Chapter II

THE WHITE PEACOCK

D.H.Lawrence began *The White Peacock*, his first novel as a romance entitled 'Laetitia' at Easter 1906. He was then living at home and teaching in Eastwood. He took up the task of fiction writing in a light mood, in a bid to escape the dull monotony of his life. Writing on 4 May 1908, when he began to attend Nottingham University College, he recalled his boredom in 1906 saying : 'it was imperative that I should do something, so I began to write a novel' (Letters, Vol.I, C.U.P.,p.49). He completed the first version in June, 1907. It portrays with sentimental melodrama 'the strained relationship between a hysterical young wife Lettie and her passive husband George, and the lurking threat and attraction of her ex-lover Leslie who has made her pregnant and then jilted her'(Robertson, Andrew, Introduction of *The W.P.*, C.U.P., 1983 XVIII). This version appeared to Jessie Chambers, Lawrence's first girl-friend, unimpressive, 'story-bookish and unreal' and Lawrence, however, was not quite pleased with the first version of *The White Peacock*. He set to rewrite it. Now what matters most is that the novel's gradual development from the first version, then called 'Laetitia' to the final version called *The White Peacock*, depicts really Lawrence's own development as a writer, the gradual unfolding of his understanding about life – a real self-progress. And different versions of the novel may be called the different layers of his understanding about life.

The second version, written between July 1907 and April 1908, was a great development upon the previous one; the story was radically altered and 'the characters became more like flesh and blood', except Cyril, who remained unchanged, 'old

maidish'. In the present version, Lawrence had his eyes fixed on George. Also, he introduced a new character, Annable, apparently an unpolished brute, who comes closer to a typical Lawrentian hero, embodying his dark philosophy of life. To a repeated inquiry of Jessie, about Annable's appearance, Lawrence replied : 'He has to be there. Don't you see why ? He makes a sort of balance. Otherwise it's too much one thing, too much me' (E.T., p.117). But Lawrence, still uncertain about artistic perfection of the new version, wished 'the ointment of somebody's sincere criticism' (E.T.50) and Jessie was to him valueless as a critic for 'she approves much'. So, through Alice Dax, Lawrence invited Blanche Jennings 'to criticise some of the writings of mine that purports to be a novel' (E.T. 43). Her remark about the book partly dissatisfied Lawrence, but he accepted her judgement. On 3 August he replied :

> Your remark on 'Laetitia' is exceedingly just. If you think it worth trouble, I will write the thing again, and stop up the mouth of Cyril - I will kick him out - I hate the fellow - I will give Lettie a few rough shakings. I will keep Alice all the way through' (E.T.,pp.68-69).

In the next version, he cut down Cyril's comments and continued Alice's important role in Part III of the novel. But all these are concerned mainly with thematic addition and alteration. His girl-friends could not critically comment on its technical defects, its prolixity and its flowery style.

Meanwhile, Lawrence left Eastwood for a teaching job at Croydon in October,1908. The new situation at Croydon created new problems to him but not without providing with a new insight into life. His continuous struggle for self-adjustment, his hard striving to tame the 'wild school-children' and above all his

endeavour to be self-possessed in that situation equipped him with a new understanding about life and art. He now thought about writing a serious thing not merely a means to overcome the boredom of life he had experienced earlier. At that transitional phase, however, he chanced upon *Eugenie Grandet,* a novel by Balzac. The novel provided him with a new understanding of life and also the way to express it, a technique entirely new to him, more purposeful and effective to represent life. To him, the book seemed to be a perfect novel and he said : 'It is wonderfully concentrated; there is nothing superfluous, nothing out of place. Can you find a touch of melodrama, or caricature, or flippancy ? It is all in tremendous earnestness, more serious than all the profundities of German thinkers, or affecting than all English bathos' (Lett, C.U.P., Vol.I,91). This critical response to Balzac enabled Lawrence to detect his own faults :

> I have nearly read 'Laetitia'. It bores me mightily in parts. You can none of you find one essence of its failure; it is that I have dragged in conversation to explain matters that two lines of ordinary prose would have accomplished far better; I must cut out my pages of talk and replace them with a few paragraphs of plain description and narrative... (*Lett,* 92).

