

# A Comparative Study of Lawrentian and Taoistic Ideas

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## 1. Introduction

D.H.Lawrence's view of life can be called as that of anti-culturalism. According to his viewpoint, highly-civilized life-style in modern society is distorting the natural and genuine joy of life. He admittedly was the honorable fore-runner of nature-preservationists in this age of relentless nature-devastating industrialism. He denounced in his voluminous writings the modern civilization built up by scientific method and industrial mechanism, because he thought that it spoiled human primordial instincts and destroyed natural beauties. For him human untarnished nature is the inexhaustible fountain of true wisdom and happiness.

The first object of the angry Lawrence's attack is the modern industrial society. For him the true joy of life is being helplessly devastated by the greed for possessions in the mechanistic society of modern industrialism. If he had lived in our ultra-industrialized society, he would be even more shocked by the more dehumanizing processes such as highly-mechanized method of production, rational standardization or scientific anatomy of life, fanatic competition of marketing strategy, and the like.

Lawrence's another enemy is Christianity. According to Christianity, human beings are in the special status as that supreme being on the earth which is honoured to be the ruler of the whole living things, and human nature is glorified by its spirituality whereas other animals are only physical. Lawrence took quite the different viewpoint. He asserted that human beings are not superior in status to other living things, and so they must get out of the illusion of the privilege as the master on the earth. According to him, modern man should seek for reinstatement of 'blood consciousness', i.e. instinctive sensibility in order to purify the corruption of modern civilization.

When we direct our eyes to the Oriental history of ideas, Lawrence's longing for the return to the primitive state can be paralleled by Taoistic view of life.<sup>1)</sup> Both of

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1) Taoistic ideas mentioned here mainly indicates the philosophical Taoism which was advocated by the ancient Chinese philosophers such as Lao-tzu(老子) and Chuang-tzu(莊子). It was centering on how to interpret the meaning of our life or how to establish the ideal relation between the human life and the cosmic order, whereas the religious Taoism which came to rise afterwards among groups of common people attempted to appropriate the philosophical Taoism in

these views are characterized by the negative attitude towards culturalism and rationalism. Both are in favor of carefree indulgence in letting loose original human instincts. Both look to the sacred state of Nature not yet damaged by the reckless development of civilization. What Taoism was to Confucianism in the North-East Asian culture may be said to be what Lawrentianism was to Christianity in the Western culture. One side has been recognized as orthodoxy; the other has been excluded as heretical. The former is favorably disposed towards civilization; the other towards primeval origin of life. Confucianism was the most influential religious tradition for the public functions of the family and the state, and in that sense the most official. For private worship, philosophy, and art, however, Taoism as well as Buddhism was quite influential, depending primarily upon its greater appeal to individualist and artist sentiments.

We can make a diagram as in the following, which represents the main streams of Oriental and Occidental thoughts as seen against the traits of Lawrence's viewpoints. In the next chapter we'll see the essential elements which are homogeneous both in Lawrentian and Taoistic views of life.

Table representing the main streams of Oriental and Occidental thoughts as seen against the traits of Lawrence's viewpoints

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order to meet quite worldly needs such as long and healthy life. Even in the religious Taoism, however, we can recognize its basic texture of life-view rooted in the Taoistic philosophers.

		attitude to natural instinct	outlook on education	relation of dual elements	whereabouts of the cosmic order	man's bond with nature	superior principle
The East	Confucianism	negative	approving	in harmony	inherent	harmonious	masculine
	Taoism	positive	disapproving	in harmony	inherent	harmonious	feminine
The West	Christianity	negative	approving	in strife	transcendental	dominant	masculine
	Lawrence	positive	disapproving	in strife	inherent	harmonious	feminine

## 2. Anti-cultural Ideas

In Chinese tradition, Confucianism stands for cultural development, while Taoism tends towards the natural state of primitive society. These two schools represent the opposite indigenous poles of the Chinese outlook on life. The one represents the classical, the other the romantic. One camp stresses social responsibility, the other sings the glories of spontaneity and naturalness. Confucius' focus is always on man, Lao Tzu's beyond man. As the Chinese themselves say, Confucius [孔子] roams within society, Lao Tzu[老子] wanders beyond.

Confucianists believed in civilized life and deliberate

education, while Lawrence and Taoists in the return to the natural state. They stood for culturalism and asceticism. It taught extremely mortifying self-control in expression of instinctive passions --- especially sex-related passions --- by the enforcement of numberless items of moral principle.

