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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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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

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.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THREE POEMS

#### A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

I have chosen three poems,<sup>1</sup> from separate periods of Lawrence's life, in order to explore his treatment of resurrection imagery - and attitude to the institution whose primary task should be to act as a vehicle of resurrection imagery. While my study of Lawrence's poetry is primarily a thematic one, it will be important to bear in mind Hebe Mace's caution:

As useful as ... thematic studies have been, however, it seems to me that a great deal is lost by refusing to take Lawrence seriously as a poet.<sup>2</sup>

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1. The poem "Resurrection" itself is less useful for my purposes than might be imagined. It comes from the same period as the *Look! We Have Come Through!* sequence, but was not anthologized by Lawrence himself in *Look!*, or in his 1928 revisions that became the *Collected Poems*. The poem is written in an imaginary first person, without the raw personal touch of the *Look!* poems, perhaps accounting for Lawrence's omissions of it in future revisions and collections: certainly this abstract persona means the poem whose title is my theme becomes less valuable to a study of the resurrection theme itself.

2. Hebe R. Mace, "The Genesis of D.H. Lawrence's Poetic Form", in Dennis Jackson and Fleda Brown Jackson (eds); *Critical Essays on D.H. Lawrence*, G.K. Hall, Boston, 1988. p.189.

Mace's plea is an important one, though it should be held in tension with Lawrence's own claim that 'the novels and poems come unwatched out of one's pen'.<sup>3</sup>

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3. *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, Penguin edition, Harmondsworth, 1971. p. 15. This claim of Lawrence should not be taken at face value, unless we add the proviso that the copious revisions Lawrence made of many of his works are equally 'unwatched'. It is more likely that Lawrence meant that he wrote without consideration for the pruderies of society.

## A. "WEEKNIGHT SERVICE"

"Weeknight Service" is an early and relatively insignificant poem, and not Lawrence at his best. In it however, Lawrence addressed an overtly religious theme, the cycle of Church life symbolized by the ringing of bells for a midweek liturgy. Ecclesiastical cycles are to be important for Lawrence in *The Rainbow*, *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and *The Plumed Serpent*, so their appearance here is significant for an understanding of his thought. Liturgical cycles are a celebration of the chronology of night and day, and of the annual seasons on the one hand, and of the human longing for and understanding of resurrection, rebirth, and the rites of passage on the other.

Carole Ferrier,<sup>4</sup> finds significant variations in the genesis of this poem,<sup>5</sup> which was originally published in *Amores* in 1916. These variations provide

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4. Carol Ferrier, "The Earlier Poems of D.H. Lawrence: A Variorum Text, Comprising all Extant Incunabula and Published Poems up to and Including the Year 1919 (hence "Earlier Poems")", (Ph.D Thesis, two volumes, University of Auckland, 1971).

5. Pinto and Roberts record only slight reworking on the poem, and follow the *Amores* version.

clues to understanding Lawrence's changing attitude to the established Church and its symbols. Gail Porter Mandell rightly describes these attitudes as 'deep religious skepticism',<sup>6</sup> an important attitude to hold in tension with the insight of Harry T. Moore and others that Lawrence was a deeply religious writer.

Ferrier traces the poem to MS 1,<sup>7</sup> which she dates as being *circa* 1906, the year Lawrence entered Nottingham University College; also contained in it are his Latin notes.<sup>8</sup> It is impossible, beyond these hints, to pinpoint the beginnings of "Weeknight Service", since at least part of the poem is in good copy.<sup>9</sup> By the time it appears in MSS 19 and 22 "Weeknight Service" has received considerable revision

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6. Gail Porter Mandell, *The Phoenix Paradox: a Study of Renewal Through Change in the Collected Poems and Last Poems of D.H. Lawrence*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1984. p. 20.

7. Commentators since her Ferrier's work have generally followed her designation; This MS is now officially designated MS LaL2 by the University of Nottingham Library.