The next stage of development in writing of the novel now retitled 'Netheremere' in 1909, is confirmed by Arthur Macleod, the only man on the staff of Davidson Road School. In this version, Lawrence radically changed the construction of the novel bringing in the qualities and techniques he had so much admired in Balzac. With his newly awakened interest in a new type of language and style, comparatively less rhapsodic and less flowery, he tried to portray his characters in a new descriptive method instead of relying on dialogue. Here although Cyril is made into a more distant narrator,

he remained opinionated and moralistic. George and Lettie, each having married safely in keeping with their social ranks rather than their instincts, found life hollow. The novel 'shifts from romantic illusion to startling disillusionment' (Intro. *The W.P.* C.U.P. XXIV). In Jessie's opinion, this version was an immense stride forward from the first conception. But her serious comment that : 'he struck me as a figure of sinister prophecy. It seems to me not without significance that in this first novel Lawrence should portray no fewer than three men whose lives come to complete frustration'; contributes to Lawrence's later role as a dark prophet. The published version of 'Netheremere' was retitled as *The White Peacock.*

D.H.Lawrence was initially inspired by George Eliot's mode of novel writing. Out of his frequent studies of George Eliot, he developed a conception that 'the usual plan is to take two couples and develop their relationships' (E.T. 97). But 'anyhow, I don't want a plot, I should be bored with it. I shall try two couples for a start' (E.T. pp.97-8). Indeed, he seemed to have found himself through his close study of George Eliot. H.M.Daleski, while analysing her influence on Lawrence, says that in *The White Peacock,* the action is set in motion by the dynamics of a triangle, not coupling. Lettie Beardsall is attracted by George, though she is involved with Leslie Tempest. Lawrence, in Daleski's opinion, followed the pattern laid down by George Eliot in her *The Mill on the Floss,* for three reasons : firstly 'it exemplified the simple but effective method of organizing a novel', secondly, 'it offered a tangible means of realizing the aim he wished to set for himself as a novelist, and thirdly, 'it spoke to his own deepest experience as a young man' (Meyers, J. (ed), 1985, 57). But Daleski has overemphasized Eliot's

influence on Lawrence. He has gone so far as to identify *The White Peacock* as a slavish imitation of *The Mill on the Floss* :

> 'The signs of her influences are stamped everywhere in his first novel, where we might expect to see them most innocently displayed - to a degree that *The White Peacock* may be read as Lawrence's rewriting of *The Mill on the Floss*' (Meyers,J. (ed); 1985, 53).

Such a radical opinion implies that Daleski has tried either to disapprove of Lawrence's talent as a writer or to accord him less significance than he deserves. Lawrence's criticism of *The Mill on the Floss* is that George Eliot did not solve the problem she had raised through Maggie, but drowned her in order to evade the conflict and that she had 'gone and spoilt half way through'. Lawrence could not forgive the marriage of vital Maggie Tulliver to crippled Philip and said; 'it was wrong, wrong. She could never have made her do it' (E.T.,pp.97-8). This criticism of George Eliot issued from a new insight about life itself which was at work as he was writing his first novel. *The White Peacock*, therefore, remains strictly Lawrentian, both in theme and style, free from any kind of outer influences. It adumbrates all of Lawrence's preoccupations which he would explore and resolve in all his later *oeuvre*.

The main plot of the novel centres on Littie Beardsall, a timid woman. She fails to deal properly with the vicissitudes of both love and life and finally loses her spontaneous manner and personal autonomy. She is victimized by social circumstances for which she cannot shirk responsibility. She has to suffer a split personality because of her desperate craze for high social status and ultimate success in this venture. She ties the knot with Leslie Tempest, an aristocrat coal merchant. But, ironically she finds it so

difficult to love him, pushing aside from her mind George Saxton whom she did really love from the core of her heart. Thus she was divided in herself, failing to act in tune with her inner urge and impulse. She profited in the bargain a divided self, a split personality.

In the triangular love relationship, Lettie's true lover is George, the son of the soil. He is 'stoutly built, brown eyed with naturally fair skin burned dark and freckled in patches' (*The White Peacock*, 41, Hereafter by page number). George Sax(t)on is a representative of primitive rural England, as his surname implies. There is an unsympathetic primitive vigour in him. While visiting Felley Mill with his friend Cyril Beardsall, he catches hold of one of the flying bees, teases it and finally crashes it between the fingers as a game. Again, on another occasion, both Lettie and Cyril release the injured cat, Mickie Ben from the trap and give it warm milk to drink. But George kills it by drowning, an act of unsentimental primitivism that compels his sister Emily to say that there is something too loathsome about him which fills her with disgust. True to his nature, George is a man of action. He feels at home in nature. He is physically more active than vocal and keeps himself aloof from verbal humbug. This personal distinction leads Lettie to think about George that he is 'either asleep or stupid'(58). Also this primitive fervour in him attracts Lettie and she deliberately engages herself to the task of arousing his interest towards her through physical intimacy. She plays the piano, sings love songs to him, and sitting very close to him, she catches 'the swelling of his arms, as he moved them', 'the rise and fall of his breast' and 'the white flesh of his throat'. Their love relation begins to develop through physical urge where words and