The Confucians exercised considerable care on the self's education, especially for the middle and upper classes. They did not stress speculative reason (that which gives rise to abstract theory), since they were not primarily concerned with the human capacity to get at the Logos of nature, and their major motivation was social needs. On the other hand, the Taoists, who paid greater attention to the relationship between human consciousness and the cosmic Tao, produced a paradoxical view of life. They went against the Confucian standards of social proprieties. Their masters were either cryptic eccentrics such as Chuang-tzu or magical 'immortals' possessing paranormal powers. The cryptics' suspicion of human reason developed into a strong attack on logic and Confucian prudence. Logically, the *Chuang-tzu's* chapter on seeing things as equal suggests that the philosophical Taoists found conventional language and morality both arbitrary and relative. Standard terms in Confucian discourse such as 'great' and 'small', 'good' and 'bad' turned out to be wholly relative in the context of Taoistic viewpoint. In fact, the Taoists cast doubt on the entire realm of discursive reason, which plods along from premise to premise and often misses the whole. If one could argue either side of

a proposition, they are sure to argue, one clearly was not in the realm of ultimate concern.

Difference can be seen in the two schools' allegedly true way of creating one's real life. Confucian way to create is through following the calculated directives of the conscious mind. The results of this mode of action, however, are seldom really one's own according to the Taoistic view: they tend to smack of sorting and arranging than of genuine creation. Genuine creation comes when the more abundant resources of the not-extraneously-defined self are somehow released. But for this to happen a certain dissociation from the surface self is needed. This is the very meaning of so-called non-action [wu-wei(無爲)], which is the first motto of true life in the Taoistic philosophy. Here we will see a succinct explanation of it by a scholar.

The conscious mind must relax, stop standing in its own light, let go. Only so is it possible to break through the law of reversed effort in which the more we try the more our efforts boomerang. Wu-wei is the supreme action, the precious suppleness, simplicity, and freedom that flows from us, or rather through us, when our private egos and conscious efforts yield to a power not their own. With Confucius every effort was turned to building up a complete pattern of ideal responses which might thereafter be consciously imitated. Taoism's approach is quite the opposite --- to get the foundations of the self in tune with Tao(道) and let behavior flow spontaneously. Action follows being. "The way to do is to be." 2)

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2) *The Religions of Man*. Huston Smith. (Harper & Row, New

The philosophical Taoists sought for such an ideal state of the natural person which forgets the self. To show how, they distinguished between action [wei(爲)] and non-action. Wei is willful, selfish action: it is always in tension because it is not in harmony with the Tao. Proper action is thus paradoxically called non-action: since the Taoistic sage's actions merely reflect the Tao, he does not really act; the Tao acts through him. The Taoist sage seeks harmony within himself and in the process loses himself to the Tao, whereas the ideal Confucian zhunzi (君子) seeks it outside himself and in the process loses himself to the social proprieties. Taoists are fond of the analogy of water, asking to reject all forms of self-assertiveness and competition. They think that the world is full of people who are willing to be pressed hard into the burden of worldly fortune, or who are determined to be somebody only to be troubled with tension. They want to get ahead, to stand out. Taoism has little use for such ambition. One of their sages taught that the ax falls first on the tallest tree.

As mentioned above, Lawrence's anti-culturalism is rather radical. He viewed the modern civilization as lacking of the majesty, mystery, and vitality of the primitive man or even the wild animal in the wilderness. We can see in almost all of his stories so many characters who are disillusioned with human culture. Rupert Birkin, acting as a Lawrence figure in *Women in*

*Love*, says "Humanity is a dead letter." (Chapter V, 'In the Train') and "Man is a mistake, he must go." (Chapter XI, 'An Island') Ramon in *The Plumed Serpent* says "I am nauseated with humanity and the human will." p.68) Mellors in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* says "I don't believe in the world, not in money, nor in advancement, nor in the future of our civilization." (p.290) Lou in "St. Mawr" prefers St Mawr, a wild horse, as her source of vital inspiration rather than Rico, his husband, saying "He seems a far greater mystery to me than a clever man. He's a horse."

It is quite noteworthy that Lawrence tries to find a salvation of human life in the 'dark' communion with cosmic life force, since such way of human sublimation strikes us as similar to the Taoistic philosophy. In this point again Lawrentian and Taoistic views of life have much in common with each other. In both of these viewpoints, the human potentiality of vitality can be enormously enlarged by means of achieving mysterious union with the limitless life force of the universe, and so these two may well be called 'vitalism.' Such union with the Universe may as well be called 'mysterious' because it cannot be explicated in terms of verbal or intellectual knowledge.

