

On *The Plumed Serpent* and *The Lost Girl* : A Study of the Process of Assimilation into Different Cultures in Heroines Kate and Alvina*

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[Summary] Seemingly, there is no similarity between *The Plumed Serpent* and *The Lost Girl* in the plot. However, if the two heroines Kate in Mexico and Alvina in Italy are compared, a lot of similarities can be found in their characters, behaviors and sense of values. By losing their identity as Irish woman in Mexico or English woman in Italy, they find the new sense of life. Lawrence might have wanted to tell that if you take a risk with courage without fear of failure, you would gain more ripeness, richness, happiness and fulfillment of life as a pioneering woman in the early twentieth century. He also might have tried to say that if you try to assimilate into a different culture, you could gain a mental transformation into a new world in your life. Kate and Alvina try to overcome the cultural difference, and experience a process of mental transformation to become a new woman. However, Lawrence himself could never accomplish perfect assimilation into each country despite traveling in many countries. *The Plumed Serpent* and *The Lost Girl* express his unfulfilled yearning in his real life.

[Key Words] new woman, mental transformation, assimilation into different culture, risk and courage

Introduction

After D.H. Lawrence eloped with Frieda to Germany in 1912, he kept traveling in different countries for many years, seeking a new point of view in each country. He vacillated between loving and hating the new countries. At first, he felt enthusiasm and excitement in a new country. However, after a while, he felt negative emotions. And then, he wanted to visit other countries, one after another. In Mexico, where he stayed for about six months from late 1924 to early 1925, he wrote *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) on the basis on his real experience. It

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is clear that Mexico stimulates Lawrence to write novels powerfully in every way. Take, for example, heroine Kate, who is like Lawrence, in *The Plumed Serpent*. At first she feels she must stick to her European race and family background, but she gradually feels sympathy for Mexicans and Mexican culture through interacting with the Mexicans and the Mexican culture. Her feeling wavers between repulsion and captivation in the new culture. This is a process of assimilation, that is, Kate undergoes a process of cultural assimilation and mental transformation as well.

On the other hand, Lawrence settled down for more than a year from late 1919 in Italy. In those Italian days he wrote *The Lost Girl* (1920), which won for him his first literary prize. Though he was rewarded for his good work, “some readers thought less highly of *The Lost Girl*” (Sagar 143). However it is obvious that he was widely recognized by critics as a British novelist for his prize-winning work. It is certain that Alvina’s way of life in the novel would affect middle-class women and middle-class society.

In Italy, like in Mexico, Lawrence vacillated between loving and hating the new country. In one letter he writes: “To look down the Salernian Gulf, southeast, on a blue day, and see the dim, sheer rocky coast, the clear rock mountains, is so beautiful, so like Ulysses [...]” (*Letters* III 462). Yet in another letter he says: “I am very sick of Capri [...]. I shall have to risk expense and everything, and clear out: to Sicily, I think” (*Letters* III 469). It is supposed that Lawrence reflects his mental pilgrimage in *The Lost Girl*. Heroine Alvina experiences the adaptation to the lower society of Italy. For Alvina, the process of adaptation means to assimilate to the foreign culture. It is a kind of mental pilgrimage for Alvina to throw everything away and to assimilate into the hometown of Italian Ciccio.

Concerning the past criticism of *The Plumed Serpent*, Kimberly Van Hoosier-Carey points out: “Critical discussion of *The Plumed Serpent* too often confines itself to the discussion of Lawrence’s ‘male leadership’ theme” (Van Hoosier-Carey 104). Indeed, it is well-known that *The Plumed Serpent* is a political leadership and religious novel. Stephen Rowley comments:

The Plumed Serpent is a novel which has posed many Lawrence scholars a problem because of its focus upon the cult of the leader, which smacks of fascism; its propensity for often sickening violence; and its tendency to see the Mexican peasant as an expendable non-entity whose only purpose is to bow down to the greater forces at work in the Lawrentian universe. (Rowley 225)

It is obvious that *The Plumed Serpent* contains leadership and religious problems as these scholars indicate.

On the other hand, on *The Lost Girl*, Judith Ruderman, referring to Graham Hough, who condemns the novel, indicates:

Graham Hough [...] condemns *The Lost Girl* as “the dullest and least characteristic Lawrence [...] without any of the passionate psychological preoccupations that had lifted Lawrence’s earlier books out of their setting.” Although Hough’s view may be extreme, the novel today is little known by anyone other than a Lawrence scholar and is certainly not accorded major status by the critics. (Ruderman 37)

Seemingly, there is no similarity between *The Plumed Serpent* and *The Lost Girl* in the plot. However, if the life history of the two heroines Kate and Alvina is considered, a lot of similarities can be found in their characters, actions and philosophies. They throw away their middle-class status and choose their own new life voluntarily. They are depicted vividly as women who create their own future by themselves.

Kate was not satisfied with the mediocre life in her own country Ireland. In the novel, Lawrence gives Kate an important role to explore Mexico, Mexicans and primitive culture through her marriage with Cipriano. Rebecca Carpenter says “Lawrence trenchantly explores the racial and imperialist assumptions that even liberal Europeans tend to replicate and the tension between first-world feminism and Mexican woman hood” (Carpenter 119).

On the other hand, Alvina works as a maternity nurse though it was not a suitable occupation for the daughter of a middle-class family at the time. Like Kate, at the end of the story, Alvina decides to marry an Italian strolling player and throw away her middle-class status and her home country England. Alvina and Kate try to experience the process of assimilation to the different culture by living in the foreign countries. It is certain that they experienced a mental transformation through receiving the different culture.

In this thesis, we will discuss the process of Kate’s and Alvina’s mental transformation and adaptation to the different culture, and then we will analyze the way how they transform themselves into a new woman, not in England but a foreign country. Kate and Alvina always seek freedom and dislike unconsciously to follow the mediocre role and custom of their society. At the time when *The Lost Girl* and *The Plumed Serpent* were written, women’s liberation movement had occurred in England, and it might be related with Kate’s and Alvina’s actions and thoughts. Moreover, we will also consider why Lawrence gave Kate and Alvina the role to change themselves. At the same time, by considering Kate’s and Alvina’s roles in the novels, we will also find out what Lawrence was seeking for in his real life.

Chapter I Search for a New Sense of Values

1. Kate Leslie's Search for Mexico in *The Plumed Serpent*

Kate Leslie, the heroine in *The Plumed Serpent*, divorced herself from her first husband. She then gets remarried to Joachim, who was the leader of the independence movement in Ireland, passed away and left Kate a childless widow, though she had two children with her first husband. As Kate suffers from her beloved husband's death, she feels remorse as well as repulsion for the people that took his life, the Irish and the English. Therefore, she decides to visit Mexico to seek a new outlook on her life and get out of European society. Lawrence describes Kate: "She was never *in* any society: too Irish, too wise" (*The Plumed Serpent* [hereafter *PS*] 42) [italics Lawrence's]. It is evident that Kate has an extraordinary character; she is brave, bold, and intelligent. She carries herself with an intellectual curiosity and maybe is too wise. She is courageous enough to go to a foreign country and find her own identity as well as a new change in her life.

