The Description of the Indians’ Longing for Identity in D. H. Lawrence’s *The Plumed Serpent* and His Other Mexican Writings

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1. **Introduction**

The Indians’ lives are depicted in terms of their extremely powerful energy and drive for aggression in D. H. Lawrence’s *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), when they envelop and terrify Kate Leslie, a woman who came to Mexico from England, with their hostility. Kate is shocked in the early days when she arrives in the country, observing the Indians, who have a fierce and destructive power which glorifies death, enjoy appalling scenes en masse. Along with *PS*, Lawrence wrote a series of stories which have similar settings in which the white women and the Indians contact each other. Although at first the heroines feel strong repulsion, they gradually become fascinated by the Mexicans’ peculiar ethnicity and their view of life and death. As a consequence of this devotion, the women experience the interception of their bond with the European world which they belonged to and are obliged to abandon their egos which were attached to modern values and intelligence. The plots are based on Lawrence’s criticism of the supremacy of intelligence, and Christianity and Western-centrism which have developed upon it. Therefore, he attempted to dismantle the modern Western people’s identity through the encounter with primitive religion or ethnic “others” in the postcolonial context.

In the process, however, in order to intensify the extreme situation of the heroines, exposed to the alteration in their circumstances, it was inevitable that Lawrence should sometimes shape the Indians as a cluster of intimidating others. And there is an important point underlying this way of creating and grouping the Indians as a symbolic image of otherness. It produces an incorrect impression that the characters do not have individuality by blurring their respective emotions. As a result, some critics simplistically assume that Lawrence is racist, pointing out that the Indians’ violence and inhumane characteristics are emphatically described as barbarous and horrific. Jeffrey Meyers claims that the way Lawrence illustrates the Mexicans as eccentric and barbarous implies that he looks down on them as inferior, quoting a passage from the text of *PS* to show this: “Kate’s emotional regression [of gradually becoming insensible to the savageness] emphasizes Lawrence’s appalling lack of concern for the human dignity of ‘the black savage mass’: the peons ‘carry huge weights, without seeming ever to think they are heavy. Almost as if they liked to feel a huge weight crushing on their iron spines’ (p. 243)” (Meyers 72). Meyers thinks that the way in which Lawrence expresses the propensities of the Indians belittles their racial traits and insults their dignity. Yet we should register from the text that Lawrence affirmatively depicts this apparently unpleasant way of living, which confirms their lives by hurting themselves, as an essential characteristic of the Indians which has existed since long

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1 The title of the novel is hereafter abbreviated as *PS*.

2 Three short stories, “The Woman Who Rode Away” (1924), “The Princess” (1924), and “None of That!” (1927), are referred to in this essay. *St. Mawr* (1925), a long short story which has a theme in common with these stories in that Mexican men appear in it, is an exception since it can be said that the white heroine gets more obsessed with the vitality of a horse rather than human beings.

3 For example, “In Lawrence’s work, indigenous characters rarely receive individual recognition. Generally, Lawrence refers to all Indians collectively as ‘columns of dark blood,’ (47) who possess an ‘unconscious, heavy, reptilian indifference’ (151)” (Swarthout 133).
before colonization. This matter will be discussed in a later section of this essay.

Moreover, whereas Kate suffers from the conflict of being unable to completely abandon her old ego and accept her new one, there is no description of a similar experience on the part of the Indians, who take pains to deal with their egos in order to step toward Kate who represents the white people. In addition, the unfathomableness of the character of Don Cipriano, a general who is a genuine Indian, encourages the wrong impression. He is implanted with the image of a non-individual being which sometimes even suggests the aura of a dark and savage male Pan rather than a human being. This has led to one study even declaring that “originally, there was no ego to abandon for Cipriano” (Yoshimura 66–7; my translation).

However, these preceding studies present nothing but superficial views and represent significant misunderstandings. For instance, taking a closer look at the description of Cipriano’s self-consciousness towards Kate, it is obvious that he is always sensitively aware of how he and the Mexicans are seen by her. Cipriano asks Kate whether “You mean we aren’t real people, we have nothing of our own, except killing and death,” and resists her intention with his challenging will “in an animal way” (40). Carrie Rohman comments that “Lawrence represents the unspeakable confrontation with animality as Kate’s fear of cannibalistic incorporation by the Mexican ‘other’, which is figured as an animal other throughout the novel” (Rohman 216–7).

