# *Iconic Mythopoeia in MacEwen's The T.E. Lawrence Poems*

R. F. Gillian Harding

Although MacEwen's *The T.E. Lawrence Poems* build themselves around the biographical and historical events surrounding the figure of T.E. Lawrence, an imaginative superstructure arises amidst the historic framework.[1] As in MacEwen's earlier books, recurrent icons overlay the local context in a conceptualized pattern of concrete images. We encounter the same themes revolving around the problem of an ambiguous, ambivalent reality in which multiple perspectives become possible. Although a possibility for transcendence enters a number of poems, such transcendence often involves a process of dialectic whereby insight is derived through devious means. Accordingly, the drive towards synthesis becomes a destructive one or, at least, one carrying mixed implications in the way of good and evil. As in *The Shadow-Maker*, however, the necessity for such a dialectic is affirmed and, in "The Peace Conference," we find the mature Lawrence actually rejecting the ideal of a unified state among the Arabs. Here, we have a complex thematic structure which shows considerable development from that of *The Rising Fire*, MacEwen's first book, in which uncompromised artistic transcendence is univocally and rather self-consciously pursued.

In the first poem of the book, we are introduced to water as an icon which represents the primordial matter of creation. Having no colour and no form of its own, water offers the potential for adapting all manifest form, all manner of *bricolage*, to mythical expression. Accordingly, "it disguised itself as snow and let itself be chopped/And spooned onto the stunned red grapes of summer." As opposed to objects usually associated with the material world, water as the imaginative reservoir of elemental forms provides the ideal metaphor for truth. "Water will never lie to you, even when it insinuates itself/ Into someone else's territory." Thus, all perspectives on truth prove equally valid in their own terms. In addition, water has "no conscience and no shame"; it remains amoral as truth itself. The closing lines of this introductory poem which offer the reader advice to "drink to overflowing when you

[1]*The T.E. Lawrence Poems* (Oakville, Ont., 1982). All references will be included in the paper.

can,/ then go/Go sparingly between wells" perhaps explains the creative lapse in MacEwen's writing since her previous book, *The Fire-Eaters*. These lines, moreover, apply the implicit metaphor of a journey through the desert to our reading experience of the poems (p.3).

The "Water-Bearer" referring to Dahoum, whose name translates as "the darkness before Creation", becomes a sacramental figure in association with water (p.18).[2] His identity as Dahoum thus becomes a transient one before his death symbolically implied as a dissolution to his primary material of water. In "The Death of Dahoum", the speaker Lawrence remarks that Dahoum did not wear the world "like a cloak", but that the world "borrowed [him] for a time/And then let go" (p.51). From another perspective, however, Dahoum suggests the artist. Like water which becomes a symbolic medium for artistic expression, the artist is conceived as an agent of the larger principles of truth. In "The Water-Bearer", the character of the artist as existentialist is perceived as combining a paradoxical diffidence and humanity which attracts simultaneous love and admiration: "The animals admired you because you had a splendid/disregard for man that even they/could not achieve. And a dark and secret love/That only they could achieve.

As a metamorphosis of water symbolically mediating heaven and earth, the clouds in "Clouds Hill" become an icon of transcendence.[3] Battered and disillusioned by war, Lawrence returns to his home in Dorse which is also conceived as a state of mind in which the clouds "erase the sunset" so that time is obliterated while Lawrence as artist becomes "the hard core of everywhere." Centred on Clouds Hill, this iconic poem reflects the artist's process in achieving transcendent vision. Just as Clouds Hill leans against an insubstantial sky, the speaker attends to the paradox of an ideal which is "so important it will never happen", except in a dream southward symbolically retracing his life's journey from Damascus. Suggestive of MacEwen's Blakean conviction in experiental excess as an inverse means to knowledge, Lawrence has written his diaries "upside-down" and in pencil so that he will now decipher them in order to distill their meaning and perhaps learn from his mistakes. Moreover, he will live on dark chocolate and write on an oak desk, thus affirming a sensual aspect in the act of creative expression (p.63).[4]

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[2]See Desmond Stewart's *T.E. Lawrence* (London, 1979), p. 101.
[3]J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. Jack Sage (London, 1962), p. 48.
[4]Robert Graves associates the oak with the poet or seer in *The White Goddess* (London, 1952), p. 39.