speeches scarcely matter, a Lawrentian conception of love that we would see more developed in his later novels. But, in the present novel, the love relationship between George and Lettie is sketchily drawn and Lawrence does not attain the depth and complexity that it demands.

Lettie wants George as her lover, but is reluctant to accept him as she finds him, an unsophisticated, unrefined primitive fellow. George should be refined in taste and raised in status. Lettie loves him but hates his status and position. Occasionally she makes sarcastic comments about his simple life-style and primitive vigour. But in spite of her dissatisfaction with his lifestyle, she gradually comes closer to him. She appears to be mesmerised by his physical charm and yet holds herself back :

> 'Their eyes met in the briefest flash of glance, then both turned their faces aside. Thus averted, one from the other, they made talk. At last she rose, gathered the books together, and carried them off. At the door she turned. She must steal another keen moment'(73).

In the idyllic scene, one of the finest scenes in the book, George's rhythmic physical grace tempts Lettie to come closer and to touch him :

> '"Do you know" she said suddenly, "your arms tempt me to touch them. They are such a fine brown colour, and they look so hard". He held out one arm to her. She hesitated, then she swiftly put her finger tips on the smooth brown muscle, and drew them along. ...She looked at him, full at physical beauty, as if he were some great firm bud of life'(94).

It is an intimate moment between George and Lettie. Here, Lettie's love for George symbolically represents her love for natural rural England, for George is a representative of primitive, rural and agricultural England. The decline of agricultural England implies George's decline. Lawrence, here, presents two prominent causes for George's decline :

firstly, he is rejected by Lettie whom he thinks to be an inseparable partner of his life, his source of creative power', and secondly, the decline of agricultural England. While writing this novel, Lawrence was acutely conscious of the ruinous impact of industrialization on agriculture. He provides a brief account of this damaging effect of the frourishing industrialism on agriculture. The contemporary landowners considered agriculture an unprofitable business, and began to reap more profit from rich coal mines. Lawrence's hint at this agrarian problem is further confirmed by Haggard's report about South Nottinghamshire :

> 'The general position was one of chronic depression and farmers as a whole were on a lower level than they used to be. Both rents and selling values had fallen about forty percent. ... In conclusion, Mr. Brett said that he did not take a favourable view of the prospects of Nottinghamshire land and those who cultivated it, as the agricultural interests there were going steadily down the hill' (Haggard, 1902, *Rural England* , Vol.II, pp.258-59)

This historical change from the agricultural England to the industrial one affects the simple farming lifestyle. For the first time in his life, George begins to feel insecure about his daily needs because farming is 'running wild and unprofitable' (113). It is a threat to his free living. But what can he do ? The answer comes from Lettie :

> 'Here you can't live as you like - in anyway or circumstance. You're like a bit out of those coloured marble mosaics in the hall, you have to fit in your own set, fit into your own pattern, because you're put there from the first. But you don't want to be like a fixed bit of a mosaic - you want to fuse into life, and melt and mix with the rest of folk, to have some things burned out of you'(113).

This burning that Lettie tells about is nothing else than burning of his primitivism, his wildness, his reckless freedom to enjoy life.

While Lettie devotedly loves George; her 'Taurus', and initiates plans to tame him, Leslie Tempest, an aristocrat, on the other hand, loves Lettie with a monopolistic attitude towards her. Leslie is a youth with 'fine lithe physique, suggestive of much animal vigour, his person was exceedingly attractive'(89-90). But he is more mental than physical, more conscious than sensitive, quite opposite of George in lifestyle. He shows tenacious loyalty to Lettie with occasional prattle about his blue blood. Although he is not unaware of Littie-George love relationship, yet he remains indifferent to its profundity. George is, to him, a 'common fellow' having no refined taste and aristocratic status, so is quite unmatched with Lettie as her lover. As a true predecessor of Clifford Chatterley of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Leslie considers love a light sentimental issue that develops through verbal tricks, the necessary condition for it being the refined aristocratic taste and status. He has no capacity to understand the underlying assumption that love is more physical than mental.