Lawrence often complained that modern people are lacking of the ability 'to come into contact with the great cosmic source of vitality which gives strength, power, energy to the men who can grasp.' ("New Mexico", *Phoenix*, p.146) His idea of 'impersonal love', which is pictured in many of his figures, such as Tom Brangwen,



Rupert Birkin, or Cipriano ( in *The Plumed Serpent* ), can be seen as a sublimation or trans-figuration of mere human love into cosmic-dimensioned vitality. We can see another of his statements on this sort of cosmologically-sublimated life in *The Rainbow*. In the following excerpt, Anna and Lydia, before the dead body of Tom Brangwen, come to the rare understanding that the meaning of the human beings can be the most enlarged when laid in connection with the infinite cosmos.

They cleared and washed the body, and laid it on the bed. There, it looked still and grand. He was perfectly calm in death, and, now he was laid in line, inviolable, unapproachable. To Anna, he was the majesty of the inaccessible male, the majesty of death. It made her still and awe-stricken, almost glad. - - - He was beyond change or knowledge, absolute, laid in line with the infinite. (Chapter IX)

This kind of awakening supplies Ursula with a chance to see her life as capable of supassing the spuriousness in the past by getting at a freshly elevated self effected in communion with the infinite energy of the universe. Such awakening served her as a big moment of self-enlargement process. She can get over the materialistic and mechanistic life-image around her under the influence of this mysterious power from the vast universe.

Suddenly she had passed away into an intensively gleaming light of knowledge. She could not understand

what it all was. She only knew that it was not limited mechanical energy, nor mere purpose of self-preservation and self-assertion. It was a consummation, a being infinite. Self was a oneness with the infinite. To be oneself was a supreme, gleaming triumph of infinity. (Chapter XVI)

### 3. Anti-intellectual Ideas

Taoism sees the material as subordinate to and ultimately controlled by the spiritual world. Especially the religious Taoists thought that spiritual and physical phenomena can be quite influential to each other. To them, such spiritual exercise as meditation could mean much change in physical condition at the same time that physical exercise such as hypogastric breathing could mean much progress in spiritual purification.

We must notice that the Chinese original idea of immortality was primarily that of the eternity of both the spirit or soul and the body. Without the body, there could be no immortality. Thus the quest was not just for meditational release from the constraints of life and death, but for transformation of the physical body into an eternal vehicle capable of bearing the spirit and of being united to the One Origin {Tao} and to Heaven and Earth for ever.

Confucianistic intellectualism seemed to the Taoists to be too artificial and repressive to act as a genuine life-view. The Taoistic sages had learned to forget knowledge or intelligence and to outgrow the distinctions of good and evil, on which the value system of the

ordinary world is based. Huston Smith said of the Taoistic anti-intellectualism like the following.

The Taoists had small patience with the Confucian approach to life. What could be hoped from punctiliousness or the meticulous observance of social propriety? The whole approach of Confucianistic intellectualism seemed to them to be so artificial, a lacquered surface which was bound to prove brittle and repressive. All calculated systems, every attempt to arrange life in neat apple-pie order, is pointless.<sup>3)</sup>

One reason for Lawrence's antipathetic attitude to the modern civilization is its intellectual attribute. He made it almost a rule for presumptuously intelligent characters in his stories to attempt to go for false love affairs resulting in self-destruction, whereas simple and innocent minds are earnest in unaffected love-making. Here we will see one of his statements of anti-intellectual life-view.

The goal is not ideal. The aim is not mental consciousness. We want effectual human beings, not conscious ones. The final aim is not to know, but to be. There never was a more risky motto: Know thyself. 'Be thyself' is the last motto. To know is to lose. - - - To know is to die.<sup>4)</sup>

My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. All I want is to answer to my blood, direct, without fribbling intervention of mind, or

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3) *The Religions of Man*, pp.285-6

4) *Fantasia and the Unconscious, and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (Penguin Books, 1954), p.68

moral, or what not.<sup>5)</sup>

When Lawrence went against intellectualism, the meaning of 'the flesh' was his seemingly inevitable salvation. He advocated the motto of 'blood-consciousness' as his peculiar method of appreciating the life world, and the object of his devoted worship was 'the Dark God' (belonging in the realm of dark instinct) instead of a transcendental god like the One of Christianity.

