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# THE KING OF GLORY

An exploration  
into the resurrection motif  
in the writings of D.H. Lawrence

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## CONTENTS

Copyright Statement	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Precis	v
Dedication	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Three Poems	22
i: "Weeknight Service"	24
ii: "Song of a Man Who Has Come Through"	38
iii: "Ship of Death"	59
Chapter Two: <i>The Rainbow</i>	81
Chapter Three: <i>The Plumed Serpent</i>	127
Chapter Four: <i>Lady Chatterley's Lover</i>	164
Conclusion	212
Appendix	216
Bibliography	218

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When I set out to write a Masters thesis I elected to do so not on a writer that I knew well or loved dearly, but on one who raised my blood pressure and made me cross. Several years earlier in an undergraduate tutorial at Massey, Dr John Needham had patiently listened and remonstrated with me as I argued that the author of *Women in Love* was mad, and that no writer could expect his or her reader to take seriously a passage in which a woman strikes a man over the head with a piece of lapis lazuli, and the man promptly heads off to roll naked in the pine needles. In the words of another writer, 'I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now': now I understand Lawrence a whole lot better, and love what he sought to say.

I began this thesis at Monash University in Melbourne, under the patient direction of Dr Dennis Bartholomeusz. I wish to record my thanks to him for his setting me on the way, introducing me to so many writers who were to be essential to an understanding of D.H. Lawrence. And thank you too to my ecclesiastical colleagues Dr Stephen Miles and Fr John Parkes who made valuable reading suggestions along the way; Stephen gave me Mark Spilka's *Love Ethic of D.H. Lawrence*, and John brought my attention to Alexander C. Irwin's *Eros Toward the World*, both formative aids to my thought.

But given that it was that tutorial years earlier that placed the fire in my belly concerning Lawrence, it was fitting that I should return once more to be supervised by Dr John Needham. To John my thanks for taking on a half-formed thesis, for broadening my reading catchment much further, and for allowing *The King of Glory* to follow him while he attempted to pursue his own studies not only at Massey but on study leave at Oxford and at Austin, Texas.

My five existing daughters, and one child, ('froggy'), soon to arrive, have put up time and time again with a daddy disappearing into a closed study to write about a man called Lawrence. To them my thanks.

But above all I want to thank Anne Penman, who has carried far more than a fair share of the domestic load while this thesis has groaned towards birth, and who in turn groans each time I launch into a soliloquy about sex as a resurrection motif. This one's for you.

ORANGE, NEW SOUTH WALES.  
THE FEAST OF St URSULA October 21, 1993.

## P R E C I S

In this thesis I seek to relate the early Congregationalist up-bringing of Lawrence, and the theological factors that shaped that theological milieu, to the subsequent rejection by Lawrence of orthodox Christian belief, and to the search for 'dark gods' and an adequate resurrection symbolism with which he replaced it. I do so first by looking at the paramount theological and sociological forces shaping Lawrence's early thought, and briefly comparing Lawrence's response to those influences to the response of other philosophers and theologians of the era. In doing so, however, I recognize that Lawrence is not accurately described as a theologian or a philosopher, but rather that he is open to common influences with those scholars.

Having placed Lawrence into a religious and historical context, I explore his responses to that context as it is revealed in his search for an adequate resurrection imagery, first in the more 'raw' treatment given in three poems, and then, more exhaustively, in Lawrence's more complete treatment given to the theme in three novels, representative of three major phases of Lawrence's life. In the poems I find first a rejection of institutionalized religion, then a belief in resurrection as a 'rite of passage' within an individual life, and finally as a existential option by which to face death, as life, with integrity. In the novels I find a recognition of death and resurrection as a cyclical, personal experience in life available to those who continue to grasp life to its full potential, and not to adopt some form of *mauvais fois*, then as a collective societal experience based on recapturing ancient rites and beliefs, and finally as a potential, personal experience based on intense personal self-communication, epitomized by authentic - and adventurous - self-giving in sex.