When Kate arrives in Mexico, she feels disgust for the dirty and rotting atmosphere of its towns. She also finds that Mexicans are dirty, immoral, and indifferent to the chaos and everything else around them. Though she has a sickening view on Mexico along with the native people living there, she gradually feels sympathy with them. Kate meets two native men named Ramón and Cipriano. For European Kate, they are somewhat peculiar native Mexicans who have rather a little barbarous, strange, and dark characteristic. Cipriano makes Kate feel like getting away from him and Mexico. By meeting him, she feels that "Mexico lay in her destiny almost as a doom. Something so heavy, so oppressive, like the folds of some huge serpent that seemed as if it could hardly raise itself" (*PS* 24). On the other hand, she feels not only a favorable impression but also a strong impression of Ramón: "But it was evident that Don Ramón, by far the most impressive person present, liked her" (*PS* 41). It means that she will be affected by him in her future life. Anyway, her extraordinary life starts in Mexico by meeting Cipriano and Ramón.

Kate now feels a curiosity and fascination for the new environment of Mexico. At the same time, she knows the existence of the pantheon of ancient Mexico such as "Quetzalcoatl", and begins to take a mysterious interest in the deity. Lawrence describes the process in which Kate is enchanted by the existence of ancient Mexico's gods. She gradually feels a strong curiosity for the mysterious Mexican culture and old religion such as the Aztec culture. Lawrence describes Kate's changing feelings: "And for the first time Kate felt she had met the mystery of the natives, the strange and mysterious gentleness [...]" (*PS* 93); or "The natives had a certain mystery and beauty, to her" (*PS* 101). Finally Kate

thinks: “I am very glad to be here. It is so much better than love: the love I knew with Joachim” (*PS* 107). She finds something that is more extraordinary than love in Mexico. As Kate begins to share more and more time with the natives, she begins to feel more sympathetic toward them. Kate’s experiences of having conversations and sharing meals with them have caused Kate to see a different side of the people. Now, as Kate’s feeling toward Mexico and Mexicans has largely changed from disgust and revulsion to a mystifying charm, she slowly starts to feel a change in her life. Lawrence describes Kate’s change in her mind: “She felt a great change was being worked in her, and if it worked too violently, she would die” (*PS* 414).

Kate is fascinated with Mexicans and Mexican culture in which the mysterious charms are still alive from the earliest times. At the same time, she becomes aware that Cipriano is an important person from now in her future in Mexico. She finds a new kind of affection to Mexican Cipriano. She has never experienced such affection to a mysterious non-European in her past life in Ireland. Lawrence describes Kate’s big change of mind: “Now she was confronted by the other great assertion: The blood is one blood.—It meant a strange, marginless death of her individual self” (*PS* 417). From now on, she goes further into Mexican culture. It means that not only does she gradually step into the Quetzalcoatl movement but also escape from her country Ireland.

2. Alvina’s Escape from Ordinary Life in *The Lost Girl*

In *The Lost Girl*, Alvina Houghton, who is the heroine, is a daughter of the middle class. At the age of twenty-three, she refuses the proposal of marriage from an Australian doctor. Her family and her governesses are opposed to the marriage because they cannot expect their beloved daughter leaving their country. Alvina gives up the marriage in this difficult situation in spite of having feelings of love for him. From now on, she is never interested in the young men of Woodhouse. In a month’s time, she becomes a dissatisfied woman. She declares: “I can’t stay here all my life’ [...] ‘I know I can’t. I can’t bear it. I simply can’t bear it, and there’s an end of it. I can’t, I tell you. I can’t bear it. I’m buried alive—simply buried alive” (*The Lost Girl* 28) [hereafter *LG*]. It is too boring for an extraordinary character Alvina to live as an ordinary middle-class daughter. And then, she impulsively decides to become a maternity nurse and tries to live by supporting herself since Alvina is a strong-minded character. As a result of that, for a while, she works as a maternity nurse vividly though it was not a suitable occupation for the daughter of a middle class family at that time. She rather enjoys lively working as a maternity nurse despite the big difference between her middle-class and working-class society. Alvina was transformed into another woman, a rather fat, warm-colored, strapping and strong-

looking young lady. She changes with astonishing speed mentally and physically by working as a maternity nurse. After taking the qualification of maternity nurse, she returns to Woodhouse to make her fortune, but her plan fails. There were few women who asked her to help to be delivered of a baby in Woodhouse, because she was a daughter of the middle class. In consequence, Alvina could do nothing but to teach piano lessons again to her pupils.

Lawrence describes the hopeless Alvina: "There was no hope for Alvina in the ordinary. If help came, it would have to come from the extraordinary" (LG 84). Lawrence makes a reference to her extraordinary fate. She cannot stand the maintenance of her status quo. Here I would like to point out the reason: in order to estrange from her family and Woodhouse, the extraordinary role is to be granted to Alvina by Lawrence. She can escape from her stifling society and family: her escape is not only from stifling society but also from England. In order to have Alvina escape from England, Lawrence intentionally writes about her falling in love with Italian Ciccio. He is an Italian strolling player and Alvina decides to throw away her middle class status and her home country to marry Ciccio. Her determination causes her to lose her status and social position in England.

Ciccio has not only savage atmosphere as a peculiar southern Italian but also primitive mysteriousness. For English woman Alvina, his southern peculiar aura is mysterious and strange. Lawrence describes his southern peculiar aura with such phrases as "dark shadow", "a certain dark" or "the lovely, rich darkness of his southern nature" (LG 289, 291). In a sense, the word "dark" suggests primitive aura. Alvina was never impressed with such a dark aura from the young men of Woodhouse. Alvina is a free and uninhibited, bold and extraordinary woman at the time despite her class, just like Kate in *The Plumed Serpent*. Alvina cannot live just an ordinary life because of her bold and extraordinary character. Also, she cannot be satisfied with an ordinary man except an extraordinary mysterious man. Therefore, Lawrence writes the consequence concerning the extraordinary woman's extraordinary fate and future. From now on, Alvina goes into a primitive life in Italy with Ciccio.

Lawrence describes Alvina's nostalgic feeling towards England which she had left: "England, like a long, ash-grey coffin slowly submerging, [...] long and ash-grey and dead, with streaks of snow like cerements. That was England!" (LG 294). The passage shows not only her pain of parting from her beloved England but also her pleasure of setting out on an inner journey of her mental transformation. Lawrence describes England "like a long, ash-grey coffin". For Alvina, now England is just like a dead substance. The attachment to her England sank under the sea. She never regrets that she left England. She is rather excited to escape from oppressive England, formal middle-class, stifling

Woodhouse or her family. She is entirely fascinated by primitive atmosphere of Italy. She realizes that she could escape from the smallish perfection of England. And now she knows that she is in the grander imperfection of a great continent. From now on, her journey of search starts in Ciccio's primitive country.