Lawrence's relief in art, however, does not afford a lasting solution to the problem of consciousness. Although he has perhaps learned something from his mistakes, he doubts the possibility of reliving his life purely: "Is there a second string to the bow?" he asks himself in "The R.A.F." (p.62). Therefore, he must be satisfied with insight gained by inverse methods and with transcendence on a demonic basis: "My soul rushed upwards/ if only for a time/on smoky, blackened wings." In "The Void", Lawrence remarks, "I have burned all the bridges behind me; this is high dry/land" (p.64). The water associated with his birth in "Our Child Who Art in Heaven" has undergone the 'burning' process of life, but without purgation. Thus, in "Hot Baths" he expresses a desire for such spiritual purification. "All I want now is to boil the Hell out of myself,/let the elastic water explore me and find/ all my parts guilty of consciousness" (p.68).

The desert, the stone and the mirage make up a second cluster of images suggestive of the elusive nature of reality. In contrast to water as an icon of potentiality and original chaos, the desert icon represents annihilation and a "reductive nothing" which implodes into pure light.[5] "Massive and alone", the desert becomes associated with God and an eternal principle amounting to the "horrible beauty" of "nothingness, this Everything—" (p.20).

In "The Story of a Stone", the stone becomes an icon for concrete reality whose materiality eludes understanding and represents the circularity of a self-referring symbol, "There is a stone in the blue fields of midnight,/ And finally the stone is its own story; the stone/will always tell you nothing about itself." The stone resists analysis, and its essence remains inaccessible: "What lives inside the stone?" The speaker who intuits a sense of meaning and process in the universe while the "sky abounds with silence," expresses his frustration: "I have been sitting here for three hours under this/Handsome tree, trying to get blood/ out of this stone,/ But it lies there contemplating itself in a state/ of perfect bliss" (p.23).

In "The Mirage" and "Visual Purple", we confront the complementary themes of informing shape and informing abstraction through an iconic interplay of images of light and dark, insubstantiality and solidity. In "Visual Purple" the abstraction "time" is conceived as a "myth", a silver slit in space" which allows that space dimension, and

[5]Here, we might recall Ondaatje's similar metaphor of implosion in "The White Dwarfs." *There's A Trick with a Knife I've Been learning to Do* (Toronto, 1979), pp. 68-69.

the mirage image in "The Mirage" consolidates the concept of arbitrary demarcations fabricated by the mind in which it would otherwise make up a vacuum. Thus, the desert is landmarked only by imagined phenomena (such as the mirage, or by rocks randomly fallen from heaven).[6] At the end of the latter poem, Lawrence's consciousness itself becomes the informing principle of concreteness underlying creation. He remarks: "I need tons of yellow space, and nothing/ in the spectrum is unknown to me./ I am the living centre of your sight; I draw for you/ this thin and dangerous horizon" (pp.32,37).

A third iconic cluster involving human-imposed contexts for reality reflects the multitudinous perspectives on this ambiguous, ambivalent reality. Accordingly, we find the castle, the garden, the excavation and the world described by the camera. The castle with its paraphernalia of fairy tale imagery enters in the first section, marking Lawrence's childhood fantasies and a projected world of wish-fulfillment. In "My Mother," Lawrence mythologizes his mother as "Mother Eve", a 300-foot-tall giant whom he can still see" if [he] raises [himself] to [his] full height." "Green and powerful" in her self-rightousness, she lacks self-knowledge of her own evil, and becomes a figure comparable to Bowering's representation of Temperance in *Genève*. Thus, this giant of a mother attempts to lay siege to the presumably impregnable castle which is her son, and "aspires to its tower", his mind.