*Für Anne*

## INTRODUCTION

In 1907, Lawrence pronounced 'at this time I do not, cannot, believe in the divinity of Jesus.'<sup>1</sup> Who or what was the Jesus whose divinity Lawrence rejected? What are the Jesu-ology<sup>2</sup> and Christology that Lawrence borrows and rewrites in his literary schemes? Mark Spilka notes Lawrence's use of the metaphor of 'resurrection', a movement to 'greater fullness of being'.<sup>3</sup> Since Lawrence persists with Christian metaphors, while rejecting Christianity, we must ask what

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1. Letter of 03.12.07, *Letters* 1:39 ff, (# 39). All references to the letters of Lawrence are to the Cambridge edition of his letters, 7 volumes, general editor James Boulton, 1979 -.

2. This period of Protestant theological thought, by which Lawrence was subconsciously influenced, was notable for its surrender of Christology to the search for 'the personality of Jesus'. (See Karl-Josef Kuschel, *Born Before all Time?*, translated by John Bowden, SCM, London, 1992, p. 132). Lawrence's German contemporaries, Karl Barth (1886-1968) and Rudolph Bultmann (1884-1976), as well as Paul Tillich, (1886-1965) all reacted in vastly differing ways against this 'religious moralism' (Kuschel, *ibid*, p. 130) that so influenced Lawrence's childhood Congregationalism.

3. Mark Spilka, *The Love Ethic of D.H. Lawrence*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955. p. 23. Spilka recognizes the role of sex as a Laurentian resurrection metaphor: 'sex is never an end in itself, for Lawrence, but always a regenerative force, a mode of resurrection and renewal.' *ibid.*, p. 207.

Lawrence's understanding was of the religion he left behind, and with what he replaced it. It is my concern in this thesis to come to an understanding of the Laurentian doctrine of resurrection, and in doing so to bear these wider questions in mind.

Harry Moore calls Lawrence 'consistently one of the most religious men who ever wrote';<sup>4</sup> T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis disagreed over the way in which Lawrence was religious, rather than the fact that he was: T.S Eliot in *After Strange Gods*<sup>5</sup> criticizes Lawrence's Congregationalist background for providing a 'lack of intellectual and social training,'<sup>6</sup> while F.R. Leavis celebrated Lawrence's Protestant heritage as a high and dignified intellectual tradition.<sup>7</sup> The truth, as

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4. Harry Moore, *The Priest of Love*, Heinemann, London, 1974. p. 22.

5. Faber and Faber, London, 1934. Any evaluation of Eliot's response to Lawrence should not be based solely on this early and polemical work of Lawrence, for alone of all his works he did not reprint this one. Despite Leavis' hesitance to accept it, Eliot's introduction to the work of Fr Jarrett-Kerr, and his references to Lawrence in glowing terms in private correspondence (to which Leavis did not have access) make clear that Eliot's response to Lawrence was far from one of straightforward dismissal. See Eliot's introduction to Martin Jarrett-Kerr, *D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence*, second edition, SCM, London, 1961, and *The Letters of T.S. Eliot*, edited by Valerie Eliot, Vol I, Faber and Faber, London, 1988, especially p. 617.

6. *ibid.*, p 59.

7. See especially the appendix to *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1955.

writers such as Graham Hough,<sup>8</sup> Donald Davie,<sup>9</sup> and Margaret Masson<sup>10</sup> have been concerned to point out, is that early twentieth century Congregationalism neither precluded intellectual capacity or breadth of reading (as Jessie Chambers makes clear,)<sup>11</sup> nor was it necessarily a hotbed of creative, and certainly not symbolic, imagination.

Like many humanitarian intellectuals of his day,<sup>12</sup> one basis for Lawrence's rejection of orthodox Christian doctrine was the failure by the Church of the time to address the question of 'theodicy,' the problem raised by the existence of evil and suffering in the world. After passing through part of Sneinton, to the south-east of suburban Nottingham, Lawrence was moved

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8. *The Dark Sun*, Gerald Duckworth & Co, London, 1956. pp. 17-23.

9. *A Gathered Church: The Literature of the English Dissenting Interest, 1700-1930*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Henley, 1978. pp. 52, 92-97.

10. "The Influence of Congregationalism on the First Four Novels of D.H. Lawrence", Ph.D. thesis, University of Durham, 1989. Masson explores what she calls the 'Eliot/Lawrence dialectic', based on the (false) dichotomy established by F.R. Leavis, on pp. 20ff. Her thesis has been reproduced in an abridged form in the *D.H. Lawrence Review*, Vol 22, No 1 (Spring 1990) which was published late in 1991. All references will be to the thesis unless otherwise stated.