As we have seen, there are lots of similarities between Kate's and Alvina's characters in *The Plumed Serpent* and *The Lost Girl*. They have a power and courage to change their life to extraordinary one. They are bold, brave, extraordinary, self-reliant, strong-willed, and non-conservative. They cannot stand the maintenance of their status quo.

Like Kate and Alvina, Lawrence himself did not want to stay in his own country to keep his life safely. He left his country England and made a mental pilgrimage by traveling all over the world to seek a new sense of values. It could be said that Kate or Alvina might be considered Lawrence himself; he was never satisfied to lead a mediocre life vaguely in England.

Chapter II Fallen Women

1. Alvina's Loss of Herself

It is clear that Alvina is described as a lost woman. On the meaning of the word 'lost' of the title of *The Lost Girl*, there is a consensus of opinions among lots of researchers. The majority of critics agree with the idea that Alvina is a lost girl: Alvina moves out of her middle-class society and England to a lower social status, that is, the savage countryside of Italy with her beloved Italian Ciccio. She gradually loses her middle-class status, beloved family, her father's own house, home town Eastwood, and England.

Alvina's strong nature showed up her abrupt determination to become a maternity nurse. She lost her pure and high mind as a middle-class daughter: as Sheila Lahiri Choudhury points out, "Undoubtedly Alvina comes down the Midland social ladder, first by training to become a maternity nurse in the small town of Woodhouse" (Choudhury 162). As Choudhury indicates, Alvina lost her high-mindedness by working as a maternity nurse at a dreadful hospital. She lost not only her high-mindedness but also the respectability of middle-class.

Lawrence ironically depicts Alvina's adverse circumstances: "But to a woman, failure is another matter. For her it means failure to live, failure to establish her own life on the face of the earth. And this is humiliating, the ultimate humiliation" (LG 84). It means that she does not have bright future any more in her thirties. Alvina meets Ciccio when she is thirty, at the time; she is already an old maid. She works as a piano player at the movie theater that her father manages. Miss Pinnegar, the manageress of the work-girls at the theater, tells Alvina about a piano player's work: "[...] you're going to play the piano? It's a disgrace!

It's a disgrace!" (LG 100). For a middle-class daughter, working is a dreadfully disgraceful behavior except working as a governess. On the other hand, despite Miss Pinnergar's sorrow for Alvina, she rather enjoys working as a piano player.

When Alvina decides to marry Ciccio, she does not know anything about Ciccio, not even his age and his family. Therefore, it is natural that Madame Rochard worries about the relationship between Alvina and Ciccio, because of their different social class and racial matter. She gives Alvina the following advice:

But I know something of these Italian men, who are labourers in every country, just labourers and under-men always, always down, down, down [...] when they have a chance to come up [...] they are very conceited, and they take their chance. He will want to rise, by you, and you will go down, with him. (LG 180)

Madame Rochard's advice shows that she has racial prejudice to Ciccio and Italians as well as class prejudice. In fact, Alvina thinks about their relationship: "Was it atavism, this sinking into extinction under the spell of Ciccio? [...] Perhaps it was. But it was also heavy and sweet and rich. Somewhere, she was content" (LG 288). For English woman Alvina, Ciccio's atavistic atmosphere is an unknown world with which she is even content. By entering his atavistic world, she loses her English spirit, respectability and ordinary life.

2. Alvina's Self-Discovery

At the beginning of the story, when Alvina works at a hospital as a maternity nurse, she already makes a new self-discovery. Once she enters a hospital as a maternity nurse, she feels even confidence in spite of being in its working-class society. She gets along well with her hospital companions: "Her companions were almost without exception vulgar and coarse—yet never had she got on so well with women of her own age—or older than herself" (LG 32). She acquires the special skill to get along with her companions and to work there in only two weeks. Her appearances also change dramatically for the better: "When she had put on flesh and become pink and bouncing she was just their sort: just their very ticket. Her voice had the right twang, her eyes the right roll, her haunches the right swing" (LG 33). Not only did she become mentally stronger but she also became physically healthier than when she stayed in Woodhouse as a middle-class daughter.

Take another example of Alvina's mental transformation. At the end of the novel, Alvina is overwhelmed by the atavistic atmosphere of Ciccio's home town, the mountainous countryside of Italy. Even in those atavistic surroundings, Alvina feels a sense of the natural beauty of the wild place: "How unspeakably

lovely it was, no one could ever tell, the grand, pagan twilight of the valleys, savage, cold, with a sense of ancient gods who knew the right for human sacrifice. It stole away the soul of Alvina” (LG 315). Just as she adjusted herself to the working place of hospital, she adapts to the new surrounding of Italy though it is such an atavistic world. She has a natural ability to adapt to a new environment. She undergoes a process of mental transformation into the atavistic world. Lawrence describes her mental transformation: “And a wild, terrible happiness would take hold of her, beyond despair, but very like despair. [...] She had gone beyond the world into the pre-world, she had reopened on the old eternity” (LG 316).

She has no hesitation any longer about living with Ciccio. It does not matter for her where they would live, because she loves him so much. We can see her mental transformation and mental maturity in conversation with Ciccio in the Italian mountainous countryside when he is soon to be conscripted:

‘If you make up your mind to come back, you will come back. We have our fate in our hands,’ [...]

‘I know it.—If you don’t come back it will be because you don’t want to—no other reason. It won’t be because you can’t. It will be because you don’t want to.’ (LG 338-39)

Alvina puts some ideas into Ciccio who is discouraged, although she is also concerned about his conscription. She is emotionally disturbed about that. Yet, at the same time, she grows up to be a more strong-minded woman. She encourages him: “‘You’ll come back to me,’ she whispered, in an ecstasy of pain and relief. It was not her affair, where they should go, so long as he really returned to her” (LG 339). Alvina makes a new self-discovery and a self-fulfillment. By deciding to continue living even alone in the Italian countryside after Ciccio’s leaving, she gains much stronger mind as well. Alvina gains mental maturity as Ciccio’s wife through her serious experiences. Surprisingly enough, she has become a mature woman, though she lives in the atavistic countryside of Italy, which is an unfamiliar place for her. She acquires an ability to encourage and support her husband.

Also, Alvina makes a good human relationship between husband and wife beyond nationality and social class. Choudhury indicates: “Each encounter leaves her with greater social degradation, yet Alvina appears to have gained more strength and better human understanding, which is the purpose of her life’s journey” (Choudhury 164). As Choudhury says, Alvina inevitably lost her English social status little by little through her extraordinary behaviors. But, ultimately, by losing it she became a much stronger woman with the spirit of

independence.

