Chapter 1

D. H. Lawrence: The Escaped Cock

For the phallus is a signifier, a signifier whose function, in the intrasubjective economy of the analysis, lifts the veil perhaps from the function it performed in the mysteries.


In the novella The Escaped Cock, D. H. Lawrence’s treatment of Christ after his “resurrection”—a Christ who repudiates the Law of the Father—is a narrative in which the repression of sexuality (symbolic death) and desire reenact the tenets of Lacanian theory. At the height of his newly found sexual identity, as Christ “rises” to the Father in the temple of Isis, Lawrence gives us a formulaic image of a mythical union worthy of the Oedipus complex. The difference, however, in this instance, is that instead of castration, the son recovers his manhood, possesses the mother symbolically, and ascends, like the sun, illuminating the ego with the “dark rays” of the id. Christ recovers from his impotence and, redeemed at last, he is part of “the great rose of Space.”

Freudian critiques of Lawrence (Lacan staunchly maintained that he was a devout Freudian) tend to look for the author behind the work, whereas Lacanian criticism frees the text from this umbilical cord. The text thus becomes a free-floating construct in which metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, homonymy, aporia, puns, indeed every combination possible, contribute to the artistic space that
defines the work. Lacan privileges the text over the artist’s life because the text already contains everything we need to know. Indeed, Lacan wrote his “Seminar on ‘The Purloined Letter’” in order to demonstrate that meaning, the letter, the signifier are displaced and circulate throughout the text whether or not we refer to Edgar Allan Poe’s biography. As a signifier, the letter is “the letter of the unconscious” and it is a paradigm that functions independently of the author’s life. Every text contains repressed material that manifests an ongoing record of the Other’s presence. It is the play of language, its gaps, puns, repetitions, metaphorical slippages, and homonyms—the spaces wherein desire lurks—that reveal the discourse of the Other. Language manifests desire because desire was proscribed by the Law (le nom/non du père). It is during the infant’s so-called mirror phase, when it misrecognizes itself as Other, that the child accedes to language. This accession to language coincides with the primal repression of desire (union with the mother and displacements of desire), which then lingers on, embedded in the subject and his or her language.

For Lacan, the unconscious is structured like a language, whereas for Lawrence the unconscious is the life force, the soul, the individual self generated spontaneously at the very moment of conception when the sperm penetrates the ovum. The unconscious, says Lawrence, is the “active spontaneity which rouses in each individual organism at the moment of fusion of parent nuclei,” and it “brings forth not only consciousness, but tissue and organs also.” The true unconscious “is the spontaneous life-motive in every organism,” and it begins where life begins. For Lawrence, the concept of repression is a false unconscious, whereas for Lacan, repression and accession to language form the unconscious. Lawrence believes in a phenomenological and ontological sense of presence, whereas for Lacan and for Derrida, a self constituted by language, whether consciously or unconsciously, is a fragmented, decentered, and problematic self. Because of this decentering Lacan says, playing with Descartes’ cogito: “I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think” (“Je pense où je ne suis pas, donc je suis où je ne pense pas”).

