually ends up talking about the English, and not Indian, sources of American literature. The belief that American literature is, after all, derivative of the English tradition surfaces in the essay on Crevecoeur, along with the conviction about the composite nature of the American mind. Lawrence claims that Crevecoeur and Franklin are complementary; "They are the last two instances of ethical England and emotional France, and together they make the complete American". (*The Symbolic Meaning*, 1962: 54) Lawrence notices the equivalence of France and Indians in Crevecoeur's case, but he does not stretch the analogy. Extolling *The Scarlet Letter* as "one of the eternal revelations", (168) Lawrence speaks again in global, national terms. He finds in Dimmesdale "the whole clue to Dostoevsky", (152) and insists that *The Scarlet Letter* is "far more profound than the epileptic Russian" and "more perfect than any work of fiction in French". (168) Some of Lawrence's generalizations go too far to

be usable. He claims, for example, that "the world is like Dimmesdale, it has its Chillingworth in the dark races. It has its Hester in Germany". (167)

In the last chapter, devoted to Whitman, the distinction between English and American literature is again blurred. Suddenly Lawrence perceives the American literary achievement in terms of guilt: "Crevecoeur, Hawthorne, Poe, all the transcendentalists, Melville, Prescott, Wendell Holmes, Whitman, they are all guilty of this provoking of mental reactions in the physical self, passions exploited by the mind". (255) Yet, Lawrence does not regard the habit of acting "from mental provocation" and not "from passion" as an exclusively American characteristic. He also recognizes this tendency in Europe. "Europe and America are all alike; all the nations self-consciously provoking their own passional reactions from the mind, and *nothing* spontaneous". (256) Beginning with this sweeping generalization, Lawrence goes on to argue against Whitman's idea of Allness, One Identity, En Masse (258).

In the early versions of his essays Lawrence begins with the idea of American literature as a province, then he claims that it is a source of European thinking, only to conclude that English and American literature are, in fact, identical. It is only the vivid image of American literature or America as a sloughing snake in the *Studies* (62) that solves the contradiction. Building upon this conceit, Lawrence refers in the essay on Poe to the "disintegrative vibration". (74) As soon as the religious concept of "diabolicism" is introduced in the essay on *The Scarlet Letter* (93), the image of a sloughing snake is replaced by the image of an apocalypse. Lawrence proclaims that the ship of the white American sank with *Moby Dick*. "What's been happening ever since?" is the question he poses. He answers it with the phrase which reappears several times in the essay on Whitman: "Post mortem effects, presumably". (174)

III. *Studies in Classic American Literature*: Childhood and Adulthood

In the Foreword to the American edition of the *Studies* Lawrence defines his project as an attempt "to be midwife to the unborn homunculus". (8) He then proceeds to specify the "child" metaphor: American literature figures as the infant Moses and Lawrence acts as "some friendly Egyptian princess" who "comes to rescue the babe". (8–9) In the last chapter, the initial metaphor is revived; Lawrence describes Walt Whitman as "a strange, modern, American Moses. Fearfully mistaken. And yet the great leader". (183) The dichotomous figure of child and old man, Whitman for example, remains an insoluble and persistent American riddle. Two years after the publication of the *Studies* Lawrence still pondered over it in a letter to Kyle Crichton: "I always think there is, way down in most American men, a weird little imprisoned man-gnome with a grey beard and a child's quickness, which knows, knows so finally, imprisoned inside the man-mountain while the man-mountain goes on so lively and cheery-O-!without knowing a thing". (*The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, 1984: 302)

The word "child" and its derivatives appear in the *Studies* either in conjunction with the image of old age or autonomously. Lawrence attributes childlike qualities either to the audience or to the critics, or to the authors, or to the characters. The distinction between English and American literature is not so crucial in the *Studies* as it was in the earlier versions of his essays. Instead, Lawrence introduces and evaluates the popular claim that American classics are children's books. The essay entitled "The Spirit of the Place" begins with the words: "We like to think of the old–fashioned American classics as children's books. Just childishness, on our part". (11) It is a typical Freudian maneuver of saying and unsaying, making a statement and withdrawing it. The first sentence expresses a belief. The second sentence qualifies it. The authorship of this claim remains unclear. The ambiguous pronoun "we" may stand for the English, for the critics, for the highbrows, or for a combination of these three roles. The pronoun implies also Lawrence's instinctive complicity.