3. Kate's Mental Loss

Kate experienced a physical, mental and moral decline, especially when she lost her beloved husband Joachim. She struggled to overcome the sorrow for the death of her husband, but she could not succeed well, because she loved him so much. She spent an extraordinary and happy life with him in the first half of her life in Ireland. Therefore, after his death, she felt strong feelings of loneliness and loss. She really needed something to overcome her loneliness: "She knew she could not live quite alone. The vacuity crushed her. She needed a man there, to stop the gap, and to keep her balanced" (*PS* 251). So she came to Mexico to seek something to fill the vacuity. She is courageous enough to visit a new place, a foreign country by herself, only to find a new philosophy of life. As Kate seeks for a new outlook on life, it is a reasonable idea to move away from her home country to an unfamiliar place. Surprisingly enough, she chooses the marriage to a Mexican male, Cipriano. It means to throw away her superior culture, her class and her country, Ireland.

4. Kate's Self-Discovery in Mexico

Yet, Kate sticks to the basis of European sense of values until making a decision to marry Cipriano: she knows that she belongs to the ruling races. Lawrence describes Kate's European sense of values as follows: "Kate was of a proud old family. She had been brought up with the English, Germanic idea of the *intrinsic* superiority of the hereditary aristocrat" (*PS* 416) [italics Lawrence's]. Kate is proud of her superior blood and her aristocratic family. Of course, she knows that her blood is of so much superior race to Mexicans. Kate is not completely able to throw away her European sense.

However, after staying in Mexico and especially after marrying Cipriano, she experiences the Mexican sense of values little by little. From now on, she embarks on a journey of self-discovery. Lawrence describes Kate's change of life:

She had sunk to a final rest, within a great, opened-out cosmos. The universe had opened out to her new and vast, and she had sunk to the deep bed of pure rest. She had become almost like Teresa in sureness. Yet the process of change within her blood was terrible to her. (*PS* 421)

Kate feels absolutely at rest for the first time in her life. She never felt such a peace of mind even in Ireland, even with her beloved Joachim and family. However, now she feels at rest in the relationship with Cipriano as his wife. Her spirit changes rapidly: "For it was not her spirit alone which was changing, it

was her body, and the constitution of her very blood. She could feel it, the terrible katabolism and metabolism in her blood, changing her even as a creature, changing her to another creature" (PS 421). She feels that she has become almost like Ramón's wife Teresa. It means that Kate has become almost like a Mexican female. Once she despised Teresa as if she was a woman "as part of the harem" (PS 398). However, now Kate realizes that she is changing herself mentally and physically like Teresa. Clearly, now Kate respects Teresa as a Mexican woman: "Under that soft brown skin, and in that stooping female spine was a strange old power to call up the blood in a man, and glorify it [...] in some way, keep it for herself" (PS 401). Kate acquires the Mexican female's sense of values without her consciousness. It is a process of assimilating to Mexican culture, although, for European Kate, it is a process of assimilating to primitive culture. Living in a foreign country is to acculturate into the country and culture, and through the process of adjustment, maybe she goes through a process of "going native". At the end of the novel, by marrying Cipriano, Kate starts to try to transform herself into Mexican culture. Lawrence describes the relationship with Kate and Cipriano:

He was a stranger to her, she to him. He accepted the fact absolutely, as if nothing else were possible. She, sometimes, felt it strange. She had so craved for intimacy, *insisted* on intimacy. [...] She lived in his aura, and he, she knew, lived in hers [...] no personal or spiritual intimacy whatever. A mindless communion of the blood. (PS 423) [italics Lawrence's]

"A mindless communion of the blood" is a new type of communication in her life, almost of Mexican style. She finds her new sense of values; it is not acquired by the European sense of values. She is content with the primitive type of communication. For the first time in her life, she enjoys the primitive and Mexican style of communication with Cipriano. By sacrificing her European spirit and sense of values, she gains a new self-discovery.

As we have seen, in both Kate's and Alvina's cases, we can find that by losing European society, class, moral, spirit and sense of values, they find the new sense of life with self-confidence in their life. They discover the primitive sort of affection as well, with their foreign husbands. In order to seek for a new sense of values through traveling to foreign countries, Lawrence also threw away his home country, England. As Gary Wiener says: "[...] the sacrifice of so little is well worth the gain of so much" (Wiener 429). Lawrence also gained so much fame by sacrificing his home country, England. It can be said that he wrote novels so as to gain fame, escaping from working-class.

Chapter III Women in the Victorian Age

1. Satire to Victorian Society

Concerning the occupation of middle-class women, Yoshitsugu Uchida points out: “The women of middle-class were able to save their respectability by becoming a governess” (Uchida 13) [translation mine]. As Uchida says, the only work of the unmarried women who belong to the middle-class was to become a governess. An old maid, Miss Frost appears as Alvina’s governess in *The Lost Girl*. To become a governess was an intellectual occupation, and she takes an important role in education of middle-class or upper-class children. However, a governess’s social position was in a pitiful situation. At the beginning of *The Lost Girl*, Miss Frost is already at the age of fifty, and she could not marry. She could not escape her pitiful social position as well. Lawrence describes Miss Frost with apparent sarcasm as a typical old maid in the Victorian society (the setting of the story is in “the early eighties” [LG 2]). Victorian families were generally large because of high birth rates. Thus, old-maids in large families had to go out of their house as a governess. “[...] Motherhood was expected of a married woman and the childless single woman was a figure to be pitied” (Abrams, “Ideals of Womanhood in Victorian Britain”, par. 35). Lawrence depicts Miss Frost exactly as a figure to be pitied or “a failure” in the Victorian society as the following article says:

Marriage signified a woman’s maturity and respectability, but motherhood was confirmation that she had entered the world of womanly virtue and female fulfillment. For a woman not to become a mother meant she was liable to be labeled inadequate, a failure or in some way abnormal. (Abrams, “Ideals of Womanhood in Victorian Britain”, par. 35)

Marriage was expected of a middle-class women and the childless single woman was a figure pitied in the Victorian society. Therefore, Miss Frost had to work as a governess in her life; she did not have another choice. She failed to gain her maturity in her life. Moreover, by missing her marriage she lost her respectability as a married woman of middle-class in the Victorian society. It turns out that Miss Frost is also one of the lost girls in the Victorian society.

As a middle-class daughter, Alvina almost joined the ranks of old maids and she willy-nilly starts to teach some pupils as a piano teacher, but she is not a good teacher. She continues teaching reluctantly though she is not interested in the work. However, it is a suitable job for the middle-class daughter. In other words, it is only one of the few occupations by which Alvina can keep her position. Or a suitable marriage is the most ideal choice for Alvina. For the middle-

class daughter, marriage was the most important thing in their life. However, Alvina cannot choose an ordinary life and a suitable marriage as a daughter of the middle class, because she is not an ordinary character. Therefore, Alvina voluntarily chooses a severe world impulsively. Alvina's father raged when she chose a maternity nurse's work: "I can't understand that any young girl of any—any upbringing, any upbringing whatever, should want to choose such a—such an—occupation. I can't understand it" (*LG* 30). To Alvina's father's eyes, the maternity nurse's work does not suit her and his class. Alvina's behavior and decision to become a midwife deviates from the respectability of the Victorian society. However, Alvina carries out her will to become a maternity nurse though she is opposed by her father and beloved governess.