Whatever the unborn and the dead may know, they cannot know the beauty, the marvel of being alive in the flesh. The dead may look afterwards. But the magnificent here and now of life in the flesh is ours, and ours alone, and ours only for a time. We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive and in the flesh, and part of the living, incarnate cosmos.<sup>6)</sup>

Anti-intellectual tendency both in Lawrentian and Taoistic life-view make its peculiar shape as the disbelief in language. According to it, the mystery of life or its profound relation with the cosmos cannot be reached by linguistic medium. The Taoistic philosophers sought to shatter the complacency of our conventional use of language by showing its severe limitations. This can be seen in the key ideas or arguments which crop up throughout Tao Te Ching [道德經]. The book opens with a discussion of the inability of language to express, or even come close to, reality.

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5) *The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Harry T. Moore (Viking Press, 1962), p.94.

6) *Apocalypse* (Penguin Books, 1974), pp.125-6

The Tao that is spoken of is not the eternal nature of the Tao. That which can be named is not the true Tao. (*Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 1)

One of Lawrence's statements on this subject can be seen in the following. It seems quite natural that his life image is so religious, and his cherished life goal such as blood-consciousness is so far beyond the intellectual understanding, that the power of language cannot but be out of place.

The true religious faculty is the most powerful and the highest faculty in man. And by the religious faculty we mean the inward worship of the creative life-mystery: the implicit knowledge that life is unfathomable and unsearchable, not to be described, having no ascribable goal save the bringing-forth of an ever-changing, ever-unfolding creation: that new creative being and impulse surges up all the time in the deep foundations of the soul, from some great source which the world has known as God.<sup>7)</sup>

When it comes to the mysterious communion with the cosmic life force, it is interesting to notice that the practical method of Lawrence and Taoists shows much difference. While Lawrence held fast, at least most of the time, to one way of getting near the dimension of the Universe, that is, the way of sexual love, even though its meaning was elevated above the common sense, Taoistic monks developed a variety of ways of

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7) "Education of the People" in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence* (Viking Press, 1936), p.608.

assimilating the cosmic energy. The goal of Taoistic discipline was to enjoy a long and healthy life and to gain supernatural powers like clairvoyance or magical space contraction, and its methods included hypogastric breathing exercises, concentrative meditation without any particular subject, magical pill or the elixer of life, highly-technical communion with the cosmic mechanism during sexual intercourse and other physical exercises imitating animals' and birds' stretching and bending. Interestingly enough, Lawrence also thought that the solar plexus under the navel, not the brain in one's head, is the center of all the sympathetic system or the great prime knowledge<sup>8)</sup>. This reminds us of the Taoistic belief that the hypogastric region is the center of the whole body's life force, which is also the entrance of the cosmic energy.

The religious Taoists saw the self as a mortal physical body. Therefore, by the several 'hygienic' regimes above mentioned, they tried to prolong physical life. As a result, the religious Taoists experimented with yogic practices, many of them in the vein of Indian 'kundalini' or Tibetan Tantrism, both of which viewed the body as a repository of energy centers. Depending on the particular interest of a religious Taoist group, the self might focus on breath or semen or some other quintessence.

Taoistic monks and Lawrence are in seeming agreement with each other in thinking very highly of sexual intercourse as a means of participating in the cosmic life

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8) *Fantasia and the Unconscious, and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, p.35

force, though, from the Taoistic standpoint complete union with the cosmic energy without any passion, whether sexual or not, is the supreme goal of religious discipline.

#### 4. Dualistic Ideas

Seemingly D.H.Lawrence's dualistic view of life is similar to that of *the Book of Changes* (*I Ching*: 易經), which is the basic framework of the ancient Chinese cosmology, whether Confucian or Taoistic. In both of these dualistic viewpoints, Lawrentian and Chinese, the life world is going on with its subsistence through the interaction between the two principles, i.e. the masculine principle, which rules the spiritual and ideal part of the life, and the feminine principle, which rules the physical and phenomenal part of the life.

It is a thing of interest that which of the two principles is superior makes a turning-point of each life view. In the Lawrentian and Taoistic outlook on life, the feminine and physical principle is superior to the masculine and spiritual principle, while the Confucian and Christian outlook is quite the opposite. Lawrence puts relatively heavier emphasis on the instinctive functions of primordial life and so shows the characteristics of intuitional primitivism, and so, in the Lawrentian sense of dualism, Nature as the feminine principle acts as the matrix of Culture as the masculine principle.