Similarly, the castle icon enters "It Was Only a Game" in which the children fantasize a siege and hostage-taking, taking turns to enact the "enemy outside, scaling the garden wall" (pp. 5, 11).

The garden, associated with an Edenic world before the onset of sin, enters "Daoud and Farraj" in which the spiritually twin brothers come to represent the innocence of unrestrained impulse. In this idyllic context, moreover, their actions have not negative results. "Everyone forgave them for everything,/The way you forgive Tuesday for following Monday, the way/You forgive the sun for being just a shade too bright." In the closing stanza, Lawrence offers a retrospective tableau signifying their demise and that of all they represent: "Years and years and years ago. And I recall the bullets / Falling in an olive garden where they had played, before/Snake death sucked the nectar from their loins, and /the whole world turned burnt amber and pale gray" (p.39).

In "What It's Like", the metonymic image of the snake-bite recalls

[6]As becomes clear in MacEwen's *King of Egypt, King of Dreams* (Toronto. 1971). meteorites represent god-sent omens, pp. 135-6.

the garden of Eden. On account of a process of self-cancellation, belief in everything fails as a cure for snake-bite or original sin, subsiding into the indifferentiation of a destructive synthesis (p.35). The Edenic description of the garden in "Departures" is marred by the compromising sword of justice which presumes a pre-existent evil and, by symbolic implication, becomes the means of the garden's destruction. Accordingly, the extinction of this modified Eden represents the end of this already fallen garden, and the world's apocalypse (p.70).

The excavation site assumes iconic status, reflecting the reality of past worlds. In "Excavating in Egypt", the excavators progress from a scientific disinterest which renders interchangeable the relic-trinkets as gods or toys to an identification with the historic people (p.22). As the night grows colder, the excavators become fearful and wrap themselves in the funeral clothes of the dead. In "The Water-Bearer" and "The Absolute Room", the excavation site affords an opportunity for transcendent insight (pp.18,21).

The framed world of art provides a myopic perspective as interpreted by the elegiac speaker in "A Photograph from Carcemish" (p.54). In nostalgically viewing the picture of his deceased friend Dahoum, Lawrence does not entertain the possibility of his death representing a new beginning. Although he considers the idea that "the world was created from the waters of Chaos," "the black waves of tears" still "drown [his] dreams forever." In "Their Deaths," a factual description of the brothers Daoud's and Farraj" Farraj's deaths follows their mythical distancing in "Daoud and Farraj" (p.39). The now depressed Lawrence recalls the self-assurance that characterized his young manhood when he had no need for the immortalizing of art. "I was the coolest of men," he remarks, "deserting/A photographer who shot me standing in a group of /ridiculous cactii, by saying simply /I have to go now; we're having a war." Thus, the validity of his experience of reality as a young man no longer holds (p.49).

The house provides another less traditional and more specialized (by context) variant on this iconic cluster representing enclosed orders of reality. In "My Father", Lawrence describes his father's sense of estrangement from the world in terms of his being lost and unable to find their home, a sense of security and rational perspective.[7] Recalling the threat which his chastising mother posed to his father as well as to

[7]According to Cirlot, the square is a symbol of the combination of regulation of four different elements, p.292.

himself, Lawrence asserts that sometimes [his father] looked so lost that I wanted to show him/the way back home, but the house had become a place/ of thunder: it stared at us with square/unseeing eyes, and I never knew why/he went to her in the permanent, resounding dark." In contrast to his unbalanced father, Lawrence's self-sufficiency as a child allowed him at that time to feel confident that he had "the key" which opened all the houses on the street. Accordingly, all organizations of reality seemed to him then to be accessible through breadth of mind or imagination (p. 6).