By writing this novel, published in 1920, Lawrence severely criticizes people of the upper class or middle class and the values of Western society of the early twentieth century. That is, Lawrence ironically suggests that middle-class daughters should not just keep their life vaguely. Sagar also says: "Alvina's throwing overboard of everything which had bound her to a false reality is for Lawrence a paradigm of the function of any truly creative imagination" (Sagar 74). Lawrence tries to describe the modern woman's life with future vision to see a new world. On Alvina's decision to take a job, Carol Dix comments that "Alvina finds out the hard way. Alvina's spirit leads her to such dissatisfaction with her life in Manchester House, under the rule of her eccentric father and the two old maids who run the domestic side that she knows she cannot stay there all her life" (Dix 44). For Alvina, an ordinary and well-off life is not so important. The most important thing for her is to challenge her life to change better for her own values, not to follow other people's values. If she could escape from her stifling family and middle-class society, she would not care about any occupations. Her behavior deviates from the middle-class society of the Victorian age. She is always seeking for something new in her life without considering others' thoughts. Lawrence suggests his main point that Alvina's questing soul is a great characteristic compared to other ordinary Victorian women. He observes with ironical view the upper-class or middle-class women who stick to their social position.

On the other hand, Kate in *The Plumed Serpent* asks herself repeatedly whether she should accept Cipriano's proposal or not, or whether it is meaningful for her or not. It is so hard for her to decide: "it meant a submission she had never made. It meant the death of her individual self. It meant abandoning so much, ever her own very foundations" (*PS* 390). She is an Irish, and she is proud of her native country at the bottom of her heart. She belongs too much to Europe, so she cannot decide so quickly. In the Victorian age:

Women played a central role in all this [achieving moral respectability and

domesticity], and the ideal of femininity was encapsulated in the idea of a ‘woman’s mission’, which was that of playing a model mother, wife and daughter [...], [or the idea of] the ‘angel in the house’, carrying out her mission as wife, mother and daughter. (Nead, “Women and Urban Life in Victorian Britain”, pars. 4 and 14)

In the British society where the above belief was still held, Kate cannot deviate from the middle-class sense of values. Once she was an ideal mother for her two children who lived in Ireland. She spent a well-off and happy life with her husband and children. But after the death of her husband, she visited Mexico alone. She was not able to endure such an ordinary life in Ireland, because she is not an ordinary woman. She is rather an extraordinary woman, because like Alvina, Kate plays an important role to express Lawrence’s view on middle-class women. As we can see, an ordinary woman of the middle-class would never do such an action. Like Alvina’s, Kate’s behavior deviates more or less from the middle-class society.

At the end of the novel, she finally determines to accept Cipriano as her husband because she does not like to be one of “her women ‘friends’” who “turn into real grimalkins”:

One after the other, her women ‘friends’, the powerful love-women, at the age of forty, forty-five, fifty, they lost all their charm and allure, and turned into real grimalkins, grayish, avid, and horrifying, prowling around looking for prey that became scarcer and scarcer. As human beings they went to pieces. And they remained these grey-ribbed grimalkins, dressed in elegant clothes, the grimalkin howl even passing into their smart chatter. (*PS* 438)

This is considered to be Lawrence’s sardonic remark on these “grey-ribbed grimalkins dressed in elegant clothes”, and we can see that Lawrence coldly looks at the middle-class women who are dressed exaggeratedly.

Kate finds even an advantage for her life in getting married and submitting to Cipriano. For her, it is so much better an idea to live as a wife than to live alone in her old age. If she returns to her home country Ireland, she can only imagine a miserable old single woman’s life. Lawrence satirizes middle-aged women of middle-class strongly and ironically:

To sit in a London drawing-room, and add another to all the grimalkins? To let the peculiar grimalkin-grimace come on her face, the most weird grimalkin-twang come into her voice? Horror! Of all the horrors, perhaps the grimalkin women, her contemporaries, were the most repellent to her.

Even the horrid old tom-cat men of the civilized roof gutters, did not fill her with such sickly dread. (PS 439)

We can find in the passages Lawrence's severe satire to upper-class or middle-class women in the early twentieth century. It represents his criticism of the class society.

2. The Women's Liberation Movement

The feminist movement also known as the Women's Movement or Women's Liberation Movement is a series of campaigns for women's right. The movement has caused many changes in Western society. Women were oppressed in male-centered society. Yoko Inoue says:

During the First World War, women gained the jobs which were once men-dominated high wage jobs. However, after the end of the First World War, women lost the jobs they had gained during the First World War [...], and many women returned to blue collar jobs which were traditionally female occupations. Women made strides in some fields such as nursing. (Inoue 56-61) [translation mine]

Both of the novels, *The Plumed Serpent* and *The Lost Girl*, were written in the 1920s. Kate and Alvina live in a big changing society which becomes better and better for women. Also, industrialization, urbanization, and the Boers War occurred when they were young. In the Victorian era, people believed that women's place was in the home and women should not influence laws beyond home. The idea of femininity in the Victorian era could not be tolerated for long. The women's suffrage movement aimed for voting right for women. Thanks to the movement, all British women were given the right to vote on the same conditions as men in 1928.

Lawrence also lived in the society that changed greatly. As Carol Dix points out:

Demonstrations by suffragettes were very common in the London of those years and so, while Lawrence lived in Croydon as a teacher, he could not help but be exposed to this intellectual furor. [...] It is obvious from the novels that he understood how young women of his acquaintance were affected by suffragettism. (Dix 2)

He was greatly influenced by the big social changes. As a result of that, we often find the social backgrounds in his novels.

Also, Lawrence was probably influenced by activity of Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) was a pioneer of modern nursing. Most Victorian women did not attend universities or pursue professional careers. However, Florence's father believed women should get an education. In the Victorian age, "many of first feminists were active in the philanthropic movement, and it was from this feminine public sphere that demands for improvements in the position of women began to be made" (Abrams, "Ideal of Womanhood in Victorian Britain", par. 48). In addition to Florence Nightingale's father's effort and progressive character, her innate tendency of thoughtfulness and philanthropic sense make her always go ahead of the era. Saburo Kuramochi discusses Alvina as a maternity nurse by referring to Florence Nightingale:

Thanks to Florence Nightingale, an image of nurse was raised in the social position [...]. Therefore it is not so surprising that Alvina became a maternity nurse. However it is clear that Alvina lost her respectability as a middle-class woman. She chose the way of life that does not conform to respectability. (Kuramochi 85) [translation mine]

As Kuramochi says, Alvina's way of life deviates from middle-class moral. As we have seen, Florence Nightingale was also an upper-class woman. She was struggling with the expectations of an upper-class marriage from her family. However she chose the way of life that does not conform to her class. Thanks to her efforts, she made the great achievement. She is one of the new women.

Maybe, Lawrence got a hint to write *The Lost Girl* from Florence Nightingale's way of life. Alvina is a middle-class woman, who wants to be a maternity nurse to escape from stifling middle-class society and find a new sense of values; she never sticks to respectability of middle-class. Perhaps Lawrence wanted to describe a heroine like Florence Nightingale, who is not a conservative and ordinary woman. That is, she is "a new woman", and "the new woman" was a popular phrase in the Victorian era. By throwing away the respectability of middle-class woman, she became one of the new women. Lawrence gives Alvina an important role as a new woman to represent his thoughts about new women.