The philosophical Taoists also advocated quite the

similar type of dualism. To them also Nature was self-satisfied, and so eternal and absolute, while Culture was self-assertive, and so finite and relative. Likewise to them, the feminine principle represented weak and eternal Nature, while the masculine principle represented strong and limited Culture.

Lao-tzu's female is a lesson in the power of passivity, of yielding and adaptability. A valley resists storms better than a mountain, a female tends to outlive a male, an infant is freer than a king, and a house is valuable for the space inside it.<sup>9)</sup>

Since Confucianism showed the characteristics of rationalistic culturalism, and was bent on civilized life believing in intellectual education, it stood for the masculine superiority.

On the other hand, those two dualistic outlooks of Lawrence and Taoists are different from each other in the essential relationship of the interaction between the two elements of each dualism. In the Lawrentian outlook, fighting between the feminine and masculine principles is essential to every type of life, while in the Chinese outlooks which, whether Confucian or Taoistic, are based on *the Book of the Changes*, harmony between the two is more essential. According to the latter, when Yang(陽), which is the masculine and positive principle, meets Yin(陰), the feminine and negative principle, they are harmonious and productive of new life, but nothing

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9) D.L. Carmody, *Ways to the Center* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1974), p.183.



can be born out of the combination of Yang and Yang or Yin and Yin. In Chinese thought, life is kept spinning by the constant interaction between these two opposite forces of Yin and Yang to alternate with each other. Precisely at the point when one seems to have the upper hand, that is when it begins to decline to be replaced by the other. Thus when the weather is most Yin, deep winter, that is the point at which Nature begins to move towards spring and summer, Yang. On the contrary, in Lawrence's view of life each opposite part can be kept alive by the opposition of the other, and his fictional characters are destined to go to vehement conflict with each other, even though they are currently in need of love from some one. Human relations of such conflict can be seen in the numberless intersexual relations which occur in Lawrence's love stories: for instance, Tom-Lydia and Anna-Will couples in *the Rainbow*, and Birkin-Ursula and Gerald-Gudrun couples in *Women in Love*. And this kind of conflict holds true in the actual case of Lawrence's own married life, which was characterized by endless disagreement and strife between the two strongly self-assertive personalities.

## 5. Conclusion

When Lawrentian life principle is said to be similar to the Oriental one, the contextual meaning should be made clarified to avoid misunderstanding. In most cases, that kind of comparison must be limited to the similarities between Taoistic and Lawrentian types of primitivism or

intuitionism which is acting as an effective brake on self-important and self-destructive development of human civilization. But we can imagine different contextual meanings of cross-cultural comparison. According to Lawrentian view of life, the value or meaning of life inheres in life itself and so must be derived from life itself without any extraneous creator, while in the Christian doctrine the meaning of human life is a kind of blessed gift from the Heaven and gracious meaning is given to the rest of creation through human use of it.

Christianity is based on negation really. It says, Renounce all worldly desires, and live for heaven! Whereas I think people ought to fulfill sacredly their desires. And this means fulfilling the deepest desires, which is a desire to live unhampered by things which are extraneous.<sup>10)</sup>

In this sense Lawrence's view of creation and life is quite homogeneous to the Oriental life principle, especially the Taoistic idea. In the Oriental philosophy, it is a well-established tradition to exclude the conception of transcendental Creator or Judge. The great Taoist commentator of the third to fourth centuries AD, Kuo Hsiang, put it thus:

But let us ask whether there is a Creator or not. If not, how can he create things? If there is, he is capable of materializing all the forms. We must understand the fact that all forms materialize by themselves. If we go through the entire realm of existence, we shall see that there is nothing, not even the penumbra, that does not transform

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10) *The Collected Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, p.361.

itself beyond the phenomenal world. Hence everything creates itself without the direction of any Creator. Since things create themselves, they are unconditioned. This is the norm of the universe. (Commentary on Chuang Tzu, sec.2.2:46-7)<sup>11)</sup>

We may have still another comparative context. According to Lawrentian outlook on life which can be interpreted as an ecological view, man must not be opposed, but obedient, to the natural environment just like the Oriental outlook, whether Confucian or Taoistic. Contrastingly, according to Christianity man is qualified to be the master of all things on the earth and so is legitimated to turn them all to human advantage and natural exploitation in the name of human and divine glory. Lawrence advocated the principle of continuous strife between the elements of dualistic cosmology. But he seemed to feel that human beings should not be domineering over nature because he was antipathetic to the human civilization and opposed to the superior status of man in the hierarchical order in the universe. Hereabout in his thinking I feel that he was not so much a logical-minded thinker as a tender-hearted sentimentalist.