Leslie symbolically represents modern England with its frourishing industrialism. His prosperity insinuates into the development of fake, counterfeit, mechanical lifestyle that implies the decline of George and decadence of the values he stands for, the unsophisticated natural qualities of life. Leslie's love for Lettie is shallow, non-vital and devoid of a spark of life. But he has one thing, the financial privilege that enchants Lettie. She, despite her initial antipathy towards him, gradually falls for him, thus deceives her own self. It is not her physical urge but her greed for wealth and position that turns her towards Leslie. She now wishes not to let him out of her control. One day, Leslie passes her in the street without even saying hello, a behaviour, she thinks

despicable, that enrages her. In her subsequent meeting, she takes revenge on him keeping herself silent and unresponsive throughout his inquiry. She does it intending to bring him closer to her, a perverse act of her split personality. Her strong desire for financial security creates within herself an attraction towards Leslie. But a fake love-relationship bereft of physical urge always remains 'cold' and such a relationship is 'but a fading dawn'(138). Lettie wants Leslie when he remains out of her sight, but when she meets him, his emotional humbug sometimes causes her vexation. She occasionally stops Leslie by saying : 'what are you making so many words about ?' (138). More social than individual as she has been, she fails to realize that life is a law unto itself and that the demand of intuitive life always does not cognise social status and position. She surrenders herself to Leslie's proposal to be engaged with him.

Immediately after her verbal engagement with Leslie, she visits George at his house, makes love with him forgetting for the time being, altogether about her engagement with Leslie. In the dark night, both George and Lettie get out of home to bring some mistleto. There in the dark :

> 'She leaned forwards and upwards to pierce the darkness; he also straining to look, felt her breath on his cheek, and turning, saw the pallor of his face close to his, and felt the dark glow of her eyes. He caught her in his arms, and held her mouth in a kiss. Then, when he released her, he turned away, saying something incoherent about going to fetch the lantern to look'(152).

Their communion is so deep that Cyril feels 'the light seemed to hold them as in a globe, in another world, apart from the night in which I stood'(152). This love relation is spontaneous, physical and beyond verbal expression. It expresses itself suggestively to

the sensual understanding where words and speeches are 'incoherent'.

The bond of love that binds Lettie and Leslie is spun out of superficiality, frigidity and artificiality. It however reminds Leslie of the natural and spontaneous and flesh-to-flesh love between George and Lettie. Leslie, now disheartened with the thought of George's predominance over Lettie, plans to detach her from George. On the occasion of Lettie's birthday, in which she comes of age, Leslie presents her with a gold ring decorated with sapphires and diamonds apparently as a token of love, but implicitly, as an allurement to confine Lettie into his family circle on the pretext of love. He wishes to be the master of Lettie. He also wants Lettie to be his, completely his woman. George's physical presence at the birthday party, a matter of overwhelming joy to Lettie, would be a matter of consternation to Leslie. When he hears from Lettie about George's possibility to attend the party, he angrily bites his moustache. To be precise, he may be a weak lover, but is a strong master. He exerts pressure on Lettie only to exploit her physically for he has nothing to offer her. He appears to Lettie like one of those of her friends in whom she feels 'there was nothing ... than they tired me'(171). But it is George who 'would for ever hang fire' in her. Her greedy nature makes George 'Cinderalla', the neglected or despised person. Openly she neglects George for his lower status and down-to-earth simplicity, but her inner self is always burning for him. Her love for George develops due to the urge of her flesh and blood and she is unable to resist temptation to love George. Indeed, Lettie's mental effort to reject George implies her tendency to divert herself from the source of her life. This diversion is a result of her forced engagement with Leslie to whom she surrenders but cannot accept. The

conversation between Lettie and Leslie discloses Lettie's mental conflict. She is reluctant even to continue her conversation with Leslie and stops him by saying : 'what's the use of saying anything when there is nothing immediate to say'(154). Such a remark implies that she is going to marry the man she never has loved and she is a tormented soul. But immediately afterwards, she inquired of Cyril about George and is eager to listen to talk about him. Although betrothed to Leslie, she is unable to keep herself off from the temptation to continue her 'forbidden game' of love with George. But what for?