Though Kuramochi never refers to another new woman, Mary Seacole (1805-1881), she deserves mentioning here too. She was also a pioneering nurse of the Crimean War. She became known as "Mother Seacole". Her nursing activities and reputation equaled that of Florence Nightingale. However her activities were "obscured from view by the metaphorical glare of Florence Nightingale's candle" (Salih xv). Recently, Seacole's achievements in Crimea have been restored appropriately. In fact, "In Britain it was only in 1973 that Jamaican nurses revived Seacole's memory with the restoration of her grave [...]" (Salih xli). It is well

known that she overcame a prejudice as a woman of mixed race, because her father was a Scottish soldier and her mother was a Jamaican. Seacole was born in Jamaica and she became a mixed-race British nurse. In spite of mixed-race prejudice, she devoted herself to nursing: “Still, in spite of the ideological obstacles she encountered, Seacole did eventually succeed in her attempts to become ‘a Crimean heroine’ [...]” (Salih xxix) [italics Salih’s]. As a result of her unceasing effort, perseverance and courage in the face of prejudice in her lifetime, she became one of the pioneers in nursing, like Florence Nightingale. It is certain that she became a new woman in the Victorian society. When we consider about pioneering women of modern nursing, we should remember not only the existence of Florence Nightingale but also Mary Seacole.

In *The Plumed Serpent*, on the other hand, Kate divorces herself from her first husband. She has two children with her first husband. Yumiko Hirono says: “In the Victorian era, the motherhood was woman’s highest achievement [...]. Also, an ideal wife and daughter were seen as an angel of home. They were always expected to behave in an amiable way to their family” (Hirono 165) [translation mine]. Broadly speaking, an ideal woman in the Victorian era should not pursuit her ideals in outside world, but should pursuit her family’s ideals. However, Kate’s actions do not accord with the ideal woman or mother image of the Victorian era. Kate rather begins to seek a more independent life. Her innate sensitivity and activity make her always go ahead of the times of a new era. She could not stand to limit her life only within her house or Ireland. Kate is one of the active middle-class-women in the early twentieth century Ireland. In other words, she is one of “the new women”, too. In order to become one of the new women she throws away the oppressive Victorian respectability.

As we have seen, Lawrence gives Kate and Alvina important roles in the novels to give an example to women of middle-class that live their mediocre life. If you take a risk with courage without fear of failure, you would gain more ripeness, richness, happiness and fulfillment of life as a new woman. Kate and Alvina are represented as a pioneering woman in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. They are depicted as free, uninhibited, brave, and unordinary women. They cannot be satisfied with the ordinary life as a middle-class woman. Lawrence might have wanted to tell all women of middle class or upper class that it is not significant to stay in their present state of life without any consideration of it. Keeping happiness in their comfortable marriage life might be important, but trying to find more happiness is more important even if there is a risk. Lawrence showed them that there were many ways to pursue happiness. He also might have wanted to give warnings to the women that wanted to spend a mediocre life.

Chapter IV Process of Assimilation into Different Culture

1. Kate's Case

Cipriano proposes to Kate: "Marry me, and help Ramón and me. We need a woman, Ramón says, to be with us. And you are the woman" (*PS* 235). Kate feels that Cipriano seems to propose to her, not only for Cipriano himself but also for Ramón. Yet, Cipriano seems to make use of her for their religious activity without pure affection to her. She wants to run away from Mexico and Mexicans to a white man's country to which she could escape freely. She could not feel pure affection to him, but she feels just an aversion. For Irish Kate, she cannot stand to marry a Mexican and to keep living in Mexico.

Kate, however, as Rebecca Carpenter says, is "less amused by this difference of values; judging their behavior according to her own standard, the best she can do is try to overcome her repulsion" (Carpenter 121). Kate tries to overcome her repulsion against Cipriano and Mexican culture. However, after a while, her emotion wavers in a negative way. When people are immersed in a new culture, "culture shock" is a typical response. In Kate's case, it is more apparent, because she is immersed in primitive culture of Mexico.

However, strangely enough, at the same time, she feels as if she was almost hypnotized by Cipriano's strange atmosphere. Lawrence describes her feelings like this: "She looked at him, almost hypnotized with amazement that he should have gone so far. And even now, she had not the power to make him retreat" (*PS* 236). She is also hypnotized by both Mexico's strange atmosphere and native Mexicans. Kate thinks over and over again of escaping to white men's lands from Mexico and Mexicans or staying there. Now she undergoes a process of cultural assimilation and mental transformation.

She has to decide to submit and assimilate to the primeval world of Mexico:

The mystery of the primeval world! [...] As he sat in silence, casting the old, twilit Pan-power over her, she felt herself submitting, succumbing. He was once more the old dominant male [...] she was swooned prone beneath, perfect in her proneness. [...] Ah! And what a mystery of prone submission, on her part, this huge erection would imply! Submission absolute, like the earth under the sky. Beneath an over-arching absolute [...]. (*PS* 310-11)

As the above passage says, "she felt herself submitting, succumbing". As for her submission to him, it also means her submission to Mexico and Mexican culture. As I have mentioned above, it also means a mental transformation to Cipriano's primeval world. For Irish Kate, it is so hard to accommodate herself to inferior culture.

Kate feels rather as if she were in unconsciousness. She does not know everything: “Everything felt numb” (PS 312). Lawrence describes her big changing feeling while she sits in front of Cipriano:

She could see how different his blood was from hers, dark, blackish, like the blood of lizards among hot black rocks. She could feel its changeless surge, holding up his light, bluely-black head as on a fountain. And she would feel her own pride dissolving, going. (PS 317)

While Cipriano’s black eyes look at Kate, she feels: “she was fainting, losing her consciousness for ever” (PS 319). “Kate was pale and all her will had left her. He was carrying her on his will” (PS 319). And she thinks: “What was going to unfold must unfold of itself” (PS 332). That is, she decides to give her answer to Cipriano’s proposal.

But, even in such a situation, she begins to think about whether to go back to England or stay in Mexico. Lawrence says that Kate is half-spellbound like this: “[...] as is so often the case with any spell, it did not bind her completely. She was spellbound, but not utterly acquiescent. In one corner of her soul was revulsion and a touch of nausea” (PS 387). Lawrence describes Kate’s resistance: “But for herself, ultimately, ultimately she belonged elsewhere” (PS 387). It is so hard for Kate to abandon so much: “It meant abandoning so much, even her own very foundations. [...] She had believed truly that every man and every woman alike was founded on the individual” (PS 390).