8. He sought help in Latin from the Rev'd Robert Reid in the period late 1906 to early 1907; see Lawrence's letters of 24.10.06 and 20.02.07, *Letters* I: 31, 34, (## 26 & 31).

9. The first three stanzas of the MS 1 version are in black pen, and the concluding stanza in pencil. Two other poems in the notebook, "A Still Afternoon in School" and "A Passing Bell" are similarly written with two different instruments, suggesting subsequent revision and addition. The remainder of the poems in the notebook, excepting the last three, seem to be written in good copy, making the original dates of these poems impossible to discern.



The adjectives used in the 1928 version<sup>12</sup> reveal a harsh authorial attitude towards the subject; the bells, 'insisting, protesting', will not engender sympathy from the hearer-persona or the reader.<sup>13</sup>

The repetition of 'endlessly' (ll. 6-7), combines with the strong masculine rhyme of 'dropping' and 'stopping' to create a mantric rhythm,<sup>14</sup> emulating the strident and cacophonous tedium of the bells. The church tower becomes a tower-as-Babel image, on which the reader remains focused,<sup>15</sup> while the adjective

12. In MSS 1, 19, & 22 the bells are 'eagerly calling', allowing an interpretation of forgivable and attractive naïvety, rather than the later brash note of arrogance engendered by 'stridently'. Similar revisions towards a harsher attitude to Clifford Chatterley in the *Lady Chatterley* text took place over the same period in which these poems were revised.

13. In line 3 of MSS 1, 19, 22 and *Amores*, the bells are 'imploring and protesting', a tone more conducive to sympathetic response. To implore is to elicit sympathy, from the Latin *ploro*; to insist is more belligerent, from the Latin *sisto*, to stand.

14. Anaïs Nin (*D.H. Lawrence: An Unprofessional Study*, Edward M. Titus, Paris, 1932) comments on Lawrence's sense of rhythm, visible in poetic and prosaic writings alike. Ross Parmenter cites Nin's observation in *Lawrence in Oaxaca*, Peregrine Smith Books, Salt Lake City, 1984, p. 50; without publication details.

15. In the opening pages of *The Rainbow* tower imagery is different in intention; Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun*, p. 50 sees the tower as symbolizing potential for the Church to provide 'something standing above and beyond human life'. Mark Spilka, however, sees the tower as 'an outworn form of spirituality', (*Love Ethic*, p. 95) a reading of *The Rainbow* that is certainly more consistent with the external evidence provided by this poem. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, too, a tower is to take on a sinister role; Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1960 (repr., with Introduction and notes by John Lyon, 1990).

'spattering', not present in previous drafts,<sup>16</sup> confuses auditory and visual motifs.

Lawrence's rhythm is irregular but purposeful. After a weak, unstressed opening, the first line of each stanza ends on a stressed syllable, pitching the reader forward to the following lines. In the first stanza each subsequent line begins and ends on unstressed syllables, so the promise of momentum engendered by the first line remains unfulfilled, each line ending in caesura. The bells' strident invitation remains without rhythm or harmony, disunited and discordant.

In the second stanza 'The silver moon / That somebody has spun so high' introduces the image of moon-as-coin to the poem. Lawrence suggests that this moon-as-coin's task is to adjudicate on some question; he seeks to avoid a defined question demanding a 'yes or no' answer,<sup>17</sup> and the line 'to settle the question,

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16. Previous drafts spoke, with variations, of the bells 'falling into gabbling incoherence never resting / spattering showers from bursten sky rockets dropping / in splashes of sound, continually, never stopping / From the tower on the town, but endlessly, never stopping'. Problems of tautology and of the inappropriate 'pretyness' of the splashes of sound detract from the harsh note of the final version.