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11) Martin Palmer, *The Elements of Taoism* (Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element, 1991), p.4.

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## 국문초록

# 로렌스 및 도가사상에 대한 비교연구

양 영 수

동서양 문명발달의 역학구조에서 볼 때에, 동양의 유교사상과 서양의 기독교 사상 및 과학정신은 인간의 교화와 사회의 진보를 지향하는 문화주의 경향을 띠고 있는 데에 비하여, 동양의 도교와 서양의 로렌스 사상은 자기파괴적 문명 발달의 폐해를 우려하고 자연상태의 본능적 생활을 동경하는 낭만적 반문명주의 경향을 띤다. 현대 산업주의사회의 심각한 인간소외 및 환경파괴 문제에 직면해 있는 상황에 있어서, 인간본연의 질박한 성정과 환경친화적인 생활양식의 중요성을 다시금 일깨워주는 이들 반문명사상은 현대인이 지향해야할 진실로 인간적인 문명의 진로를 시사해 주는 의의가 있다.

도교의 無爲自然 사상을 적극적인 의미로 해석하면, 탐욕적이고 자기본위적인 맹목적 문명발달 대신에 자연 속에서의 인간의 위치를 겸허하게 생각하고 인간을 자연질서의 일부로 해석하는 길이 될 것이다. 로렌스 사상 또한, 현대 산업사회의 생산소비체제는 무제

한한 욕구재창조 논리를 바탕으로 하기 때문에 필연적으로 집단 및 개인간의 갈등과 자연환경 파괴를 초래한다고 본다는 점에서 도가의 자연회귀사상과 크게 상통한다.

소유지향적이고 자기파괴적인 문명의 발달 대신에, 우주적 생명력과 신비로운 합일을 통하여 생명의 의미를 극대화할 수 있다고 보는 점에서도 이들 두 사상은 크게 상통한다. 로렌스 사상에서 비록 남녀간 성애에 대한 지나친 집착이라는 한계가 느껴지기는 하지만, 우주적 생명력의 차원으로 남녀간 사랑의 의미를 확대심화시키는 이른바 〈탈인성적인 사랑〉의 개념을 전해 주었다는 점에서 인간 존엄성의 수호라는 〈구도자적 사명〉에 합치되는 문학을 하였다고 보아진다. 도가적 사상가들에게서 전해지던 우주적 생명력의 개념은 후세에 와서 세속적으로 종교교리화되면서 여러가지 초자연적인 건강증진법을 개발하는 비본질적인 방향으로 흐른 감이 있지만, 이 점에 있어서도 인간내부의 잠재력 발현을 추구함으로써 지나친 소유지향등 외형적으로 화려한 문명발달의 방향에 제동을 걸었다는 측면을 인정할 때 그 문명사적인 의의를 평가할 수 있다. 유교와 기독교의 본능억압적인 문화주의에 반대하는 도교와 로렌스 사상은 인간의 자연본능적인 잠재력 발현을 중시하기 때문에 구체적인 삶의 체험을 이지적으로 분석하고 과학적으로 통제하는 것을 배척한다는 공통점이 있고, 삶의 관념적 추상화 도구로 쓰이는 언어능력을 불신한다는 점에서도 공통된다.

이원론적 세계관에 있어서 로렌스와 도교사상이 보여주는 공통점도 주의를 끈다. 유교와 기독교는 자연과 감성에 대한 인간과 이성의 우위를 인정하고 공격적 자기주장적인 남성원리를 순응적 자기충족적인 여성원리보다 우월한 것으로 보는 데에 반하여, 로렌스와 도교사상은 여성원리의 우위를 인정하고 있는 것이다. 맹목적인 자연정복과 무제한 욕망창조의 논리로 발달해온 인간문명의 막다른 골목에 처하여 자연질서와의 조화로운 관계와 자기욕망의 적절한 조절을 기약하는 새로운 삶의 양식 모색에 있어서 이러한 반문명사상의 의의를 재발견해야 할 때라고 생각된다.