Despite their differences, Lawrence and Lacan frequently seem to be moving in the same direction. A discourse that in Lacanian terms has to remain unconscious, when applied to Lawrence, seems to have been contrived consciously, as though Freud’s “Wo Es war, soll Ich werden,” which Lacan translates as “Là où fut ça, il me faut
advenir,” or “ Là où c’était . . . c’est mon devoir que je vienne à être,” were part of Lawrence’s agenda and not opposed to it.10 The English version (“Where the id was, there the ego shall be”), according to Lacan, mistranslates the German, insofar as the German does not say das Es [the id] nor das Ich (the ego). It only says Es and Ich, namely it and I. Lacan substitutes the word it for id, and even more radically, the letter S [signifier] for Es, because, for the subject, every symptom is a signifier. In psychoanalytic terms, the only way to close the gap between the subject and the signifier is to strive for a melding of the two: “Where the it was, I must be.”11 The it is not, strictly speaking, the id, nor is the I necessarily the ego.12 “The Other is, therefore, the locus in which is constituted the I who speaks to him who hears, that which is said by the one being already the reply, the other deciding to hear it whether the one has or has not spoken” (“L’Autre est donc le lieu où se constitue le je qui parle avec celui qui entend, ce que l’un dit étant déjà la réponse et l’autre décident à l’entendre si l’un a ou non parlé”).13 The metaphorical discourse of fiction is the answer I have already heard if only I have ears to hear. The Other is always speaking, but what does the Other want for me?14 Since the speaking I is already in the Other, the passage toward consciousness for Lacan, as with Lawrence, is from it to me. What does the unconscious want to say and what does it want for me? Lawrence’s Escaped Cock may provide some answers.

“I tried to compel them to live, so they compelled me to die.”15 These are the words of Lawrence’s Christ—a man who survives his death because they took him down from the cross too soon, and, having survived, he repudiates his past by saying that “the day of his interference is done. The teacher and savior are dead in me.”16 Indeed, the man who died rejects his previous message of salvation in favor of a new earth-centered philosophy. “No man can save the earth from tillage,” he says,17 and he concludes that “virginity is a form of greed,”18 that preaching was a mistake,19 that care is a noose that can strangle,20 in short, that he had run to excess because he gave more than he took, and that such excess was also a form of death.21 The man who died rejects a theological idealism that is consonant with Lawrence’s own repudiation of it. Having cast off the excesses and the compulsions of his previous existence, the man moves in another direction that, although radically different from the first—he seeks a sexual fulfillment that will allow him to “ascend to the Father”22 differently—has its own compulsive force. Lawrence embarks his character on a mystical, mythical quest that allows
him to meld the Christian crucifixion and the myth of Isis and Osiris into a parable for modern-day man.

In view of Christ's ordeal on the cross, his desire for a life of physical, as opposed to spiritual fulfillment, is perhaps not unreasonable. However, a new and different obsession asserts itself primarily, although not exclusively, within Lawrence's discourse, through the use of nouns and verbs of touch. The sound of the cock crowing "made him shiver as if electricity had touched him." As a metaphor of the phallus the rooster adumbrates the novella's climax. While the priestess of Isis watches the sleeping stranger, his presence touches her with the same "flame-tip of life" that surges through the "rocking vibration of the bent bird." Before making love to her, the man who died wonders if he dare "come into touch? . . . into this tender touch of life"? Touching her "was like touching the sun." The stranger believes that if he is naked enough for this contact (my emphasis), he has not died in vain. The priestess "rubs [my emphasis] the scar on his hand with oil," and then anoints and rubs all the scars with oil. The man lays "his hand softly on her warm bright shoulder" and he sees "the white glow of her white-gold breasts. And he touched them, and he felt his life go molten. 'Father!' he said, 'why did you hide this from me?' And he touched her with the poignancy of wonder, and the marvelous piercing transcendence of desire. 'Lo!' he said, 'this is beyond prayer.' Then the priestess envelops him with her arms, and, after making love and referring to his scars, he says: "'They are suns! . . . They shine from your touch. They are my atonement with you." Satisfactions of the flesh have, at last, displaced prayer and spirituality. Afterwards, all around him, the dew touches the darkness of the starry sky that is like a rose. "The world is one flower of many petalled darknesses, and he is in its perfume as in a touch." He sleeps in his cave "in the absolute stillness and fullness of touch," and when the dawn comes, he says: "'This is the great atonement, the being in touch. . . . the invisible Isis and the unseen sun are all in touch, and at one.'