The room in "The Absolute Room" makes a different use of the house as symbol. Situated in the desert between Aleppo and Hama, this sacred room comes to represent the centre of consciousness of the excavators, Dahoum and Lawrence, and, by extension, the central void of the creating mind as universally conceived. As in "Silence is a Place" (*The Magic Animals*) And Eliot's "still point," the centre of metamorphic energy would seem to be distinguished by a paradoxical passivity. Also recalling Eliot's thought that "smells like a rose," and suggestive of the inherent physicality of thought as composed of images, a hundred scents are built into the walls, a symbol for delimiting realities both verbal and material. In the context of this "absolute room," however, these hundred conflicting scents reach a self-cancelling synthesis which represents maximum potential for expression. Paradoxically, the room metaphor of the mind immersed in contemplating of an external reality comes to partake of that activating reality and thus Lawrence's eyes, the windows to his soul, reflect "the quiet, powerful sky beyond" (p.21).

In "Clouds Hill," the moving house represents the changing perspectives of Lawrence's life. Although Clouds Hill is his biological home, Lawrence expresses certain doubts about its absolute value as such. "At least I think I am at home, but/even the house is travelling somewhere—/through time, I think, and beyond." In view of the mind's imaginative properties as a means of transcending immediate realities, he finds that he inhabits "the hard core of everywhere," and the ideal "home" in his mind becomes "more exotic than anywhere" (p.63).

A fourth iconic cluster centres on animals, frequently birds, cats, lions, horses and camels. Unlike the animals in MacEwen's early poetry and, especially *The Magic Animals*, which suggest hidden life or unnoticed depths and perspectives on reality, animals in the *T.E. Lawrence Poems* become projections of the psyche. The tit bird which bashes its head against the window pane in "There is No Place to Hide" provides an objective correlative for Lawrence's life as a process of self-destruc-

tion in the manner of Ondaatje's "White Dwarfs". Although Lawrence would once have interpreted the bird's self-arrogation as egotism, he now identifies its impulse as one of madness (p.67). The ostrich egg in "The Void" provides a similar psychological function in suggesting benighted egotism. In flying the Hejaz flag off the pinnacle of All Souls, the speaker Lawrence feels premonitions that he was "becoming an aging school boy/ a master-prig with an ego as big/ as an ostrich egg" (p.64).

Providing a psychological dialectic, the cat and the lion icons complement each other. In "My Father," Lawrence considers his father who might have been a "lion of a man," except for the castrating influence of his wife who reduces him to a kind of domestic cat. Here, we are reminded of "The Magic Cats" which MacEwen sets up as an analogue for superstitutions and evasive human nature in *The Magic Animals*. In "Furthermore", the self-indulgent cat provides a counterpart for the aesthete camel which saves up its appetite for culminative gratification, such as that advised the reader in the introductory poem, "Water" (p.17).

The horse icon reflects desire and, more generally, animal spirits and a lust for life. In "It was Only a Game", Lawrence recalls his insatiable thirst for life as a child: "I needed horses,/ and limitless space" (p.11). The "animal spirits" in the poem of that title become "so mighty they are unclean" and, in a Blakean approval of excess, Lawrence states that they can only be overcome through an identification and internalization. Contemplating a dialectic, Lawrence suggests that these uncontrollable desires provide a source of fear, but also attract love. Thus, their hooves and paws smell of honey and trodden flowers, paradoxically metonymies for immortality and the ephemeral (p.15).[8]

In their association with unbridled instinct not yet redundant with evil implication, Daoud and Farraj are likened to horses. Lawrence remarks, "I loved them the way I loved fine horses," (p.39). In another vein, Ali, the invalid son of Sharif Hussein, shows an affinity for horses which reflects his exaggerated and perhaps perverted sensuality. "A visitor, not a citizen of the world," Ali talks to and fondles his horses which causes Lawrence's censure for reasons, however, suggestive of the latter's point of view as a man of proportion rather than as a Puritan. Thus, a line-break between "which was something" and "I could never