When Lawrence questions the claim that American classics are children's books, he refers to the authorial intention, and not to the reading habits of the audience. With the exception of a few borderline cases, it is true that the books he analyzes in his *Studies* were not intended for the juvenile audience. Franklin addressed *The Autobiography* to his illegitimate son William, but at the time when the book was dedicated to him in a letter dated 1771, William was about forty years old. The two readers whose letters Franklin quotes after Part I of his book, and whom he credits with providing the incentive to continue his project are adults; however, adults concerned about the education of American youth. One can find in Melville's *Typee* occasional references to the potential boy-reader. In one of the asides, the narrator jokingly recommends "all adventurous youths who abandon vessels in romantic islands during the rainy season to provide themselves with umbrellas". (64) Nevertheless, it is obvious that neither Franklin nor Melville wrote exclusively for children.

Assuming that deeper meanings of the American classics are wasted on a childlike reader, Lawrence exhorts the adults to "look through the surface of American art, and see the inner diabolicism of the symbolic meaning" because "*otherwise* it is all mere childishness". (93) Lawrence claims repeatedly that it is childish to dwell on the surface of American classics. And yet, he admits his weakness for Cooper's pretty vignettes of the landscapes and traditions (65). The reader who does "look through the surface of American art" discovers, however, that the symbolic meanings have their roots in the experience of childhood. Freud receives no credit in the *Studies*, even though his search of the unconscious and his intense interest in childhood inform Lawrence's book. Lawrence treats childishness with contempt or with nostalgia, but, like Freud, he regards the child as an inseparable part of the adult; the American adult in particular.

Lawrence does not explicitly address the question of the attractiveness of American classics to children, but some of his remarks are helpful in approaching this phenomenon. He finds in American classics, and especially in Hawthorne's and

Melville's books, the tendency toward allegory, legend and myth, which are, by common consent, regarded as children's staple literary nourishment. The valorization of the present moment, so crucial to William Dean Howells and Henry James, is indeed alien to Hawthorne. Lawrence senses this quality, and persistently describes *The Scarlet Letter* in terms of prehistoric oral tradition, as "a legendary myth".

Although Lawrence speaks occasionally about the juvenile reader and the childish critic, the dual nature of the authors is his main concern. He evidently prefers some of the eight authors to others, but he metes out to most of them the same familiar treatment. With the exception of Dana, each is called, at least once in the course of the essays, by his first name. Each of them is at least once Benjamin, Hector, Fenimore, Edgar Allan, Nathaniel, Herman, and Walt. This informality may have several mea-nings, or none at all, but, in a study so rich in allusions to childhood, it seems reminiscent of the familiarity commonly afforded to children. The plausibility of this interpretation is strengthened by the fact that at least three of the discussed authors: Franklin, Melville and Hawthorne, are openly described as partly a child or an adolescent. Lawrence seems to be amazed at Hawthorne's ability to be both a child, and a shrewd ageless being. "The absolute duplicity of that blue-eyed *Wunderkind* of a Nathaniel. The American wonder-child, with his magical allegorical insight". (110) Two wistful proleptic remarks follow these two verbless exclamations; "But even wonder-children have to grow up in a generation or two. And even SIN becomes stale".(110) Lawrence sees in Franklin a comparable persistent fusion of childhood and old age: "There is a certain earnest naiveté about him. Like a child. And like a little old man. He has again become as a little child, always as wise as his grandfather, or wiser".(23)

Lawrence often expresses his belief that the classic American authors are childlike critics of their own work. In "The Spirit of the Place", he defines his "business in these studies" as "saving the American tale from the American artist". (13) He assumes that American authors are either liars or else they do not understand their own work. The more profound the writer seems to be, the more suspicious his critical ability appears to Lawrence. "Old-fashioned Nathaniel, with his little-boy charm, he'll tell you what's what. But he'll cover it with smarm". (108) Lawrence's evaluation of Melville's mental capacity, expressed in the early version of his essay, is even harsher: "His mind lags far, far behind his physical comprehension...His mind is cumbered up with a hopeless aggregation of fixed ideas, which spin on together like little wheels. But his bodily knowledge moves naked, a living quick among the stark elements". Lawrence concludes that "Melville cannot always have known what his own symbols meant". (*The Symbolic Meaning*, 1962: 237–40)