Christ's death—his repressed sexuality and failed desire—embody a need for contact with life that is ongoing and all-inclusive. He will strive for union not only with a woman, but with the whole phenomenal world—a conjunction that will heal the wound and soothe the scars of his crucifixion—a harmony that restores his body and his soul. The man who died feels the need to get in touch with himself and with the realm of living things, and the force that will
make this possible is the sun. Indeed, Lawrence uses the word sun almost as obsessively as he does the word touch, but he uses both words deliberately, despite the remarkable congruity of his metaphors with Lacan’s analysis of how unconscious discourse manifests itself. For example, at the end of Apocalypse, Lawrence writes: “Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly, slowly happen.” And in Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious he says that “it is necessary for us to know the unconscious . . . just as it is necessary for us to know the sun.” He equates the word sun with the word soul, since the sun is as invisible as the soul and we know the sun by “watching his motions and feeling his changing power. The same with the unconscious.” The hypothesis of a partially premeditated metaphorical discourse in The Escaped Cock is reinforced by Lawrence’s conscious equation between the words sun, soul, and unconscious in a context of “getting in touch.” A passage from the “Future Religion” confirms the process:

The future of religion is in the mystery of touch.
The mind is touchless, so is the will, so is the spirit.
First come the death, then the pure aloneness, which is permanent
then the resurrection into touch.

The man “dies” and is resurrected only after he gets in touch with his unconscious—contact with the inner sun ascending to the Father. This need for contact does, nonetheless, have its incestuous connotations because, initially, the priestess of Isis embraces the man in the same way a mother embraces her child. The priestess heals the man’s howling wounds even as a mother soothes her crying infant’s hurt. Also, the word sun, as a homonym for the son of the father, considering the importance that both Freud and Lacan attribute to the play of language, reinforces the incest motif. Paronomastic associations thus help to unveil the latent discourse beneath Lawrence’s otherwise lucid metaphorical structures.

Lacan’s discourse of the Other corresponds to the latent content of unconscious desire veiled by every manifest narrative. In order to unveil the Other, Lacan applies Freud’s theories of condensation and displacement in dreams to the tropes of realistic discourse. Indeed, Lawrence’s story has a dreamlike subtext in which the cock is the phallus, the sun in the sky veils the son of the father, and the man’s erection is tantamount to resurrection.
As striking perhaps as the dreamlike quality of the narrative is the fact that a force greater than death prompts the man in the cave on the narrow wall of rock to awaken "from a long sleep in which he was tied up." He is literally and figuratively bound and hobbled, like the cock, whose "body, soul and spirit were tied by that string." For Lacan, the repression of desire means that the emotions are tied into a knot. Indeed, as Jane Gallop points out, the slang word in French for penis is *noeud*, meaning "knot." Moreover, the essential problem in psychoanalysis is how to slice through the knot that binds and inhibits change. In Lawrence's novella the cock denotes rooster, but it connotes phallus and it is the life-force of the cock that overrides death: "something had returned to him, like a returned letter," because, despite the cold, the nausea, and the forlornness, the man pushes at the bandages on his face, his shoulders, and his legs. He unties himself, the linen swathing-bands fall away, and he leaves the cave, stepping "with wincing feet down the rocky slope, past the sleeping soldiers." Because *The Escaped Cock* reads like a case study in psychoanalysis, the sleeping soldiers guarding the tomb behave like Freud's metaphorical censors who are asleep on the job and therefore allow the unconscious to act out its dream imagery. Indeed, the man who died is free to set forth on his mythical quest only because the guardians of the Law are derelict in their duty.