However, the expression “animal way” in the text does not encourage us to read it in terms of the dichotomy of the human versus animal which Rohman presumes as a fundamental ideology of difference. Lawrence’s use of seemingly discriminative words, which describe the Indians’ way of living, should paradoxically warn us that they are attributable to a Western subjective attitude of supposing that the “uncivilized” peoples are less than human. Cipriano’s attitude displays his human desire for life which strives to confront that of Kate — that is, the white people’s way of judging things. Far from deprecating his own ethnicity, he violently asserts it to Kate on behalf of his people in more than a close competition: it does not engender a confrontation of human and animal but nothing less than one of fellow human beings. It is evident that the aggressiveness of the Indians is not merely irrational but expresses a longing for identity which involves deep pathos.

Studying the text closely, it becomes clear that Lawrence is highly conscious of the inner conflict of the Indians’ lives as individuals, as well as of Kate’s. And it means that he did not attach too much value to letting Western women abandon their egos, and was equally conscious of the Indians’ egos. In this essay, I will develop the argument that the Indians are depicted as human beings who strongly possess ego in terms of their aggressiveness, and that the depiction of their longing for identity has taken a more concrete shape in PS compared to Lawrence’s other Mexican writings.

2. The Lively Description of the Indians’ Aggression and Destructiveness

Kate is frightened of the Indians’ challenging will, involving both reverence and animosity, which suddenly surges inside them and turns upon her in everyday life. It is demonstrated by the acts of Juana and her daughters, who are an indigent family who live in the Indian village of Sayula, and whom Kate depends on for food and lodging while staying in Mexico. Kate’s impression of Juana when they first meet is expressed as follows:

Juana was obstinate and reckless: she had not been treated very well by the world. And there was a touch of bottom-dog insolence about her. But also, sudden touches of passionate warmth and the peculiar selfless generosity of the natives. [⋯]

As yet, however, [⋯] Kate felt that the cry: Niña —Child! by which she was addressed, held in it a slight note of malevolent mockery. (110)

Juana looks at Kate with envious admiration as a Goddess of the alien race. She devotedly takes care of Kate and looks curiously at her white skin like that of the Holy Mother and eyes which resemble the sun. However, whenever she half-mockingly praises her mistress to the skies, Kate realizes that she harbours a

4 See Judith Ruderman’s discussion of Lawrence’s positive and respectful use of the concept of the “otherness” which supports “healthy relationships” (Ruderman 4) between man and woman or white person and racial other.
humorous attitude of contempt toward a deformity which has a different appearance and came from a different world. Kate catches this sign in Juana’s slick and wicked look and the persistent yell of “Niña! Niña!” The word Niña is both an honorific name for a mistress and involves an implication of a condescending form of address to a young girl. As this indicates, the Indians’ compulsive aggression is an exceptional energy which is fraught with duality, darting toward opposite directions.  

Lawrence has exerted his strength to vividly depict the women of different races’ struggle for supremacy. Benefitting as domestic servants, Juana and her family enjoy steeping themselves in a modern life which Kate has worn out, while they are kindled to a destructive excitement due to deeply satisfying themselves by offending Kate’s Western and aristocratic sensibility. When Kate tries to teach Juana’s daughters how to write and sew, “They would press upon her, trespassing upon her privacy, and with a queer effrontery, doing all they could” (147) to reject Kate’s compassion and humiliate her. They show her their sensual weapons such as laziness and depravity in a way which is hard for Kate to bear. They get intoxicated with a pleasant sensation by continuing it until Kate gives up teaching them. Furthermore, when Kate is hosting her guests, Juana and her daughters and niece appear close to the Europeans, and display themselves plucking lice out of each others’ hair. “They wanted the basic fact of lice to be thrust under the noses of those white people” (147) and it is a cruel trick to disgrace Kate who belongs to the white group. When Kate scolds them and gets rid of them, trembling with fury, “One instant, Juana’s black inchoate eyes gleamed with a malevolent ridicule, meeting with Kate’s. The next instant, humble and abject, the four with their black hair down their backs slunk into the recess out of sight” (147–8). By performing uneducated and irrational acts, and intentionally showing no awareness of the situation, they pride themselves on their power that can face unclean reality to the Europeans who put on elegant and clean airs.