The dividing line between the childlike author and the childlike major character is often blurred in Lawrence's *Studies.* This confusion is understandable because most of the American classics he discusses are, or pretend to be, autobiographic. In most of them, the narrator speaks in the first-person singular. Using evidence from their fiction, Lawrence describes Crevecoeur, Cooper and Melville as split writers;

part white and part savage, part American and part Indian. For all of them, the figure of a child is only an outward sign of their idealisms. Therefore, the child who appears in Crevecoeur's, Cooper's, and Melville's books is often racially and physically older than the people who call him a child. "They [savages] are beautiful, they are like children, they are generous: but they are more than this. They are far off, and in their eyes is an easy darkness of the soft, uncreate past. In a way, they are uncreate". (*Studies*, 1923: 148)

When the equation between the child and the Indian fails, Lawrence tries another analogy and vents some of his misogynic sentiments in the process: "The Indians, with their curious female quality, their archaic figures, with high shoulders and deep, archaic waist, like a sort of woman! And their natural devilishness, their natural insidiousness". (58) He finds in American literature a savage female child whom he can identify with America in one of his emotional outbursts: "Oh, America, you Pearl, you Pearl without a blemish!" (113) In this one figure, Lawrence's equation is correct. In the final chapter Lawrence proclaims Whitman as "the first white aboriginal". (186) But it is Pearl who much more deserves this name. She is like Indians; silent, more a terrifying picture than a voice, elusive, hiding in deep woods.

IV. *Studies in Classic American Literature*: Whitman as the Great Divide

The essay on Whitman, and the *Studies* as a whole, has two prophetic endings; one is a vision of a downfall, the other is a vision of rebirth:

Whitman is a very great poet, of the end of life. A very great post mortem poet, of the transitions of the soul as it loses its integrity. The poet of the soul's last shout and shriek, on the confines of death...Only we know this much. Death is not the goal. And Love, and merging, are now only part of the death-process. Comradeship-part of the death-process. Democracy-part of the death-process. The new Democracy-the brink of death. One Identity-death itself. / We have died, and we are still disintegrating. / But IT IS FINISHED. / *Consumatum est.* (182–3)

In his more generous mood, Lawrence adds a more hopeful ending:

Love, and Merging, brought Whitman to the Edge of Death! Death! Death! / But the exultance of his message still remains. Purified of MERGING, purified of MYSELF, the exultant message of American Democracy, of Souls in the Open Road, full of glad recognition, full of fierce readiness, full of joy of worship, when one soul sees a greater soul. / The only riches, the great souls. (191)

The latter vision brings Lawrence to the verge of his critical procedure. Nothing of significance can be said or written after the erasure of the two American drives which Lawrence identifies as "merging" and "myself". Nearly a century after the publication of the *Democracy in America* (1835 and 1840), in which Alexis de

Tocqueville pointed out the tension between American individualism and American collective spirit, Lawrence imagines the America "purified" of this inner conflict.

Caught between what Ernest Tuveson calls "millenarian pessimism" and "supreme optimism", (327) Lawrence zooms to the heavenly standards. The premise of Tuveson's argument about *The Communist Manifesto* is also applicable to Lawrence: "Millenarianism in its various forms...provides a kind of scenario for great change in society; in a large sense, it might be called a scenario for revolution". (1984: 323) The cataclysm observed by Lawrence seems to be an apocalypse, rather than a revolution, in the sense that it is authorized by infallible superhuman forces. The deceptiveness of the higher law idealism, which motivates the man–made revolutions, and which is as far as a man can approximate the superhuman infallibility, can be avoided once and for all in this one final event; the apocalypse. Lawrence senses what later critics confirm; namely, the appropriateness of apocalypse as a conclusion to American history. In an overview of American Millennialism, M.H. Abrams argues that of all the nations, "the nation possessed of the most thoroughly and enduringly millennial ideology...is America, in a tradition that began even before it was settled by Europeans". (1984: 357)

The apocalyptic vision seems to be the strongest challenge posed in Lawrence's *Studies*. The book dares other critics to find a way of linking the American literature before and after Whitman. Time did not stop after Whitman's death in 1892, nor did it stop in 1923. Already before the publication of the *Studies*, a new generation of American writers came and went. Lawrence, however, remains silent about such writers as Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, and Henry James. He behaves as if the literary apocalypse had already taken place. He comments briefly on "modern" literature, arguing that modern American books "are pretty empty of any feeling, and proud of it". (*Studies,* 1923: 12) This statement is too general to be of use. It leaves open the question about symptoms and significance of the cataclysmic cleavage between the American classics before and after Whitman. The final paragraphs of the *Studies* are too mystical to provide a convincing explanation of the Great Divide.