11. *D.H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*, by E.T. (Jessie Chambers), Johnathan Cape, London, 1935. *passim*.

12. See Donald Davie, *A Gathered Church*, pp. 74ff, for a discussion of the crisis of faith experienced by many mid-Victorian intellectuals.

to reflect on social injustice:

It had a profound influence on me. 'It cannot be' I said to myself 'that a pitiful *omnipotent* Christ died *nineteen hundred* years ago to save these people from this and yet they are here.'<sup>13</sup>

Theodicy can be raised in other contexts: John Worthen believes that Lawrence's descriptions of nature in *The White Peacock* are frequently 'extended parallels between human life and the natural world'.<sup>14</sup> If this is so, then the caprice of human life is cause for rejection of ideas of a benevolent or omnipotent deity:

All the lapwings cried, cried the same tale, 'Bitter, bitter, the struggle - for nothing, nothing, nothing,' and all the time they swung about on their broad wings, reveling.<sup>15</sup>

This is a bleak, almost Hardy-esque, metaphorical parallel between human and natural existence. Such sober reflection is recurrent in *The White Peacock*: 'She said it ended well - but what's the good of death - what's

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13. Letter of 03.12.07 to the Rev'd Robert Reid; *Letters* I:40, (# 39).

14. See the Introduction to the Penguin edition of *The White Peacock*, Harmondsworth, 1982, p. 15. Mark Spilka refers to this Laurentian characteristic as 'vivid fourth-dimensional prose': *Love Ethic*, p. 12.

15. *The White Peacock*, Penguin edition, p. 135 (Cambridge edition pp. 83-84).

the good of that?'<sup>16</sup>

*The White Peacock* is full of such bleak parallelism, and so is of considerable importance to an understanding of the Christianity that Lawrence rejected, and the eclectic mystical (and mystico-political) systems that took its place. Margaret Masson writes

*The White Peacock* evolves during Lawrence's years as a chapel-goer, through the period of his break with the Chapel and with Eastwood, and into the time of his early attempts to formulate an alternative set of values by which to live.<sup>17</sup>

*The White Peacock* is one Laurentian novel that lacks a resurrection motif. Its dominant tone and symbolism is of a modernist 'wasteland',<sup>18</sup> and, as with Eliot's poem, no sense of hope intrudes. Ironically, as Masson suggests, this absence of resurrection motif may be precisely because Lawrence has not, at this point, exorcised the influence of Eastwood's Congregationalism, with its absence of symbolism and its heavy emphasis on a cerebral, disciplined moralism. It may be this that allows the powerful cry, 'the Church is

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16. *ibid.*, p 306. (Cambridge p. 233).

17. Margaret Masson, "The Influence of Congregationalism", p. 111.

18. See Masson, "The Influence of Congregationalism", pp. 118ff.

rotten',<sup>19</sup> to echo not only through this first novel but throughout the poetry and letters of the same period, and to underlie the search for 'dark gods' that was to dominate Lawrence's life and writings from then on.

For another issue set Lawrence apart from traditional Christianity. The Christianity of Lawrence's youth provided him with no powerful symbolism, no 'dark gods' to provide meaning to individual and collective human existence. Christianity failed to fulfil Lawrence's criterion of vitality. For Lawrence religion must address criteria of theodicy, symbolism, and aesthetics: 'for a God-idea I must have harmony - unity of design.'<sup>20</sup>

For Lawrence there must be struggle in the experience and birthing of a symbol. Waltraud Mitgutsch emphasizes the place of struggle as lying at the heart of the *Look! We Have Come Through* sequence of poems, commenting that in these

The tension is manifest between Lawrence,  
the male chauvinist and Lawrence the  
adoring lover, between the drive towards  
self extinction, fusion, and the loss of

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19. *The White Peacock*, p. 210. (Cambridge p. 149). This cry is surely as powerfully symbolic as the slamming of the door in Ibsen's *The Doll's House*.