The answer comes from Lettie. While wandering with her friends, she comes to open nature. Its primitive fervour stimulates her memory of the past. She realizes that she has come in close contact with nature through George Sax(t)on, the guru of her living wisdom. Her vital relation with him and nature provide her with a new insight about life, mainly physical. George's spontaneous activities, the rhythmic functions of his body while he reaps the corns, his chasing of wild animals and so on, have revealed the charm of human body and its nature to her. This understanding attracts her towards George and their love for each other develops in a spontaneous manner through their living activities in open nature. Lettie's love for George symbolically represents her love for nature and her rejection of him implies her uprootedness from nature. Her temptation for George implies the defeat of her will power to the demand of her flesh. That is why, Leslie appears to her unreal (You do not seem real to me' 189), although she is engaged with him.

In *TheWhite Peacock*, Lawrence introduces his process of living understanding,

that, in his opinion,comes willy-nilly into one if he keeps his sense organs sensitive enough while he lives in close contact with nature. It is, for Lawrence, the understanding of the flesh and blood, sensual not conceptual and has no alternative to acquiring wholeness and harmony in life. In his mature novels, Lawrence elucidates this process of living understanding in depth but here we only get an inkling of what is developing as the central preoccupation of Lawrence.

The unexpected news of Lettie-Leslie engagement contributes much to George's undoing. Lettie's sudden resolve to turn George down, an act, cruel, capricious and unjust to both herself and George,makes George indifferent to his own life; his spontaneity is gone and a deadness engulfs him. Lettie's instantaneous visit to George, now a dejected man, worries her; she comes back from him with a 'quiver of suppressed tears'(198). Even Cyril finds George for the first time in his life 'a tired boy' (205). Again Lettie, in her last premarital meeting with George, now her forbidden lover, exposes herself further. Even if she is glad to meet him she is instantly overcome by grief and sorrow with the thought of her imminent separation from him. Sadder and wiser as she now is, she learns a bitter lesson that it is life that is supreme, not emotional humbug, and as far as her life is concerned, she is a complete failure. Now a tormented soul, Lettie confesses that 'Life is very cruel .... and love is the cruellest of all'(280). Her timidity, her weakness and above all her greed for status symbol turn her away from George. She can neither marry him nor wipe out his strong impression on her. Having realized the impossibility to be united with him physically and cherishing a higher view about his person, she takes him for the god of her love and wishes to worship him : 'If

you were a faun, I would put guelder roses round your hair and make you look Becchanalian'(284). Lettie's expressed wish of the dark god-worship, later on, in Lawrence's last masterpiece, *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* is fulfilled by Constance Chatterley, Lettie's true successor, but with a slight change into phallic worship, a vital part of Lawrence's doctrine of love and life.

The sadness of parting torments Lettie; she tries hard to keep herself off from his influence, but temporarily succumbs to it. Leslie finds her dejected when he visits her. Her cold response, an offence to him, enrages him. He angrily says :

> 'I suppose you want me out of the way while you sentimentalise over that milkman (George). You need not bother. You can do it while I'm here. Or I'll go and leave you in peace. I'll go and call him back for you, if you like - if that's what you want-' (235)

No doubt, Leslie, despite his earnest effort, fails to bring Lettie out of George's hold. But his fortune favours him when he meets with an unfortunate car accident. After his accident near Lettie's house, Lettie and her brother Cyril take Leslie's unconscious body home to bring him round. Leslie, having regained his consciousness, finds Lettie engaged on nursing him. He chances on this opportune moment to persuade Lettie to marry him. His desperate approach and her cold response clear up the situation :

> 'Love-love- I don't know anything about it. But I can't - we can't be - don't you see-oh, what do they say, - flesh of one flesh.
> 'Why' he whispered, like a child that is told some tale of mystery. She looked at him, as he lay propped upon his elbow, turning towards hers, his white face of fear and perplexity, like a child that cannot understand, and is afraid, and wants to cry. Then slowly tears gathered full in her eyes, and she wept from pity and despair'(264).

Now falling on the horns of a dilemma, Lettie denies Leslie's marriage proposal with a

weak voice that encourages Leslie to stick to his persuasion tenaciously. Finally she accepts his proposal but denies the urge of her flesh and blood.