[8]Honey as a preservative becomes a symbol for immortality. Also, Cirlot cites honey as a symbol for wisdom, pp.23,143.

stand" registers the speaker's ambivalence towards Ali's behaviour. As Lawrence recognizes a sensual element in his own character, he can understand Ali's experience of life and, in part, sympathize with him. With a genuine sense of shared humanity, therefore, Lawrence departs from Ali, remarking "we were brothers just visiting the world" (p.30).[9]

The camel provides a natural image in the desert context which acquires central iconic value in *The T.E. Lawrence Poems*.[10] Associated with the horse and desire in its negative aspect, the camel signifies self-destructive aspiration which is predicated on animal instincts or misplaced ideals and lacking self-knowledge. In "Morning Horses," the "velvet horses" drink an ambrosia of camel's milk which sustains their sensual desire in the manner of the soldier's experience of the beautiful morning as an affirmation of their cause (p.45).

With similar negative implications, Lawrence in "The Virgin Warrior" shoots his own camel through the head in the excitement of battle. A verbal metaphor in the latter context, however, introduces an affinity between destruction and creativity which is not entirely ironic in view of another suggestion, that the process of war involves a "creation" of new borders and new worlds. "We surged forward, swords raised like exclamation marks and purple banners flying," Lawrence writes "when the enemy became real, I got terribly excited/ and shot my camel through the head/ by accident . . ." The line-break between "through the head" and "by accident" once more reflects the speaker's ambivalent motivations. The form implies a subconscious death-wish in keeping with the pseudomystical tendencies of the battle situation, and the reference to Kipling, of course, underlines the suggestion: As the army leapt over him, Lawrence lay on the ground, "thinking, in lines as long as a camel's stride, of Kipling." Here, again, the periodic style works against statement, and registers Lawrence's self-doubt. The camel in this way comes to represent demonic aspiration which transcends its evil basis while becoming a means to insight (p.36).

In "Towards Akaba," the dead camels and dubious pink blobs contaminating the drinking water carry repugnant connotations: but in "The Desert" we find an amoral suggestion in relation to camels (pp.40,20). The camels "lean into the desert" contemplating the ineffable, associated with Satan, but also with Christ. In "Ghazala's Foal,"

[9]These characters in association with horses appear in the poems "Daoud and Farraj" and "Ali."

[10]Cirlot associates the camel with the dragon and the winged serpent. According to the Zohar, the serpent in the Garden of Eden is a kind of flying camel, p. 36.

the female camel displays a natural nobility transcending the usually grey area of basic instincts, in this case those maternal geared towards survival. On witnessing the sight of her dead foal, the camel looks "around wildly,/ remembering something that was terribly important,/ then lapsing into a blank, dazed stare." Subsequently, she would "murmur something, nudge [the foal], ponder a while, and walk on." Here we may compare MacEwen's red starfish in "Sea Images", of *The Magic Animals* which struggles back to the sea leaving behind its speared leg. Significantly, both the foal and the starfish become victims of man's motiveless malignancy (p.50).

In "Boanerges," Lawrence refers to his motorcycles as "devil horses." As with MacEwen's Icarus figure in "Poem Improvised Around a First Line" of *A Breakfast for Barbarians*, the motorcyclist here becomes associated with a self-destructive, self-arrogating impulse. Whereas the motorcyclist in the former poem becomes ironic while he relies on drugs and nicotine, in "Boanerges" inverse means meet Blakean approval (p.65). In the subsequent "Notes from the Deadland" in which the speaker actually dies following a motorcycle accident, he recalls the "black van" that overtook him in terms of a "death camel," perhaps indicating a displacement of his own subconscious death-wish (p.69).

In "Departures," which serves as a kind of epitaph, camels are represented in a generally positive light. The tableau of "ghostly riders on blonde and dreaming camels" suggests expended potential, but also carries an idealistic implication. As in "Apologies" in which the speaker, Lawrence, expresses a desire "to be empty" in order to make room for other things, such expended potential also signifies a new beginning (p.70).