20. Letter of 03.12.07 to the Rev'd Robert Reid; *Letters* I:41 (# 39).

self on one hand and phallic supremacy on the other.<sup>21</sup>

Struggles and cycles lie at the centre of Lawrence's thought. Chong-wha Chung notes 'for Lawrence nothing can be created when the lion and the unicorn no longer fight.'<sup>22</sup> Struggle within or between human beings is essential for authenticity of existence: 'In Nietzschean terms, maximum growth needs the stimulus of severe conditions'.<sup>23</sup> Internal and external struggle provides that 'severity of conditions', whereas, according to Nietzsche, and to some extent Lawrence, Christianity, in its world denying dualism, avoids it.

Yet where the Christian *weltanschauung* provides adequate language for these conflicts Lawrence is willing to adopt it:

The rhythm of life was preserved by the Church hour by hour, day by day, season by season, year by year, epoch by epoch, down among the people, and the wild coruscations were accommodated to this perma-

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21. Waltraud Mitgutsch, "The Image of the Female in D.H. Lawrence's Poetry", *On Poets and Poetry*, third series, No. 27. *Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, Salzburg, 1981. pp. 4-5.

22. Chong-wha Chung, "In Search of Dark Gods", in Peter Preston and Peter Hoare (eds), *D.H. Lawrence and the Modern World*, Macmillan, London, 1989. p. 75.

23. Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche: A Study in Influence*, Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen, 1987, p. 86.

nent rhythm.<sup>24</sup>

In *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, as in *The Rainbow*, Lawrence celebrates the cycles of feasts and liturgical seasons because they approach the vitality of the cycles that he proposes: it is where Christian cycles become emasculated that he pours scorn upon them. He has little sympathy for Protestantism: 'Protestantism came and gave a great blow to the religious and ritualistic rhythm of the year, in human life. Nonconformity almost finished the deed.'<sup>25</sup>

'For Lawrence,' writes Albert Devlin, 'the doctrine of "resurrection" simply means to keep vital company with the indwelling godhead.'<sup>26</sup> In observing this Devlin echoes thoughts that Lawrence had earlier expressed to his sister:

There still remains a God, but not a

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24. *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, second edition, Martin Secker, London, 1931. p. 60. See also "On Being Religious", in *Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*, (ed) Michael Herbert: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988; p. 191:30-32.

25. *ibid.*, p. 79. Emphasis in the original.

26. Albert Devlin, "The Strange and Fiery Course of *The Fox*: D.H. Lawrence's Aesthetic of Composition and Revision", in Galmini Salgado and G.K. Das (eds), *The Spirit of D.H. Lawrence*, MacMillan, London, 1988. p. 82. 'Godhead' is a word that gives Lawrence's thought here a faintly Buddhist flavour, but Lawrence was not keen on Buddhism: like Nietzsche he saw it as, with Christianity, 'nihilistic' (see Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, p. 3. and Martin Jarrett-Kerr, *D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence*, p. 137).

personal God: a vast, shimmering impulse which wavers onwards towards some end, I don't know what - taking no regard of the little individual, but taking regard for humanity.<sup>27</sup>

The recurrent Laurentian motif of 'lapsing' or 'lapsing out' often indicates communion with, or absorption into this deity.<sup>28</sup> It is an experience central to the striving towards each other of Rupert Birkin and Ursula Brangwen in *Women in Love*:

We fall from the connexion with life and hope, we lapse from pure integral being, from creation and liberty, and we fall into the long, long African process of purely sensual understanding, knowledge in the mystery of dissolution.<sup>29</sup>

This experience permits Birkin's 'dark and gloomy' soul to match 'the perfect youth' of Ursula, and to be 'born again to a wonderful, lively hope far exceeding the bounds of death.'<sup>30</sup>

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27. Letter of 09.04.11; *Letters* I:256 (# 252: nb note 1).

28. The notional phrase 'lapsing out' is not automatically synonymous with similar phrases. It contrasts, for example with 'crystallize out,' as used in "Two Blue Birds", (*The Woman Who Rode Away*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1950. p. 12), but is similar to 'bleeding out' in "The Woman Who Rode Away" in the same collection (*ibid.*, p. 72). The context will be critical in determining Lawrence's meaning.

29. *Women in Love*, Penguin edition, Harmondsworth, 1960. p. 286. Lawrence uses the word 'soul' in a Nietzschean manner, to mean 'the ruling group of impulses.' See Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, p. 100.