In *The White Peacock*, Lawrence depicts George - Lettie love relationship with greater significance than that of Lettie-Leslie pair. But nowhere in the novel does he render sufficient reason behind Lettie's antilife decision to reject George except her emotional turmoil and her longing for status and position. The conflict between two kinds of love, physical and mental, hints at his later role as a sinister prophet who wants to establish the truth of physical love and to reveal animalism in man. But in the present novel, he fails to achieve this perhaps due to his timidity to come into direct conflict with social tradition. Lawrence till then was not prepared enough to make Lettie either a lost girl like Alvina of *The Lost Girl, or* as a self-accused woman like Constance Chatterley of *Lady Chatterley's Lover.* His own timidity restricted Lettie to acquire that power with which she can free herself from the perverse social cage. But at its root, the novel elucidates a deep distrust against contemporary social milieu.

Lettie marries Leslie, not because she does not love him, but because she wishes to fulfil her longing for financial security and family status. Also George, now a vindictive lover takes revenge on Lettie getting married to Meg, a woman whom he never has loved, thus paradoxically revenges on his own self; for still he remains devoted to and sensitive about Lettie. In his next visit to Lettie, presently Leslie's faithful wife, at Hampstead, he observes 'a little hardness about her mouth and disillusion hanging slightly on her face' (362), despite her hard striving after controlling her dejected appearance. As her suffering suffers him, the 'barren futility' of her

conjugal life makes his own life grief-stricken. He, who always wishes a new lease on Lettie's life, now becomes broken-hearted and this begins to act against his well-developed physique. Add to this, his own family, particularly his wife Meg, with her recurring indifference towards him, accelerates his physical deterioration. Fifteen years later, George, physically almost exhausted, again visits Lettie on her 31st birthday at her home when Leslie has been out of home. Their intimate conversation, Lettie's singing of songs, her combing of his hair, everything implies that physical love is eternal and inviolable; it is a natural activity of life. Frustration in such a love causes physical deterioration. So within fifteen years of his separation from Lettie, George turns to be a condemned man with 'delirium tremens'(404). 'His arms seemed thin and he had bellied and was bowed and unsightly'(406).

Beside the main story, Lawrence introduces another love-story as a foil, rather undeveloped. The relation between Cyril and Emily, mainly autobiographical, has never gone beyond deep friendship. Emily in actual life is Jessie Chambers, Lawrence's girl-friend and Cyril is no other than Lawrence himself. Throughout the novel, Cyril remains a sensitive spectator, but as a lover, he is rather undeveloped. He loves Emily, but it is his secret wish never to be approached. Lawrence, till then lacked the courage to develop his love relationship with Jessie and left it temporarily to develop in full detail in *Sons and Lovers*. The mother-son bitter relationship, Lawrence's major theme of *Sons and Lovers* is not altogether absent from *The White Peacock*. One day, Cyril, after taking his dinner with Emily in her house at Strelley Mill, returns home rather late. His mother is offended against him and says : 'I am sure I don't know what you can find in

any of them to take you there so much'.... 'I know you like her'(Emily).

To begin with, Lawrence a self-introduced social critic, selected an effective way to criticize the modern civilization introducing Annable, apparently a brutal and primitive character. He is a man of one idea that 'all civilization was the painted fungus of rottenness'(207). All the world hates him and he is almost ostracized from the civilized society. His motto is : 'Be a good animal, true to your animal instinct'(208). On the outset, Annable is a primitive man and civilized people hate him for he cannot be civilized and he hates the civilization for the same reason. But it is not so. The root of his hatred does not lie in his primitivism. Rather, he has gone farther than most of our modern men can go. He knows much more about civilized life and is not slipped from the civilized people due to his incapacity to adjust to it, but has rejected it realizing that it cannot offer spontaneous lifestyle with personal autonomy. He had been a Cambridge don, married Lady Christabel and led the decent aristocratic life for three years. But this offered him only shallow idealism of outer pomposity and soulliness. So he rejected modern civilized life for its artificiality and sought his solace beyond or outside the narrow boundary of modernism. Annable is a symbolic character of Lawrence's sinister philosophy. But Lawrence could not yet prepare the true soil to keep him alive throughout the novel. Consequently, he died in an accident, to be reborn as Mellors, in his last major novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover.*

In sum, *The White Peacock* is a callow novel, as Lawrence calls it in his later life. But at its core is Lawrence's abiding interest in live and life, both in capital letters. This interest he keeps alive through the bulk of his works. It is no wonder then, even in

his very first attempt, he shows great potential for a major novelist to emerge out in future.

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