After all, people become overwhelmed when deprived of everything that was once familiar. She wavers between yearning feelings to England and affection to Cipriano. At the same time, she feels that a great change is being working in her mind. Lawrence describes the change: “if it worked too violently, she would die. It was the end of something, and the beginning of something [...]. The men, Ramón and Cipriano, caused the change, and Mexico” (PS 414). She feels she would die if the changes happen too rapidly, because she is more Irish than anything: “the almost deathly mysticism of the aboriginal Celtic or Iberian people lay at the bottom of her soul” (PS 415). Therefore, she feels again that she must go away from Mexico. However she realizes that she feels a certain “duality” in herself:

She was aware of a duality in herself, and she suffered from it. She could not definitely commit herself, either to the old way of life, or to the new. She reacted from both. The old was a prison, and she loathed it. But in the new way she was not her own mistress at all, and her egoistic will recoiled. (PS 429)

She wavers between the two opposites: whether she should live as a new woman in Mexico or go back to England. Lawrence says that if she goes back to England, “it is a turning back” (PS 429). Kate finally decides to stay with Cipriano in Mexico:

I'd better abandon some of my ego, and sink some of my individuality, rather than go like that. [...] I must have both, she said to herself. I must not recoil against Cipriano and Ramón, they make my blood blossom in my body [...]. Rather than become elderly and a bit grisly, I will make my submission; as far as I need, and no further. (PS 439)

On the one hand she wants to keep “her own ego”, but on the other hand, she thinks that Cipriano makes her blood blossom in her body, and she will make her “submission”. Therefore she says to herself: “I must have both”.

At the same time, she is fascinated with mysteriousness of Mexican culture lasting from the earliest times: “After all, there is another kind of vastness here, with the sound of drums, and the cry of Quetzalcoatl” (PS 440). Even the Quetzalcoatl movement stimulates her curiosity. Now, for Kate with strong inquiring mind, there are lots of cultural attractions as well as attractions of nature in Mexico. Though she hates the primitive atmosphere before, at the end of the novel she feels a strong affinity for Mexican nature: “And always the day seemed to be pausing and unfolding again to the greater mystery. The universe seemed to have opened vast and soft delicate with life” (PS 426). The beauty of Mexican nature makes Kate comfortable. Now she feels even an eternal Mexican silence of nature. Also, the noise of the drum and the voice of singing do not disturb her any more. On the contrary, she is fascinated by Mexican culture and nature. As we have seen, for Kate, in a sense, submitting to Cipriano is a meaningful decision. It also means that she decides to assimilate herself into Mexico and Mexican culture. I would like to point out that it is clear that Kate is undergoing a process of cultural assimilation and mental transformation.

Her final decision shows up in her words at the end of the novel: “‘You don’t want me go, do you?’ she pleaded. [...] ‘You won’t let me go!’ she said to him” (PS 444). At this point, there is some doubt of why Kate does not say “I won’t go.” Lawrence describes the reason: “And even amid her tears, Kate was thinking to herself: *What a fraud I am! I know all the time it is I who don’t altogether want them [Cipriano and Ramón]. I want myself to myself. But I can fool them so that they shan’t find out*” (PS 443) [italics Lawrence’s]. That is, she still wavers between staying in Mexico and leaving it. The following sentences reveal her real intentions: “I’d better abandon some of my ego, and sink some of my individuality, rather than go like that” (PS 439). “Rather than become elderly and

a bit grisly, I will make my submission; as far as I need, and no further" (*PS* 439). And Cipriano himself says to her, "I like you very much! Very much" (*PS* 444). Kate definitely confirms Cipriano's deep affection to herself. Therefore she decides to take a chance to rely on his deep affection and stay in Mexico. This is a just little bit compromise in her final decision. Her reliance on his deep affection induces her not to say "I won't go" but to say "You won't let me go". The affective relationship beyond nationality between Cipriano and Kate starts. They know and need each other from now on in their future. Her mental transformation into Mexican culture starts from now on.

2. Alvina's Case

Like Kate, Alvina also experiences the process of assimilation and a mental transformation into Ciccio's home country Italy and Italian culture. Alvina is entirely fascinated with Ciccio's rich handsomeness like a spell on her. "Save for the fatal numbness of her love for him, she could still have escaped him. But she lay inert, as if envenomed. He wanted to make her his slave" (*LG* 203). Though she is in servility to his charm, she can still run away from Ciccio, but she does not. But, little by little, Alvina's affection to Ciccio begins to change. She notices that there is a big difference between her class and his class while she lives with him. "After all, she was demeaning herself shamefully staying with them in common, sordid lodgings. After all, she had been bred up different from that. They had horribly low standards—such low standards—not only of morality, but of life altogether" (*LG* 209). Alvina realizes not only social difference between her and him but also low morality of his class. She thinks that she falls into an inferior society with him.

Alvina wavers between the love of him and the conflict over the difference of their social positions. Finally, she decides to work as a maternity nurse again and to part from Ciccio. She meets a doctor in a new office. "The doctor with whom Alvina had most to do was a Dr Mitchell, a Scotchman" (*LG* 253). She wonders whether to accept his proposal or not, because he is quite rich and has a magnificent mansion. She thinks that she may get a stable life as his wife by accepting his proposal. She can keep her respectability of middle-class by marrying Dr. Mitchell. But after a while, she is quite uncertain whether she would marry him. Her extraordinary character awakes; she rather begins to think about escaping from Dr Mitchell. Choudhury points out: "Lawrence's intention was to present possibility of cutting loose from such dead social mores. [...] Though in the conventional sense she moves to a lower social status, yet along her downward movement she gains greater self-awareness" (Choudhury 160-01). Lawrence intentionally gives an extraordinary role to Alvina. Therefore, she refuses an ideal marriage with the doctor. At the same time, she cannot forget

Ciccio perfectly, though she is concerned about the difference between her class and his class. Moreover, she cannot abandon her revulsion against his barbarous atmosphere that comes from his class. She feels him both as a common man and as a man of extraordinary atmosphere.

Alvina thinks she does not want to marry anybody. She decides to live herself; however, at once she wants to meet Ciccio again. Her action is contradictory, because she knows that she will lose her class status and respectability of middle-class through her marriage with Ciccio. Finally, Alvina does not even care if the aura draws her down lower. Indeed, Alvina is fascinated by his mysterious aura and his appearance. Ciccio's aura has a power to draw her lower and lower into his mysterious world, which is an unknown world to her. Alvina's submission to him means that his aura draws her into his atavistic world. She even finds his atavistic world "heavy and sweet and rich". In other words, her submission to him implies to assimilate herself into his country, his social class and foreign culture, even though his atavistic world is lower one to her.

In order to follow his will, Alvina decides to go to Italy. She never thinks of keeping her old customary life persistently. She rather imagines her new life with him in Italy positively because of her extraordinary character. As I have mentioned in the Introduction, a process of adapting to a foreign culture means acculturation and transformation to a new culture. Alvina begins to assimilate to a new culture. In other words, she voluntarily makes a new life with him in his atavistic world. For Alvina, submitting to Ciccio means that it is one of her choices to make her life better and fuller. Ciccio performs an important role as a man who has the power of atavistic world to which Alvina is to assimilate.