30. *Women in Love*, p. 416.

Lawrence comes to propose a theological contrast between what Donald Davie sees as the failure of Dissenting Protestantism in the early twentieth century to provide ceremonial experience of 'the Holy' on one hand, and his own wish for an unexpected, unpredictable God on the other:

In the end, one becomes bored by the man who believes that nobody, ultimately, can tell him anything. One becomes very bored by the men who wink God into existence for their own convenience. And the man who holds himself free to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds doesn't hold interest any more.<sup>31</sup>

Lawrence explores his and humanity's need for a powerfully present or powerfully absent God, a God who will pulse with a dynamism akin to that of Lawrence's most dramatically combative, conflictual characters. For a god to be acceptably God to Lawrence he<sup>32</sup> must step beyond the confines of the clichéd:

He has climbed down. He has just calmly stepped down the ladder of the angels, and is standing behind you. You can go on gazing and yearning up the shaft of hollow heaven if you like. The Most High just stands behind you, grinning to Himself.<sup>33</sup>

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31. "On Being Religious", *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*, p. 187: 31-35.

32. Lawrence's language of God is exclusively masculine.

33. "On Being Religious", *Death of a Porcupine*, p. 189:10-13.

A God for Lawrence could never be boring or safe,<sup>34</sup> and his portrayal of a God who descends the ladder and laughs is no more than a provocative presentation by Lawrence of the *deus revelatus*, the essential corollary, as Martin Luther saw clearly, of the *deus absconditus*, a combination essential to Christian orthodoxy.<sup>35</sup> In *The Trespasser*, Helena paradoxically discovers 'the God she knew not', the *deus absconditus*.<sup>36</sup>

It is not my intention to portray Lawrence as an orthodox Christian theologian: he was none of these. Nor do I intend to portray him as an 'anonymous Christian' in the sense that Karl Rahner uses the phrase,<sup>37</sup>

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34. Lawrence's iconoclastic references to God are no more provocative than the polemical writings of St Paul, who presented an apologetics for a God who had revealed the divine nature to the world in an unexpected and unpalatable manner, a 'stumbling block to the Jews ... a folly to the gentiles'. (1 Corinthians 1:23).

35. Karl Barth emphasizes throughout his career, the essential connectedness of *deus revelatus* and *deus absconditus*, recapturing the thought of Luther which, according to Barth, had been lost by the Liberal Protestant school. It was the liberal Protestants, in the shape of the Rev'd Robert Reid and others, under whose thought Lawrence's Christian experience was formed - as Margaret Masson makes clear throughout her thesis. For Barth's views, see, for example, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol I, Part 1, § 8:2, translated by Geoffrey Bromiley, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1975. p. 321.

36. *The Trespasser*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, p. 47.

37. Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol VI, translated by Karl-H and Boniface Kruger, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1974. pp 390-398.

as Martin Jarrett-Kerr comes close to doing. But Lawrence was deeply influenced by Christian orthodoxy, and that leads him to spend his lifetime of metaphysical speculation and manouvre, even didactics, within a framework that never ceases to resemble the orthodox trinitarian metaphor, including the resurrection metaphor essential to Christian orthodoxy. "On Being Religious," written in 1924, utilizes Christian metaphors, but it is also the essay in which Lawrence wrote 'Jesus, the Saviour, is no longer our way of salvation', 'there is no saviour,' and:

We go in search of God, following the Holy Ghost, and depending on the Holy Ghost. There is no Way. There is no Word. There is no Light. The Holy Ghost is ghostly and invisible. The Holy Ghost is nothing if you like.<sup>38</sup>

And in the poem "Stand Up!" Lawrence writes 'Stand up, but not for Jesus! / It's a little late for that.'<sup>39</sup> Lawrence's theology is distinctively his own: 'your soul inside you is your only Godhead';<sup>40</sup> readers of Lawrence are warned 'God is eternal, but my idea of Him is my own, and perishable.'<sup>41</sup> Lawrence's Christology, or Jesu-ology, was often distinctly antagonistic:

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38. "On Being Religious", *Death of a Porcupine* p. 192: 37-40.

39. *Complete Poems*, p. 560.