A drive toward synthesis and annihilation implicating the thematic complex of creation and destruction organizes itself around the icons of thunder, war, winds and the sword. "The Thunder Song" involves an iconic paradigm of the ultimately destructive creative process which terminates one order to replace it with another (p.24). Two musicians, signifying the binary nature of reality, sing of war, love and death which, by implication constitute a reduction of human experience. In a militant metaphor, "armies of rain" and "murderous blue lightning," presumably induced by the musicians' song, bring the stones to life, and the statues laugh.[11] Thus, MacEwen inverts the concept of the Word of

[11]Although one musician is said to 'control' the thunder, a certain ambiguity enters the opening verse: "Two musicians played before the storm broke." Whether the storm would happen regardless of their efforts is never clear.
[12]Cirlot, p. 249.

Logos of creation as becoming flesh: here material reality is expended by articulation of the ideal word, and the self-referring stone exchanges its concrete value for abstraction.

In a reflection of the artistic process, the first musician 'controls' the thunder with his pipe, and the second musician explores the spaces between "the statements of light." Accordingly, the dual function of art as "controlling" or informing (representing an inductive procedure whereby abstraction is delimited) and "exploring" or analysing (representing a deductive process of analyzing manifest form) is represented.

In achieving the perfect synthesis of word and idea through the essential expression, the symbolic "place between twin rivers, Babylon" becomes, in a Platonic sense, "articulate /And utterly real." Corresponding to the subjects of war, love and death, the evolutionary process may schematically be reduced to a principle of creation as induced by severance or differentiation (war), a movement towards synthesis (love), and the achievement of that synthesis in annihilation (death).

Here, we might recall Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" which involves a similar confusion of the creative and destructive processes while the "mighty fountain" of inspiration spews rocks and fragments out of an earth chasm in an implicit birth image which is complicated by the suggestion of ancestral voices prophecying war. In the closing lines of "The Thunder Song," a mythopoeic projection evocative of Yeats' Second Coming enters the scene, presumably to destroy the existing order and create another. Appropriately, MacEwen's figure is a warlike "helmeted seven-foot god" immersed in blue light, which reminds us of the similar figure of the Blue Hippopotamus in *The Magic Animals*. Blue in MacEwen's symbolic colour code would seem to work ambivalently, connoting its ambiguous nature and and inherent spirituality.

The tripartite structure of *The T.E. Lawrence Poems* itself describes a process typical in MacEwen in which evolution leads to involution, and Lawrence's cultivation of his self-image meets its undoing. The first section "Dreamers of the Day", deals with Lawrence as a self-assured child and as an idealistic young man; the second section "Solar Wind: The War" presents the revolt which was the central experience of his life, and the third section presents the anticlimactic aftermath. Accordingly, the first section explores various potential worlds, including a fairytale world of childish imagination, past worlds discovered in excavations and alternate realities; the second section deals with the war in which Lawrence and his soldiers delimit borders of countries; and the final section, in completion of a dialectic, works from idealism through

disillusionment, which culminates in Lawrence's death and a symbolic apocalypse in the final poem "Departures."

In dramatising the creative-destructive process of war, the iconic poem "Towards Akaba" provides a pivot for the paradox underlying a transition from evolution to involution. In a battle motivated by a misguided ideal, the enemy facing the sea becomes associated with water so that the invading troops in the "creation" of new borders must drive back the foe or else be absorbed in the symbolic element of water. In the first case, water assumes the significance of primordial matter to be 'shaped' by the conquering troops and, in the latter case, the image becomes charged with implications of mystical immersion and annihilation. Reminded of the void by "the sound/ of waves, delirious against the shore," Lawrence experiences a psychological paralysis signified by a sudden fear of swimming (40).