In accordance with the Mexican sociological theory which has marginalized women, Keiichi Okano positions Juana as a “woman who is compelled to live a self-defensive and nasty life” and he claims that she “insults Kate and shows an attitude of kicking her out” (Okano 526; my translation). However, as the following passage shows, we can read Juana’s positive desire or craving for Kate and her effort to change it to an energy of life, and therefore Okano’s interpretation of Juana as wishing to expel Kate is unconvincing. It can be inferred that her aggression is not a mere servile feeling or fervent antagonism toward white people.

But it pleased Juana that she had been able to make Kate’s eyes blaze with anger. It pleased her. She felt a certain low power in herself. True, she was a little afraid of that anger. But that was what she wanted. She would have no use for a Niña of whom she was not a bit afraid. And she wanted to be able to provoke that anger, of which she felt a certain abject twinge of fear. (148)

This is a rapture, and a craving for Juana. It is gratified by manifesting her definite power and existence to Kate, and she fulfills herself by giving herself confidence that at any time she can overturn the transient ascendant power which Kate believes herself to possess. It is the same as the case of her daughters who flatly reject Kate’s benevolent offer to let them acquire skills. Making their lives collide with that of Kate signifies the positive appeal of their lives which involve an unreservedly powerful affirmation, rather than resistant acts.  

As it is sketched in Lawrence’s travel book, *Mornings in Mexico* (1927), the inclination towards duality in the Indians’ disposition was what Lawrence had learnt from

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5 Octavio Paz, an illustrious Mexican poet and essayist, writes: “The Mexican tells us that human beings are a mixture, that good and evil are subtly blended in their souls” (Paz 34). In Mexico, politics, the meanings of words, or fiestas, and many other things are a tangle of contradictions, as the nation’s cry of independence “possesses the same ambiguous resonance: an angry joy, a destructive affirmation” (ibid., 75).

6 Scholars tend to see Juana merely as a symbolical other, “a prototype of the region’s inhabitants” (Kessler 265). They do not inquire deeply into her interior as an individual character or pay much attention to her exceptional duality of loyalty and excitement in the rivalry with Kate. Nobuyoshi Ota inquires anew into the ambiguity of whom Juana regards as her enemies by asserting the significance of her “power of anti-colonial resistance” (Ota 23; my translation). However, he does not refer to the important fact that her offensiveness is an affirmative desire for life, rather than a simple voice of resistance.
his young native Mozo or servant called Rosalino. Lawrence focuses with curiosity on the demeanor of Rosalino who repeatedly shows his dedicated love to the white people, whereas on the next day he displays a sudden fierce rebellion and is involved in violent mood swings. However, Lawrence never depicts his manner scornfully or labels it as a negative thing—he prefers to enjoy it as a loveable quality. When the Lawrences go shopping, Rosalino accompanies the couple and delights in showing Lawrence that he can shop better than him. And he writes a Spanish poem as if mimicking Lawrence working on his writings, though he writhe in agony when his master reads it aloud and reveals that there is no meaning in it. Much as in the case of Rosalino, who tried positively to challenge Lawrence over the disparity in their circumstances, there is a kind of amusing pleasure attuned with sensations of life in Juana’s aggression toward Kate. In a sense, both the real and the fictional Indians find pleasure in exercising their powers through their lives. They are not living in despair or desperate. Their aggression seems to be attributed to an active will which desires to destroy the hierarchical value judgments—the notion of strong winners and weak losers—which reigns over the Europeans, and to declare and emphatically assert the strength of their lives. The Fiesta of the Grito, a day of celebrating the independence of Mexico, is inaugurated with an exclamation of “¡Viva México, hijos de la Chingada!” Octavio Paz comments that “it is a challenge and an affirmation” (Paz 74) and “When we shout this cry on the fifteenth of September, the anniversary of our independence, we affirm ourselves in front of, against and in spite of the “others.”” (ibid., 75; my emphasis). This triumphant voice of a burning passion of life corresponds with Juana’s attitude in Chapter 21 “The Opening of the Church”. After Christianity has been rescinded by Don Ramón and when the barbarous rhythm of the drum of Quetzalcoatl resonated instead of the mechanical sound of the Catholic church bell, Juana’s and Kate’s eyes encounter each other and Kate winces at them.