40. *Aaron's Rod*, Penguin edition, Harmondsworth, 1950, p. 344.

41. "On Human Destiny," *Death of a Porcupine*, p. 209: 23-24.

must you write about Jesus? Jesus becomes more unsympatich to me, the longer I live: crosses and nails and tears and all that stuff! I think he showed us into a nice cul de sac.<sup>42</sup>

Like all responsible theodicy,<sup>43</sup> Lawrence's was affected by the war:

[Lawrence] viewed the War as a direct consequence of the prevailing social order in which a devitalized Christianity supplied the prevailing ideology.<sup>44</sup>

The idealistic and liberal theology and philosophy of the late nineteenth century, provided few if any solutions to the horror of history's first global conflict, and the climate was right for radically new theological

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42. Letter of 26.10.25 to John Middleton Murry, *Letters* V:322, # 3516. See also # 3528 (*Letters* V:328):

Jesus is not the Creator, even of himself. And we have to go on being created. By the Creator. - More important to me than Jesus. - But of course God-the-Father, the Dieu-Père, is a bore. Jesus is as far as one can go with god, anthropomorphically. After that, no anthropos.

and 'don't bother any more about Jesus, or mankind, or yourself'. (*Letters* V:372, # 3588).

43. A notable exception being the German liberal, Adolf von Harnack. See K-J. Kuschel, *Born Before All Time?*, pp. 53-56.

44. Margaret Masson, "The Influence of Congregationalism", p. 14.

responses.<sup>45</sup>

Lawrence's reaction to the crises of faith of his era must be read in historical context: the substitution of phoenix and other symbols for the traditional Christian symbols of Easter will only make complete sense if we bear in mind the shape and form of the religion that Lawrence rejected, its rites and rhythms. Theologically he was ill informed: he had read Ernest Renan (1823-1892), whose *La Vie de Jesus* was the most popular (and populist) of the 'lives of Jesus' theological writings,<sup>46</sup> but unfortunately Renan's work was hardly of the highest calibre of scholarship or con-

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45. Besides Bultmann, Barth and Tillich, other notable theologians of this era include William Temple (1881-1944), the Catholic Lambert Beauduin (1873-1960), C.H. Dodd (1884-1973), and E.C. Hoskyns (1884-1937). The era produced the best work of P.T. Forsyth (1848-1921), whose influence on the Congregationalist Church was enormous: see Donald Davie, *A Gathered Church*, pp. 141-143. For the impact of German nationalism and militarism, on theology see Karl-Josef Kuschel, *Born Before all Time?*, pp. 97-98. Roman Catholic theology contemporary with Lawrence underwent 'a Second Spring' apparent by the 1920s (see R. William Franklin, "Johann Adam Möhler and Worship in a Totalitarian Society", *Worship*, Vol 67, No 1, January 1993, p. 11).

46. See *Sons and Lovers*, Penguin edition, p. 279. For comment on the origins, implications and impact of Renan's work see Peter Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987, pp. 152-3, and Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, translated by W. Montgomery, third edition, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1954, p. 4 and chapter xiii.

sistency of taste.<sup>47</sup> As one untrained in theology,<sup>48</sup> Lawrence was not in the best position to assess critically, only instinctively. Yet his instincts were not entirely different to some of his theologically trained contemporaries.

Paul Tillich, in his introduction to *The Protestant Era*, speaks of his need for a more poignant symbolism and sacramentality than the Protestantism of the early twentieth century could provide:

One of the earliest experiences I had with Protestant preaching was its moralistic character or, more exactly, its tendency to overburden the personal centre and to make the relation to God dependent on continuous, conscious decisions and experiences.

and

the trend of the younger generation in Europe toward the vital and pre-rational side of the individual and social life, the urgent desire for more community and authority and for powerful and dominating symbols ... seemed to prove that the Protestant-humanist ideal of personality has been undermined and that the Protestant cultus and its personal and social ethics have to undergo a far-reaching

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47. See Lawrence's letter to Reid of 15.10.07, *Letters* I:36f, (# 37), and Jessie Chambers' *D.H. Lawrence: A Personal Record*, p. 112: 'it is Jesus according to the likeness of Ernest Renan,' he is alleged to have said.