It is quite remarkable that Lawrence should use the analogy of the returned letter, the analogy that both Lacan and Derrida also use in order to explain the meanderings of the unconscious. One of Lacan's essays in *Ecrits* is entitled "The agency of the letter in the unconscious" and one of Derrida's essays in *The Post Card* is entitled "Le Facteur de la vérité," in which the word *facteur* means both factor and mailman." The truth, according to Derrida, being that a letter does not always necessarily reach its destination, whereas for Lacan it does. Poe's "Purloined Letter" is the basis for the disagreement and exploration of the workings of the unconscious by both Lacan and Derrida. Despite their differences, the event in Lawrence's story that redirects the letter to its addressee is death, not real death, but the symbolic death of a man who consciously rejects the ideology for which he was crucified. He repudiates the Father's Law, that is the *doxa* for which he was tried and which he now finds so objectionable. His insight frees him from the tangle that had bound him, and, in due course, he rises to the Father, resurrected, and no longer subservient to His Law. The man who died understands that the
coercive nature of the Law is a form of death in life. He accepts the meaning of his past and the symbolic death of the man who no longer exists. He is free to go forth in search of a new self based on a vibrant sexuality, “the flame-tip of life,” that had for so long been repressed and which he still only vaguely apprehends.48

Lawrence’s novella provides the answer to Lacan’s question: “What does the unconscious want for me?” The answer being that it wants me to live, and to live productively, and, in living, it overrules the death instinct that Freud formulated in Beyond the Pleasure Principle. Thus, the compulsion to repeat, the Fort!/Dal episode of little Ernst, whose “game” recovers the absent mother, is, as Derrida points out in The Post Card, not the negation of the pleasure principle, but its extension.49 The behavior of the man who died acts out the principle that iterative subservience to the Law is death, whereas the need to “get in touch” with life, although perhaps also compulsive, dramatizes the ongoing force of the pleasure principle. The decision of the man who died to repudiate the Law and to go forth in search of fulfillment is not, therefore, a regressive death instinct, as classical Freidians might argue, but its opposite—the affirmation of Eros over Thanatos.

The Escaped Cock can be read as a metaphor of Lacanian theory in which the Law—God—proscribes desire. Christ’s “death” is a reenactment of the primal scene—a prohibition that is experienced as castration and as a death of the self. On the denotative level, Lawrence’s story has the vivid immediacy of realism, but on a psychoanalytic level his “wound” connotes all the hurt of the primal repression. When Christ does finally creep down from the cell of rock in which he had been entombed, Lawrence tells us that “it meant full awakening,” movement accompanied “with the caution of the bitterly wounded.”50 And he thinks of his own mission and “how he had tried to lay the compulsion of love on all men,”51 and for which he was crucified. In Fantasia of the Unconscious Lawrence had already asserted that because the Ideal was evil no idea should be raised to a governing throne. “It is the death of all life to force a pure idea into practice.”52 It should not surprise us, therefore, that when the man who died comes in contact with the cock, he sees “not the bird alone, but the short, sharp wave of life of which the bird was the crest... and the voice of its life, crowing triumph and assertion, yet strangled by a cord of circumstance.”53 It is the “cord” of the Law that hobbles—a circumstance that Lawrence weaves into the fabric of his discourse. In the end, Christ overcomes his
"wound"—the Ideal that the Law had imposed on him and that was responsible for his symbolic death—retrieves the phallus, and makes love to the priestess of Isis. He is now literally and figuratively in touch with the goddess Isis, the Magna Mater. It is Isis who rewards the priestess’s quest and Christ’s quest, since they are both searching for the same thing—the lost phallus. Finally, the symbolic reunion of the son and the mother is possible only in the temple of Isis. The priestess dreams that the stranger is the lost Osiris, and he, the son of God, connects at last with the sun/son within himself, a homonymic union that was sundered when le nom/non du père intervened to split the child from the mother. Before his crucifixion, Christ’s ego is the will of God—the Father and superego for whom he "dies"—but having died, and having freed himself, he sets out to discover himself as subject. The self has been decentered and the it, namely the sun, the phallus, the life force can assert itself and ascend. It is this displacement and acceptance of a repressed sexuality that transforms this novella into a specimen-story of Lacanian theory.