Kate caught the other woman’s black, reptilian eyes unexpectedly. […] Till suddenly she met that black, void look with the glint in it, and she started inwardly, involuntarily asking herself: Does she hate me?

Or was it only the unspeakable difference in blood?

Now, in the dark glitter which Juana showed her for one moment, Kate read fear, and triumph, and a slow, savage, nonchalant defiance. Something very inhuman. […]

Then again she glanced up, and the eyes of the two women met for a moment.

“See the Niña’s eyes of the sun!” cried Juana, laying her hand on Kate’s arm. […] Juana sounded triumphant. (334)

By letting Niña know her ignominious defeat due to the death of Christianity, Juana’s offensiveness achieves a glorious culmination. It is not just a brutality which is inside her black eyes: as is hinted in the text, it is the gleam of an obsidian knife which lives in the Indians’ eyes from the preconquest days. Its mystical beauty hidden under menace thrusts the triumph of blood towards Kate.

As stated above, I have demonstrated that the Indians’ aggressiveness sometimes leads them to crave for Kate who is a representative of the others as a Westerner, and they make her an object for their self-assertion. However, in the next section, I will argue that the passion which enhances Juana’s motivation for life, fueled with duality, is not merely expressed through Kate, but is expressed spontaneously and has been inherited from the old days.

3. The Source of the Duality in the Indians’ Nature

What, then, is the source of the intensity of their duality? Grounded on the political circumstances, the history of the exploited Indians is usually considered as its origin. The colonization had remained 300 years after the Aztec Empire was defeated by Cortez in 1519, and
the separatist movement has subsequently occurred which aimed at creating a federal republic. Taking account of all those times and bringing into light the conflict of conservatives and liberalists, which continued until the modern era including the time of Lawrence’s visit to Mexico, the battles were always for the colonists from Europe or the local magnates, and not for the independence of the Indians. The presence of the race has been ignored and they have not found their savior: only the rulers change, while the native people’s power or knowledge cannot reach them. Thus, it seems to be explicable that the Mexicans feel satisfied in their blood by pulling the rulers down and applauding their death. Achieving their collapse was all they could do. Sarcastically, the image of nation-building immediately turns into breakdown, and reverence becomes derision from the point of view of those who have known that collapse never fails to follow the dominance of power.8

However, the origin of their duality can be traced back into preconquest days as an energy which destroys the binary opposition of life and death. As a matter of fact, the object of the destruction is not always predominant rulers. The bidirectional dynamic escaped the pressure of Christianity and has existed in the Indians until now. For example, a “Life and Death Mask” (Fig. 1) which is a pottery split-face mask, made by indigenous Mexicans sometime between 1100 and 600 BC, is an artwork which enriches our imagination regarding their instincts. It expresses the face of a dead man on the right side and a living man on the left side, divided by a straight line from the top of the head to the jaw. It simultaneously represents the Indians’ double affirmation, and what is worth noticing is that the tongue, which is stuck out, signifies a ridicule of both life and death. It suggests that the origin of the Mexican people’s duality can be traced back into the days in which the mask was created and is an energy which destroys the binary opposition of life and death. Anyone can see straightaway that this mask is relevant to the energetic traditional festival of “The Day of the Dead” which demolishes the binary theory of life and death by tranquility and a roar of laughter. Interestingly, we can encounter faces which are virtually the same as this mask in the text of PS. They are the dead faces of the Indians who were killed by Ramón whom they had been seeking to assault in the scene of “The Attack on Jamiltepec”.

Kate was staring at the dead men. Three of them were handsome: […] But dead, with the mockery of death in his face. All of them men who had been in the flush of life. Yet dead, they did not even matter. They were gruesome, but it did not matter that they were dead men. They were vacant. Perhaps even in life there had been a certain vacancy, nothingness, in their handsome physique. (303–4)

Kate shudders at the assassins’ gruesome though lively, unearthly beauty. The fusion of life and death in their faces naturally resembles the immemorial “Life and Death Mask”. Although physically dead, their nonchalant though mocking looks make us awestruck with the unsleeping vital force. Whereas they are indifferent toward everlasting life and do not fear death, the intense energy which they possess instantly pierces the binary notion of life and death. Worship and destruction, adoration and derision, labor and corruption, love and

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8 Innately in Mexico, the image of the goddess in myth is dialectical, and Paz writes that “The Mexican feels himself to have been torn from the womb of this reality, which is both creative and destructive, both Mother and Tomb” (Paz 20). This explains the reason for the never-ending reversal of the politically persecuted: “the hero’s tomb is the cradle of the people” (ibid., 84).
indifference—the two contradictory forms of energy occur and emanate at the same time through Lawrence’s skillful depiction of the Indians’ nature. The destructive impulse of the Indians, which even destroys the binary theory, is an ardent claim for life by their ancient blood which has yearned for satisfaction and a solid sense of life.