48. 'Lawrence shows very little knowledge of the language of theological controversy;' Martin Jarrett-Kerr, *D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence*, p. 130.

transformation.<sup>49</sup>.

Lawrence was responding to the same malaise as that faced by Tillich. The essay "Resurrection"<sup>50</sup> highlights Lawrence's need for and concern with societal collective and personal resurrection symbolism;

If Lawrence came to think that his own hunger for ceremonial action could be satisfied only by the Salvation Army or (later) by Aztec blood-sacrifice, the blame may lie at the door of the Congregationalism he was reared in, which could have supplied him with austere versions of the ceremony he craved, but apparently failed to do so.<sup>51</sup>

While Lawrence gathered together his own eclectic scheme of symbols, traditional Christian language continued to be useful to him:

49. British edition, translated by James Luther Adams, Nisbet, London, 1951. see especially p. xxxix. Margaret Masson draws attention to Tillich and to this passage in her thesis. Paul Tillich, like Lawrence, was aware of the need to incorporate *eros* into an understanding of theology and the world. Alexander C. Irwin, in *Eros Toward the World: Paul Tillich and the Theology of the Erotic*, (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991), explores in Tillich much that I am seeking to explore in Lawrence. Chong-wha Chung also associated Lawrence with Tillich: see "In Search of the Dark God", in Peter Preston and Peter Hoare, (Eds), *D.H. Lawrence and the Modern World*, p. 76.

50. Which was written while Lawrence was working on *The Plumed Serpent*; "Resurrection" and *The Plumed Serpent* therefore share motives like 'the bright morning star' and 'the bright Lords among men', with biblical or quasi-biblical tone. See Michael Herbert, in his introduction to *The Death of A Porcupine and Other Essays*, p. xxxv.

51. Donald Davie, *A Gathered Church*, p. 97.

I feel frightfully like weeping in a corner - not over myself - but perhaps my resurrection is too new, one must feel if the scars are not there, and wince - and one must see the other people all writhing and struggling and unable to give up.<sup>52</sup>

But Lawrence is able to turn traditional motives upon themselves: He writes, for example, of the entombment of Christianity:

Since the war, the world has been without a Lord. What is the Lord within us, [sic] has been walled up in the tomb. But three days have fully passed, and it is time to roll away the stone. It is time for the Lord in us to arise.<sup>53</sup>

In "Resurrection" the Christian resurrection motif stands as a call for a social rebirth, a sloughing of a previous dispensation of resurrectionless society:

D.H. Lawrence uses the Christian mystery of resurrection as a profound symbol for the emergence into living sensuality which he wanted to see humanity make in his time from the torpor ... of an over-intellectualized established religion that supported the economic and social status quo of an industrial society that turned people of flesh and blood into machines.<sup>54</sup>

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52. Letter to E.M. Foster, 28.01.15; *Letters* II:267 (# 850). —

53. "Resurrection"; *Death of a Porcupine*, p. 233: 16-19. Mark Spilka recognizes in "The Man Who Died" a call for the resurrection of the Church itself: *Love Ethic*, p. 229.

54. James C. Cowan, "D.H. Lawrence and the Resurrection of the Body", in Robert B. Partlow and Harry T. Moore (eds), *D.H. Lawrence: the Man who Lived*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1980, p. 94.

In this Lawrence was not alone: "Resurrection" was written when many theologians had demythologized the Christian resurrection motif to a similar idea. Margaret Masson sees one work, *The New Theology*, a controversial work by liberal Congregationalist theologian R.J. Campbell (1867-1956),<sup>55</sup> as significant for its influence on Lawrence. Lawrence read this work, and was dismissive of in a letter to Robert Reid dated 15th October 1907,<sup>56</sup> but it may have influenced him more so than he recognized.<sup>57</sup> Lawrence therefore must be read not only in the context of such theologians as Bultmann, Tillich, and Barth,<sup>58</sup> but in the light of theological fringe dwellers such as Campbell, Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), Henri Bergson (1859-1941), Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929), and perhaps Simone Weil

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55. Subsequently withdrawn from circulation by Campbell.

56. *Letters* I:36f, (# 37).