For Lacan, every symptom of aberrant behavior is a metaphor. According to Lawrence, the symptoms of Christ’s aberrance are virginity, excess, preaching, and the need to compel others in their beliefs. In structuring Christ’s quest after he died, Lawrence orients him and the reader toward the reenactment of a scene that dramatizes the child’s repressed desire for the mother. Although the priestess is not the mother, Lawrence’s discourse, imagery, and metaphors weave a web of enchantment that returns the Christ-child to the maternal womb where he, the son, reestablishes contact with his dead self. Only then does he achieve fulfillment. Christ’s erection and "resurrection" would not have been possible without this backward journey. Let us track the slippage of Lawrence’s metaphors and pursue their traces in the text.

In part 2 of The Escaped Cock, Lawrence anthropomorphizes nature and objects, imbuing them with the colors and symbolism of womanhood. Isis, nature, the priestess, and space become one maternal network contributing to the resurrection of the son. The temple of Isis stands on a "tongue of land between the two bays."55 A causeway of rock is "the neck of her temple peninsula."56 The peninsula is also "humped" and pine-covered and the light falls on it "triumphantly."58 Lawrence’s tropological weave introduces a decidedly human pattern—a point of view that transforms the four wooden pillars of the temple into stems of "the swollen lotus-bud of Egypt."59
The shadow of the afternoon "washes" over the pillar-bases. The little world of the peninsula is "sacred." The sunshine "pours," is "royal," and is "pure." A black-and-white pigeon flies over the "immaculate loneliness" of the sea "like a ghost." Objects are animated, shadows "wash," sunshine "pours," and the sea is "lonely."

There is a human complicity at work that imbues nature with human attributes. A peninsula can only be sacred if a person describes it that way. This is also true of the adjective "royal," as in "royal sunshine"—another example of the way man's use of language contaminates nature and objects. How can the sea be lonely? It knows nothing of its loneliness. These pathetic fallacies are disguised forms of perception that give us little real information about nature but say a great deal about the person who is speaking figuratively. The same anthropomorphism links the pink and white temple, which is "like a flower in the little clearing," to the priestess dressed in yellow and white—the exact colors of the "narcissus sparkling gaily in the rocks." Can flowers be gay? People, yes, but flowers? The gaiety of a flower can come only from one source, which is a human source. The flowers animate the temple with qualities that belong to the priestess thereby transforming the whole scene into a vast pagan evocation of the Holy Ghost over which the Egyptian goddess presides. Thus, the adjectives "royal," "immaculate," and "pure," while used to denote the landscape, connotate a sacred entity that is embedded in a non-Christian setting.

Formerly, the man who died was known as the son of God, the Father, but he will soon become the son of Isis, the Mother. Language establishes a metaphorical complicity with nature and motherhood. The stranger spends the first night in a cave in a little gully where a rock basin fringed with maidenhair [my emphasis] contains a dripping mouthful of water. The man eats bread and he dips it into the water [not wine]—the new source of his life—the spring fringed with maidenhair. Every paragraph contains metaphorical associations and anthropomorphized images. The priestess is a virginal lotus bud, or a narcissus, or "the deep interfolded warmth, warmth living and penetrable, the woman, the heart of the rose!" The heart of the rose is "like the core of a flame," and the flame, as an earlier passage tells us, is life. In due course the world becomes "one flower of many petalled darkesses" whose perfume brings the stranger and priestess together. The world and everything in it is now alive, and the man who died experiences his resurrection as a universal oneness. Lawrence's metaphorical equa-
tions state, in essence, that woman is a flower, that a rose has the life force of fire, that woman is therefore life itself, and that space is female, fertile, enveloping, maternal.\textsuperscript{70}