There is enough continuity in American literature for a critic to question Lawrence's theory of disruption. The claims Lawrence makes about some of the classics could also be sustained in an analysis of the late nineteenth-century novel. For example, Lawrence's persistent assertion that Americanization is identical with mechanization is a crucial issue in Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.* What Lawrence identifies in Whitman and before him as the mechanical manner, becomes the subject matter of Twain's book. The procedure of writing after Whitman was no less mechanical, but perhaps in a different way. Bound by contracts, induced by financial necessity, Twain, Howells, and James went on turning out one story or novel after another. Willingly or grudgingly, they accepted the public roles which the audience imposed on them; the Court Jester, the Dean of American Letters, the Expert in the International Theme, respectively. The machine

of literature became so sophisticated and produced books at such a rate that writers felt compelled to delegate some of the mechanics of writing to others; they took to dictating, bought typewriters, hired secretaries and literary agents.

Lawrence may have been right in envisioning the post-Whitmanian American literature as "purified of myself". Despite the popular belief that autobiography has been since the pre-Revolutionary times the typical American genre, it may well be true that by the end of the nineteenth century, the genre ceased to be the last resort, especially to white men. Many of the American classics discussed in the *Studies* are first-person narratives. Nevertheless, only some of them are, strictly speaking, autobiographic, and even fewer are simultaneous celebrations of the self and of the country. Twain employed the first-person singular in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* to enhance its regional authenticity. Howells and James, however, avoided striking the autobiographic note in their fiction. Although all three major American "realists" wrote auto-biographies, the pursuit of this genre did not become their chief claim to renown. The impulse to serve as architects of "the House of America" (Sayre, 1980: 168) while reconstructing their own lives was beyond them. Out of the four leading American autobiographers whom Sayre places on the points of the compass; East – Benjamin Franklin, South – Frederick Douglas, West – Walt Whitman, and North – Henry Adams (161–8), only Adams crossed the threshold of the twentieth century. Sayre proves the vitality of these four models, but not the vitality of the genre.

It is not clear at the end of the *Studies* in what sense the new American literature is "purified of merging". Nevertheless, the implied idea of boundaries is appealing. The awareness of boundaries and the necessity to cross them may well have shaped American mentality and become particularly strong after Whitman. The racial and gender identity, as well as the literary status of such writers as Twain, Howells and James did not differ from the condition of the authors discussed in Lawrence's *Studies*. The old masters and the new were all white male canonical authors. It may be true, however, that Twain, Howells and James were to a greater extent than their predecessors involved in bridging the gaps between England and America, fiction and criticism, the lowbrow and the highbrow, the child and the adult. They probably had a greater awareness of the boundaries, and the greater urge to cross them than the earlier writers.

By the time Twain and James began writing, the opposition of England and America had lost its political urgency. It remained, however, an abstract challenge to the American mind; to Twain, who emphasized the boundary, and ended up confused; and to James, who confused the countries, even though he chose England so emphatically. Twain's professed anti-intellectualism strongly flavored his relatively rare attempts at literary criticism, as for example in the "No trespassing" sign addressed to critics on the first page of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Both Howells and James, however, had to negotiate the coexistence of their two roles; that of the fiction writer and that of the critic. Even James, who had the reputation

of a "high" author, accepted the lowbrow literary tradition, and ventured to elevate the lowbrow entertainment, called novel, to the status the epic had once enjoyed. The "new" masters all wrote about children, although Twain was the only one of them to address some of his books to the young readers. Both Twain and James created not only memorable portraits of children, but also gender models; the American boy and the American girl, respectively.

V. Final remarks

Even though Lawrence ousted Twain, Howells and James from his *Studies*, the oppositions signaled in his essays are useful as criteria in approaching American literature after Whitman. The reader may focus on the basic dichotomies, as it has been done in this paper, or else savor Lawrence's discovery of the chaotic nature of American literature. The book contains both light and smoke, sound reasoning and prophetic mumbo jumbo. Its inconsistencies, however, are not merely Lawrence's fault. They are at least in part due to the resistance of the literary material; to the phantom presence of the loose ends (such as the Indian prehistory) and internal contradictions (e.g. "myself" and "merging") in American literature.

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