Furthermore, it can be said that their destructive energy is not only directed towards others but also towards themselves in everyday life. Lawrence argues in PS that the Indians lack attachment to life and do not feel sorrow about death. In this context, the notion of ‘life’ is a linear and persistent Western one which keeps developing the practical way of living, and here again, he ventures to adopt a dichotomous contrast with Western subjectivity. On the contrary, the Indians are indifferent to making their daily lives convenient in order to prolong their lives, but seek deeper satisfaction in the moment. This absence of attachment is what Kate calls ‘vacant’. The Mexicans’ way of living is delineated as bizarre: they never wish to fulfill their lives through material things, and enjoy displeasure. As we can see in PS, they do not even try to make a comfortable bed, and let themselves feel the chill of the earth to their bones, and they knowingly burn out their stomachs by drinking pulque and cauterize the injury by another hot chili. Although it is hard to accept for the reasonable and practical Westerners, receiving pains and sufferings physically are methods for them to feel alive. Additionally, in respect of giving offense to Kate, they feel ecstasy at their ability to make others feel unpleasantness and they are self-sufficient with pleasures. They instinctively chase after the rectilinear continuation of life, they seek for means of replenishing their lives in the dramatic moment by offending others and themselves.

4. The Change in the Attitudes of Indian Men Towards White Women in Lawrence’s Mexican Stories

Considering that the Indians’ aggression, which has been described as a dark resistance, is their raison d’être that is traceable to their folk characteristics, it becomes obvious that Kate is not the only person who is a stickler for his or her ego: as a matter of fact, the Indians are also people who have strong egos. In the light of this, we can now make a careful observation of the human-like quality and individuality of Cipriano, who has been described by some critics as having an abstract and inhuman personality. It appears that there should be a difference between Juana and her girls who are uneducated and can behave unrestrainedly, and Cipriano who is an authorized general, educated in England; nevertheless, Kate discovers an Indian duality distinctly inside him. Cipriano has the official appearance of a soldier, characterized as macho by might and prominence which are acquired aspects of his identity. Ramón is aware of Cipriano’s self-esteem and vainglory, and his tendency for militancy and showing off his influence. Still more, a destructive ambition which even Ramón cannot handle lurks inside him. Cipriano shows an obedient veneration for Ramón with whom he works as right-hand man. His affection is sincere and pure as that of a child; nonetheless, Kate keenly detects his attitude of never really trusting anything. “You don’t believe in him. You think it is like everything else, a sort of game. Everything is a sort of game, a put-up job, to you Mexicans. You don’t really believe, in anything” (204). Kate’s suspicion is exposed in another quotation:

“I say I am Ramón’s man,” replied Cipriano stubbornly.

Kate looked at him, and mistrusted him. In the long run he was nobody’s man. He was that old, masterless Pan-male, that could not even conceive of service: particularly the service of mankind. He saw only glory: the black mystery of glory consummated. (313)

Ramón is also aware of the possibility that one day Cipriano could betray him as one of the Mexicans. Furthermore, Kate perceptively infers that Cipriano never really cares about Ramón, when he comes to report his condition after being assaulted. “How curious Cipriano was! He stated things as if they were mere bare facts with no emotional content at all. As for its being

9 Swarthout, for example, mistakenly argues that, “Even Cipriano Viedma […] who is the novel’s only developed indigenous character—cannot escape Lawrence’s racial stereotyping [of seeing him as inhuman]” (Swarthout 133).
painful to Kate to go to Jamiltepec, that meant nothing to
him” (309). Passionate devotion and trust, and utter
indifference—both are sincere truth for Cipriano in his
relationship with Ramón.