The metaphorical complicity that moves inexorably toward the maternalization of nature and space is a necessary prelude to the man’s ascension. He, like the priestess, is still “in Search,”\textsuperscript{71} and he seems unable to fulfill himself without reliving the original mother/son union that was severed by the father. “Sun beyond suns had dipped her in mysterious fire, the mysterious fire of a potent woman, and to touch her was like touching the sun.”\textsuperscript{72} The man feels not only the sun’s warmth, but homonymically speaking, the child within himself. His face shines with the invisible violet light of “the dark sun.”\textsuperscript{73} He is ready for the climax, but still impotent, “faced by the demand of life, and burdened still by his death.”\textsuperscript{74} The scar on the man’s side “is the eye of the violet”\textsuperscript{75} and the wound is the source of “the re-born man.”\textsuperscript{76} The wound has healed externally but not internally, and this sexual impotence cannot be overcome until the man unites symbolically with Isis. Only this union can heal the inner cry by conjuring the lost mother and retrieving the absent breast. In Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious Lawrence speaks of birth, pain, and the child’s desire to heal the wound. The child seeks the mother’s breast in order to reinstate “the old organic continuum—a recovery of the pre-natal state.”\textsuperscript{77} Indeed, “the nipples of the breast are as fountains leaping into the universe, or as little lamps irradiating the contiguous world, to the soul in quest.”\textsuperscript{78} The man’s wound is like a baby’s mouth seeking to recover the warmth and comfort of the lost breast. Accordingly, the priestess puts “her breast against the wound in his left side, and her arms round him, folding over the wound in his right side, and she pressed him to her, in a power of living warmth . . . And the wailing died out altogether, and there was a stillness and darkness in his soul, unbroken dark stillness, wholeness.”\textsuperscript{79} The breast and the embrace heal the wound and the wailing—the child’s silent ongoing and unconscious wailing—is silenced only after this primal, maternal contact has been reaffirmed.

It is the ascent, the rising of the unconscious, the \textit{it/ça} that is “coming up in him, in the perfect inner darkness of himself.”\textsuperscript{80} This inner darkness is the unconscious, and the voice of the Other that has been veiled for so long by the Law is unveiled in the temple of Isis. It is like the rising of a new sun. But this sun is now the son of Isis, and as the sun illumines the I, the two together see. Truly, the
man who died, echoing Freud, can say, "The id and I are now one," or, as he prefers to say "'Now I am not myself. I am something new.'" The new man, no longer impotent and at last in touch with the primal mother says as he feels himself ascending to the Father:

"I am risen!"
Magnificent, blazing indomitable in the depths of his loins, his own sun dawned, and sent its fire running along his limbs, so that his face shone unconsciously.82

The sexual union of the man and the priestess of Isis is, in Lacanian terms, a metaphor for moving the contents of the unconscious into the light of day. Hence the role of the sun in its denotative and connotative forms. The mystery and power of the sun generate the "flaming buds of life" and "the foaming crest of the wave"; the reviving power of the goddess Isis in contact with the sun-god heals the stranger on the shores of Lebanon. This is the message of the unconscious that is manifest in the puns, metaphors, and slips of language that, like a letter, always has a destination (what does the unconscious want for me?), even though sometimes it may not get there. What had been silenced and repressed by ideology was the phallus. The man's erection is the resurrection and retrieval of wholeness. The child's wound has been healed, and the dead man is finally alive. Lawrence's novella relives with formulaic accuracy the events of the so-called primal scene.

The Son, the Father, and the Holy Ghost are now one, insofar as the resurrected man incorporates all three: the unconscious, his I, and the displacement of the Father by his own impending fatherhood. The man is now in constant touch with the principle of life—universal motherhood—and free at last to pursue the calling of his own identity. This inner radiance, Barthes would surely have called it jouissance, with its incestuous connotations, is the happiness of freedom, wholeness, fulfillment, and absence of care. The priestess is also happy because she is "full of the risen Osiris! ..."83 The phallus, as Lacan points out, is a signifier and its function is to lift the veil from the Other so that the id may speak, rising to the occasion one might say, and becoming the subject, a subject who can at last assume his identity in the Father.84 The Escaped Cock demonstrates that Freud's "Wo Es war, soll Ich werden"85 is not an incursion of the ego-ideal into the id, but its opposite, namely the illumination of the ego by the rising sun of the unconscious.