A process of dialectic in which one extreme leads to another would seem to explain the paradox of transcendence through inverse means. From a position of idealistic, and altruistic impulse in "Apologies" in which Lawrence expresses a need to give himself to the Arab cause, he proceeds towards disillusionment and near cynicism in "Nitroglycerine Tulips" (pp.29,41). Confronted with terminally ill victims suffering from typhus fever in the box car, Lawrence comes to a recognition of the essential irony of "organized destruction." Larger forces generating pain and disintegration render his activities not only unnecessary, but also despicable. The speaker describes a futile gesture in which he attempts to arrange the dead in aesthetic rows; this, of course, emphasizes the superficiality of a clear-cut ideal in the face of a complex reality. From an abstract and impersonal view of the enemy, Lawrence comes to identify with the Turks, "want[ing] nothing more than to lie down with them." No longer able to endure the depressing banality of blowing up Turkish trains, a mystical impulse takes away his self-confidence. The impersonal yet sensuous image of raspberries cold with rain, recalling an English garden, provides an objective correlative for his projected mystical ideal as removed from the messy business of war. As a possible variant on the pomegranate image for unity in diversity, the image becomes particularly apt.[12] Just as Lawrence will not support an ideal unity which would amount to a destructive synthesis of the Arab states in "The Peace Conference," he expresses a mature understanding for the necessity of diversity and a dialectic in human experience.

Comparable to epiphanic "Nitrogycerine Tulips," the incident in "Deraa" in which Lawrence suffers a homosexual raping by the Turkish army provides another turning point in his psychological and spiritual development (p.46). Again, the transcendence of insight involves a process of dialectic whereby idealism is transformed through disillusionment to a more realistic understanding. Lawrence emerges from the ignominy "singing" though "bleeding and broken," his spectators jeering in the background. In a marvellous choreographical evocation, the offending Turks "lean on the horizon, insolent and wise." As the horizon becomes associated with delimitation, the implication becomes that the Turks have achieved a metamorphosis of Lawrence for which they, the victors, love their victim—even as the creator 'inflicting' form on his creation becomes attached to it.[13]

The sword icon epitomises the paradoxical nature of a dialectic process. Although it represents justice, a need for the sword of justice in itself implies an unjust and fallen world. Generally the sword carries positive connotations, however, which confirm a necessary dialectic. Not only is justice desirable, but so is injustice for a definition of its opposite. We are first introduced to Feisal, who, in his judicial authority, becomes a human counterpart for God. Significantly, Feisal's name may be translated as "sword", and thus he provides an extension of the symbol in his secular capacity as administrator of justice. Parallel to God's sporadic munificence, Feisal's handing out of rewards in the form of true and counterfeit money would seem to preclude a meaningful pattern. Just as the sword functions ambivalently towards justice or injustice, and yet maintains positive implications, however, so does Feisal retain his image as a dynamic figure of justice in Lawrence's eyes.[14] Thus, Feisal comes to represent the principle of a necessary dialectic (p.31).

We encounter an iconic tableau of the sword in the garden, first in "Damascus" and then in "Departures". (pp.55,70) In both cases, the suggestion enters that a day of Judgement has caught up with the Edenic scene. Paradoxically, the sword as an instrument of war, however, implies the creation of a new order as well as the end of the world. A confusion of ends and beginnings in this way enters "Damascus," in which Lawrence mistakes for a new beginning the blowing up of surplus

[13]The horizon becomes associated with verbal and material delimitation in "The Mirage" and "A Farewell to Carcemish," respectively.

[14]Desmond Stewart describes Lawrence's portrayal of Feisal in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* as "reverent (and lifeless) as the pious Aeneas of Virgil," p.236.

munitions following the war. Similarly, an allegorical function becomes apparent in "Departures" while the sword behind the palm tree denoting victory cuts through a mystically-conceived sky ("silk with locusts") over-extending its purpose towards apocalypse, and thus completing the process from evolution to involution.