Moreover, he exhibits an Indian masculinity towards
Kate whom he loves, by never really disclosing himself.
Since he grasps Kate’s instinctive hatred of the blood of
the barbaric others, he dislikes above all to be looked
don down on by her and bans her from watching him with
earthly eyes and recognizing him as a short alien general.
By disapproving of every Western quality of Kate which
attempts to know the other through frictional contact,
including reciprocation of looks and words, Cipriano
refuses to treat Kate as a Western woman and exposes his
strong desire to bring her to heel and turn her into a
Mexican woman. Nevertheless, he doubles his deep
attachment for the statue of the Virgin Mary which he
sensationally encountered in his youth in Europe.

However, the aggression toward Kate is an element
which conceals his true inner self. Kate perceptively
notices that his superficial way of speaking English,
which resembles a parrot talking, is fluent though it
evasively conceals his real intention, like the surface of
the water on which an oil of authenticity and academic
knowledge form. And she sees that “His manner was
superficially assured, underneath perhaps half savage, shy
and farouche, and deprecating” (21). Moreover, when
she first meets Cipriano Kate perceives “His quietness,
and his peculiar assurance, almost aggressive: and at the
same time, a nervousness, an uncertainty. […] yet which
perhaps were waiting for some sign of recognition and of
warmth! Perhaps!” (24). In such an early stage of their
relationship, she realizes the inherent solitude which
expects some kind of “recognition and of warmth”, lying
dormant under the acquired mighty characteristics, and
she intuitively perceives what his soul truly wants.

In his short stories, Lawrence tends to deliberately
deviate from realism and express the product of his
imagination which is too shocking for long novels, and
adopts a style which creates an odd fictional world which
is exaggerated comically. In the three stories “The
Woman Who Rode Away”, “The Princess”, and “None
of That!”, it seems that Lawrence is attempting in an
experimental way to represent the power relationship of a
white woman and a Mexican man as convincingly as
possible. There are some studies which compare the
stories with PS in terms of the extent to which the white
women get involved in the Mexican power; however,
it can be considered that Lawrence has made a trial of
how far he can enlarge the influential personalities of his
Mexican characters. In “The Woman Who Rode Away”,
the Indians form a creepy existence which almost does
not have any individuality. In “The Princess”, however,
the mutation of Romero, the Mexican owner of
haciendas, astounds the readers by gradually exposing
sadistic and sexual violence and his desire for possession
toward Dollie, the main character. Due to revealing his
true existence which involves an intense ego, he is finally
killed. Compared to the disposition of Romero in the
first half of the story, which is taciturn and indifferent to
anything, the extent of his transformation in the latter
half is ferocious. For instance, as the following passage
shows, the ups and downs of the inner human qualities
such as the joy and the inflamed passion of the Mexican
are highlighted. “And she could feel a curious joy and
pride surging up again in him: at her expense. Because
he had got her. She felt like a victim there. And he was
exulting in his power over her, his possession, his
pleasure” (“The Princess” 189). Although Romero was
also hotly waiting for some sign of affection and of
warmth from Dollie, he could express it only by his
aggressiveness, and the explosion of his ego which is
unstopable in rushing ahead to his own destruction, is
full of grief. In “None of That!”, which was published
in the year after PS, the Mexican man regains his level of
abstraction again. By appearing as a mysterious man who
forces an American woman to discard her dignity and
turn into a sacrifice with nothing but his indescribable
sex appeal, the character has ultimately become symbolic.

Now, what can be said of the difference between
Cipriano and Romero, whose personality is most
meticulously described in the three works? An important

10 See Magali Roux’s comparison of the women in the three
short stories, who cannot be reconciled with their desire for the
Indian men who have irresistible appeal though they are
terrifying at the same time.

11 Neil Roberts writes that “Cultural difference manifests itself
in a wholly destructive way” through the characterization of
Romero. “Although his plight is portrayed sympathetically”, he
is “something of a stereotype” and “effectively stand[s] for the
otherness that Dollie [s ‘white’ consciousness] so self-
destructively tries to break through to” (Roberts 115-6).
common denominator can be found in “The Princess” and PS. It is in the passage containing the reiteration of Romero’s heart-breaking order, compelling Dollie to express her need for him by crying “But you’ve got to say you want to be with me” (“The Princess” 192), while he tries to have her all to himself by physically tying her down and struggles to tempt her to love him in the condition of extremity. However, due to her thorough “lack of compassion” (Squires 93), she does not accept his wish and furiously rejects him. Hence, the story precipitates into the disastrous result of Romero being shot to death, too soon and too indifferently, by white men who came to rescue Dollie. And she keeps on living by losing her will forever, in compensation for being unable to listen to Romero’s earnest request or her own desire.