Lawrence shows his view of Alvina in his letter:

I'm terrified of my Alvina who marries a Ciccio. I believe neither of us has found a way out of the labyrinth. How we hang on to the marriage clue! Doubt if it's really a way out. But my Alvina, in whom the questing soul is lodged, moves towards reunion with the dark half of humanity. (*Letters III* 521)

Lawrence shows that he encourages his Alvina to find a new sense of values through her experience of assimilation to the primitive countryside of Italy. For through her marriage to Ciccio she escapes from civilized England and through her new experience of the atavistic world of Italy regains a life of fulfillment.

3. Lawrence's Case

Lawrence looked for new cultures and people in foreign countries. He reflected the result of his observation in the novels. Writing novels was the key way of

expressing his feelings and emotions. He started to write *The Plumed Serpent* while in Mexico. He not only carefully observed the Mexicans and Mexico, but also felt a very friendly affection for them. He felt that Mexico has a certain mystery of beauty: “as if the gods were here. Now, in this October, the days are so pure and lovely, like an enchantment, as if some dark-faced gods were still young” (*Letters* IV 513). Lawrence even wanted to have his own house and to live in Mexico. But, after a while, Lawrence felt an aversion to Oaxaca of Mexico: “But despite its loveliness and the perfect climate, the quietness of Oaxaca came gradually to seem oppressive, like the quiet of a prison” (Sagar 206). Oaxaca makes Lawrence feel sick. In a short period, he always found both delight and depression in every country. In a new country, he well observed its culture, people, religion and landscape and so on. Therefore he found both attractive and disgusting points in the new country. However, it is obvious that Mexico is one of his favorite countries, and stimulates his writing.

Frieda refers to Lawrence’s full writing life in Mexico: “Lawrence could only write in places where one’s imagination could have space and free play, where the door was not closed to the future, where one’s vision could people it with new souls to be born, who would live a new life” (Frieda Lawrence 156). Frieda’s observation shows us how Lawrence enjoyed writing and spending time in Mexico. He did not just stay there but tried to understand Mexicans and Mexican culture. His efforts can be said to be a kind of a process of assimilation into Mexico though he never could assimilate into Mexican culture finally.

As we have seen, Kate and Alvina are enchanted by each man’s mysterious aura as if they were in a hypnotic state. Cipriano and Ciccio have so much aura that Kate and Alvina voluntarily want to worship them. Their aura draws Kate and Alvina into their atavistic world, Mexico or Italy. Kate and Alvina begin to seek their way of life in their new surroundings. They also experience a process of assimilation and transformation into a different culture.

On the other hand, Lawrence also tried to understand and adapt to different cultures. He was deeply involved in quest for different cultures though he was not able to accomplish a process of cultural assimilation and mental transformation perfectly. However, it can be said that like Kate and Alvina, he was able to find a new sense of values in the foreign countries through his experiences. In his real life, he could not assimilate into every foreign culture so that he needed to express his own ideas about a process of cultural assimilation and mental transformation in *The Plumed Serpent* and *The Lost Girl*. Therefore he gave Kate and Alvina an important role to express his ideas instead. Lawrence might have tried to say that if you try to assimilate into a different culture, you could gain a mental transformation into a new world in your life.

Conclusion

As we have seen, in the process of accommodation to Mexico or Italy, Kate and Alvina suffer enormous mental pain from culture shock. Gunpei Sato indicates three stages in encountering a new culture:

When a person lives in a new country, he or she will go through the first stage. At this stage, everything about the new culture will delight and interest the new comer. It is common for the new immigrant to try to absorb the different culture. [...] After the first stage, the new immigrant will find themselves suffering from hostile feelings to the new culture. This second stage is the hostile stage. This stage is characterized by depression and aggression toward the new culture. [...] The third stage is the acceptance stage. The immigrant begins to learn to accept the difference between their culture and new culture. (Sato 49-65) [translation mine]

At first, Kate and Alvina waver between loving and hating of a new culture in a foreign country, Mexico or Italy. Because they experience the first stage and the second stage of culture shock in the foreign countries.

At the end of the novels, however, they try to overcome the cultural difference, and experience a process of mental transformation to become a new woman. Now, they experience the third stage of acceptance to accommodate into the different culture. In *The Plumed Serpent* and *The Lost Girl*, they are represented to become a “new woman” as bold, brave, strong-willed, extraordinary, free and uninhibited woman.

On the other hand, like Kate and Alvina, Lawrence experienced the culture shock through living in foreign countries in his whole life. Therefore he always wavered between loving and hating feelings in each country. The wavering feelings were represented through the heroines in *The Plumed Serpent* and *The Lost Girl*. Sagar points out Lawrence’s longing for England: “He longed for Europe with hungry longing [...]. He felt he would have given anything on earth to be in England [...].” (Sagar 159). Lawrence was not able to accomplish assimilation into the culture of a foreign country perfectly. Lawrence wrote: “[...] I am making up my mind to return to England during the course of the summer. I really think that most living clue of life is in us Englishmen in England [...].” (*Letters* IV 219). [italics Lawrence’s]

After all, after traveling in many countries, Lawrence found he had a longing for his own country, England. He could never accomplish perfect assimilation into each country. Even though he tried hard to accommodate to a different culture, it was a struggle. However, the heroines Kate and Alvina try to accomplish

to accommodate to the foreign culture at the end of the novels. Lawrence was always writing his novels to express his own ideal views. *The Plumed Serpent* and *The Lost Girl* express his unfulfilled yearning in his real life.

At the same time, Lawrence severely criticized materialism and class society of the Victorian era and the early twentieth century in the two novels. There are lots of satirical elements toward upper-class or middle-class women in the two novels. It can be considered that Lawrence criticized women of upper-class or middle-class society in which they stuck to their sense of values and respectability. Lawrence's severe criticism is shown through Kate and Alvina who are not ordinary and conservative women. Lawrence gave Kate and Alvina the important roles to show that if you take a risk with courage without fear of failure, you would gain ripeness, richness, happiness and fulfillment of life as a new woman. Lawrence's critical eyes pointed to not only the upper-class or middle-class women but also the whole society which sticks to mediocre life.

Lawrence also suffered from a dilemma between his mother's lower-middle class and his father's lower class. When he was young, he was deeply affected by his mother's ideas than his father's ones. Thanks to the education which he received, he could escape from his father's lower class. However, he never wanted to live in a mediocre middle class society in England. After all, he never belonged to middle class and lower class by living in foreign countries in his life. One of the reasons for his classlessness is that he found the revulsion toward both middle class and lower class. He explained in the two novels that it is not so important to stick to a class. He showed a kind of happiness and affection beyond social class and nationality through Kate's and Alvina's way of life. It can be said that Lawrence could not accept British class-minded society.

The similarities of Kate's and Alvina's way of life are not a coincidence as well as their extraordinary and innovative character. Their character was intentionally created to reflect Lawrence's ideas toward the English society. Kate and Alvina play an important role in the novels to speak for Lawrence's ideas.

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