Copyrighted Material
The new father sleeps in the cave "in the peace and delight of being in touch . . . the invisible Isis and the unseen sun are all in touch, and at one." \(^{86}\) Isis, the earth-mother, watches over the man in the womblike cave with its spring and its maidenhair, and he sleeps in this protective enclosure as a child sleeps in its mother’s womb. Lawrence’s novella can thus be read as the discourse of a man in search of the mother, and of the son’s primal contact with her. When he finds her and himself, then the son of the father and the sun that shines ascend together as one heavenly body. The sexuality of the unconscious illuminates the whole.

But the son who died is now also the new father, and his eventual departure from the temple means that his child will be raised by the mother, the priestess of Isis. "The man who had died rowed slowly on, with the current, and laughed to himself: ‘I have sowed the seed of my life and my resurrection.’" \(^{87}\) Nature has displaced the mother, and the mother is nature, and this new oneness is the retrieval that resurrects the son. Now that he is healed and whole, he will venture forth, once again, into "the great rose of space" in which he is "like a grain of its perfume." \(^{88}\) The man’s desire is not to merge with a caretaker mother, although the mother is present, but to function as an individual within the maternal realm of the universe. In the final analysis, both Lawrence’s message and his achievement, at least in \textit{The Escaped Cock}, show that his mother fixation is not emotionally and artistically crippling, as some commentators allege, but ennobling. As a future father, the man who died has proved his manhood, and he is now ready to assume his place in the world as a free, independent, integrated person.

Although I find it impossible to say where the deliberate metaphorical weave ends and the discourse of the Other begins, it is reasonably clear that \textit{The Escaped Cock} contains both conscious and unconscious material. The two function together, simultaneously, and they attest to Lawrence’s profound need to incorporate the mother as an artistic, psychological, and visionary presence within a novella that, near the end of his career, marks an important synthesis of values. \(^{89}\)

The novella demonstrates that Lawrence believes in the oneness of a world that has been feminized. However, this symbolic incest with Isis, the Magna Mater, and "the rose of space" also confirms the obsessional recurring patterns to which Leigh Travis objects. \(^{90}\) Nonetheless, \textit{The Escaped Cock} objectifies Lawrence’s need and desire to transcend the problem of death, castration, and
lost identity. In the end, the son recovers the phallus and ascends to the Father as a renewed and now whole “Osiris.” He rejects the-name-of-the-father—the Law and ideology that crucified him. I am tempted to say that he will now be able to live without the Law, without the transcendental signifier to which Derrida objects so strenuously, were it not for the fact that the phallus of self-identity becomes the new Law on which he will found his system. There is a fundamental difference, however, between the two Laws, a difference the existentialists have been stressing for a long time. One is imposed from without and is unauthentic, whereas the other is self-generated and authentic. Unauthenticity stems from encratic language, that is, the use of clichés and the acceptance of ready-made values, whereas authenticity is the by-product of choices consciously made after the rejection of doxa. Lawrence’s novella points toward a phallic authenticity and presence based on a rejection of ideology. This authenticity is accompanied by insight and bliss. Symbolic death and the primal scene have been exorcized in a reenactment and dramatization of phallic possession. The sexual psychodrama that has been staged in the temple of Isis puts the subject (ego) in touch with the it (id), thus opening the way to insight and fulfillment.

All this has been made possible by the illumination of the I by the dark sun of the unconscious. The repressed has been incorporated into consciousness and the I is where it was. The Law disappears with the resurrection of the phallus because the I’s wholeness has now been affirmed. Union with the symbolic mother heals the pain of symbolic castration, desire has been satisfied, and the unconscious no longer functions as the repository for the-name-of-the-father. The man who died may no longer be the subject of a méconnaissance, the misrecognition of identity that accompanies repression. He is now himself, whole and resurrected—the new father.