On the other hand, in PS, a similar situation is depicted; though in this case it is the white woman rather than the Mexican man who honestly expresses her desire. Kate was wanting a partner who comes half way in the relationship of a man and a woman, and as already argued in this section, she knew that Cipriano would never reveal himself, and that he keeps denying her original character.

In the final part of the story, Kate experiences a fateful dilemma as to whether she should stay in Mexico or return to England, and thus yearns for love from a man who needs her and requests her to stay. However, due to her realizing that her wish cannot be fulfilled by Ramón, her plea is targeted at Cipriano who has never expected to achieve mutual understanding through words, which are the Western means of communication. Although “she was a bit afraid of him too, with his inhuman black eyes” (444), Kate hints at the possibility of his detaining her in Mexico by pouring out her heart and tearfully saying, “‘You don’t really want me’” (443). And then, Cipriano intuits her feelings by straining his voice for the first time to say that he loves her. Eventually, Cipriano’s manner of stepping half way to Kate by making a sympathetic concession is depicted here, and it is notably different from either violence or detached mercifulness: the story is concluded by his compassion. Kate’s insight into Cipriano who had been an incompatible other to her, dramatically takes a favorable turn; however, there are scarcely any readings which recognize the emergence of Cipriano’s human nature. Whether the bond of their hearts lasts forever or not is not mentioned. However, the collapsed relationship of the two sexes which could not gather each others’ feeling in “The Princess”, has precisely changed into success. And their souls which have long engendered various conflicts have connected at that moment, ending the story with an overflowing possibility of the deep communication of the different races.

As these parallel relationships of Romero and Dollie, and Cipriano and Kate show, Lawrence seems to have intended to depict a success in the submission of one’s heart, that is, the importance of appreciating what one’s companion wants now, and of giving it in the form that he or she requests. It can be assumed that Lawrence has realized to what extent he can depict his ideal of the relationship of a Westerner and an Indian of the other sex realistically in the transition from “The Princess” to PS.

5. Conclusion

It is already clear that Lawrence has not uniformly emphasized the Indians who appear in the fiction as abstruse, savage and unhuman beings for Kate and the readers. All the more because he has inspected the interior of the Indians he met in Mexico, and accepted its depth as a lovable and animated thing, Lawrence has paid thoughtful attention to the question of how he should depict the Indians’ interior intricacy and what their heart really craves for. The Indians’ aggressiveness is an active way of pursuing life which flows in their blood, and also a means of self-expression which results from living in difficult circumstances under the harsh conditions of politics and society; and the radiance is expressed in both attractiveness and dreadfulness through the senses of the white women. In Lawrence’s portrayal of them, the Indians’ aggressiveness expresses itself as follows: in exactly the same way as Kate’s Western ego obliged her to harbour hatred and repulsion toward Mexicans, the firmness of their indomitable egos makes them feel hostility towards Kate so as to avoid easily opening up

12 The actual words in the text are as follows: “And I feel there wouldn’t [be a real fusion with Cipriano],” said Kate. “…[...] He would never come forward in himself, to meet me. He would come to take something from me, and I should have to let him. And I don’t want merely that. I want a man who will come half way, just half way, to meet me” (271).
their hearts and drawing near to her. The aggressiveness which yearns for self-assertion, which increases in the combat with Kate’s Western ego, is depicted by Lawrence’s sincere attitude toward the Indians. Furthermore, Lawrence depicts the weakness of Cipriano or Romero who are unable to convey their real emotion straightforwardly to the white heroines. Through Lawrence’s portrayal, Cipriano’s character has gained depth as that of an individual who reflects his pride as a general and his experiences of being educated in Europe, in contrast with Romero. What is worth noticing is that Lawrence has depicted Cipriano as endeavoring to bridge the gap of unacceptableness between humans, not only in terms of the difference in blood, by intuiting Kate’s feeling in the end. While describing the Indians’ sense of life in various ways and by various expressions, and coming close to their human delicacy, it can be considered that Lawrence in PS has depicted a moment in which communication with others has been granted.

Works Cited