57. Margaret Masson, "The Influence of Congregationalism," pp. 25-27.

58. If Lawrence responds with alarm to the Protestant liberalism of Campbell, Barth's reaction to Campbell's theological tradition was sterner still: he refers to the heritage of Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Hermann, in which Campbell stood, as leading 'only [to] the plain destruction of Protestant theology and the Protestant Church'. *Church Dogmatics*, Vol I, Part 1, pp. xiii and xiv.

(1909-1943):<sup>59</sup> Lawrence was familiar with Bergson,<sup>60</sup> and a part of the same socio-theological climate that produced Schweitzer and Weil.

This was written at the time that Lawrence was working on his *Pansies*, in which he muses 'shall a man brace himself up / and lift his face and set his breast / and go forth to change the world?',<sup>61</sup> while in the same volume he writes of 'the risen Lord' who exclaims

Now I must conquer the fear of life  
the knock of blood in my wrists,  
the breath that rushes through my nose,  
of desires in the loins' dark twists.<sup>62</sup> <sup>the strife</sup>

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59. Bergson and Weil in particular shared Lawrence's abhorrence at the reduction of humanity to subservience to the machine, see Mark Spilka; *Love Ethic*, especially pp. 139-143, where Spilka refers to Gerald Crich and Loerke as symbols of industrial instrumentality, the machine as nemesis - or nadir - of Mill's Utilitarianism.

60. Lawrence's original response to Bergson was decidedly lukewarm: see his letter to Arthur McLeod, 23.04.13: 'Bergson bores me. He seems a bit thin;' *Letters* I:554 (# 573). However Bergson's impact on Lawrence's generation was enormous and all but unavoidable: see especially Paul Douglass, *Bergson, Eliot, & American Literature*, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 1986; Leszek Kolakowski, *Bergson*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1985; and A.E. Pilkington, *Bergson and his Influence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976.

61. "To Let Go Or To Hold On?", *Complete Poems*, p. 428.

62. "The Risen Lord", *Complete Poems*, p. 461. Margaret Masson draws attention to a sermon of the Rev'd Robert Reid in which 'the courage to face life' is extolled as a cardinal virtue. A resumé of the sermon appeared in *The Eastwood and Kimberley Advertiser*, June 21st, 1907. See Masson, "The Influence of Congregationalism", pp. 55-58.

If in these works Lawrence is 'thinking in poetry',<sup>63</sup> then he is attempting to articulate a resurrection that offers a new breed of person in society. It is a Nietzschean escape from mass moralities and mass mentalities that Lawrence seeks - a radical alternative to the nightmare vision near the end of *Women in Love*, in which Gerald Crich and his industry are reduced to wheels, cogs, and nameless functions.<sup>64</sup>

New rituals and new purposes are needed for this new breed; the 'old dead morality',<sup>65</sup> can be done away with because it has failed to avert the horrors either of industrialization or of global war, (and in the end they are part of the same horror, the depersonalization of society), and must be replaced with a society whose brief is no more specific than to 'conquer the fear of life',<sup>66</sup> to 'push back the stone',<sup>67</sup> or to 'honour the

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63. See M.J. Lockwood, *A Study of the Poems of D.H. Lawrence: Thinking in Poetry*, MacMillan, London, 1987.

64. *Women in Love*, pp. 524 ff. see also Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, pp. 167-170.

65. *Women in Love*, Penguin edition, p. 169.

66. From "The Risen Lord", *Complete Poems*, p. 461.

67. From "Resurrection", *Death of a Porcupine*, p. 235:28

flame'.<sup>68</sup>

Not all the resurrection motifs that Lawrence offers will be as obvious as, for example, that of "The Man Who Died," but it is my hope close scrutiny of a selection of them in their development and in the context in which Lawrence wrote them will provide a clearer understanding of the religious and social values for which Lawrence so determinedly strived.

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68. From "The Novel", *Study of Thomas Hardy*, p. 189:20. Emile Delavenay, in *D.H. Lawrence and Edward Carpenter*, (Heinemann, London, 1971, p. 199) offers another list of Laurentian resurrection motifs: the Crown, the Holy Ghost, 'a quick new desire to have new heaven and earth,' 'dual understanding,' 'death understood and life understood'. The notion of 'understanding life and death' seems to underlie the poem "Resurrection" (*Complete Poems*, pp. 743 ff), which first appeared in the depths of the despair of the war years, in 1917.