17. All early manuscripts and *Amores* read differently to the 1928 text, when the earlier 'To settle the question, yes or no, has caught ...' is altered to 'To settle the question, heads or tails? has caught ...'.

heads or tails?' gives no answer to the question, nor hint as to what the answer signifies. The moon adjudicates with 'a smooth, bland smile up there in the sky', the words 'up there'<sup>18</sup> emphasizing the otherness of the moon, its transcendence and superiority to the bells, while a 'little star' 'jests' at the bells' obscenity.<sup>19</sup> The moon-as-coin is silver, spun eternally to settle some unidentified question, but it is caught at the mid-point of its arc, trapped in 'the net of the night's balloon', able only to 'smile blandly', or, when joined by 'a little star', to make 'tittering jests' at the bells' obscene intrusion.<sup>20</sup>

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18. These words are a late inclusion that serve both logical and rhythmical sense. They add an extra iambic foot to the line, further separating two anapaestic feet, so that the rhythm distances the moon from its observer: 'And sits | with a smooth | bland smile | in the sky' becomes 'And sits | with a smooth | bland smile | up there | in the sky'. The later line is five footed, long, irregular, creating a sense of distance from the moon.

19. By 1928 'obscenity', has replaced the earlier 'insanity', maintaining the rhythm, but replacing a notion of pardonable mental failure with an action of deliberate and sheer offensiveness. The word 'obscenity' is used in this poem in a manner different to that of the essay "Pornography and Obscenity"; in that essay the word refers to the use of words defined by the law courts as obscene, but which can in context be a thing of great beauty. In this poem the greater obscenity is the belligerence of a religious instrument/symbol which has lost its potency, but which continues to serve a religion whose adherents are still 'protesting / they are right.'

20. The final line of this second stanza is a break in Lawrence's management of the poem: what is the referent of the emphasized masculine pronoun, 'as if he knew aught'? If it is the star, it is bewildering to find such a minor 'character' in the action adjudged ignorant at a climactic moment in the stanza.

For Lawrence, the moon comes to be a symbol of far more than feminine impulses: 'it represents feelings, values, ideals which have become fixed, known, conscious'.<sup>21</sup> Its masculinity in this stanza is consistent with Lawrence's symbolism.<sup>22</sup> But in the negative assessment, 'as if...', are the star and moon found as hollow and despicable as the bells themselves? If this statement does not refer to the moon, then she is merely 'smooth' and 'bland', caught in a web of potential that remains unfulfilled in its mission of pronouncing judgment.

Each of the pre-publication drafts reveals changes, and *Amores* differs considerably from that of *Collected Poems*: from

The light distresses her eyes, and tears  
Her old blue cloak, so she crouches and covers her face  
Smiling, perhaps, if we knew it, at the bells' loud  
[clattering disgrace,

in the *Amores* (1916) version, to the 1928 *Collected Poems* version:

The noise distresses her ears, and tears  
At her tattered silence, as she crouches and covers her face

21. Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, p. 151.

22. Waltraud Mitgusch emphasizes Lawrence's later willingness to fly in the face of stereotypes - if only out of the confusion of his own definition of sex roles, and the disparity between his art and his own sexual insecurities. See "The Image of the Female", p. 10.

Bent, if we did but know it, on a weary and bitter grimace.

The stanza is problematical. The 'bitter grimace' is an appropriate response for the moon, but we are left with an ambiguity, a rhyme that works only on a second reading, when it becomes clear that 'tears' is a verb rhyming with 'cares', not a noun rhyming with 'ears'. Is this an 'eye-rhyme', or an awkward half-rhyme? In a more important poem Lawrence may well have sorted out this discrepancy.

In the final stanza Lawrence returns the perspective from the celestial to the local, from the moon to the 'wise old trees'. A passing car is introduced in a forced attempt to emphasize the degree to which the poet feels the Church, as it is symbolized, has failed in its vocation. The 'car' is for Lawrence a symbol of the machine, of mechanization's destruction of life.<sup>23</sup>

Lawrence has moved beyond his bells-as-Babel

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23. For Lawrence on motor vehicles specifically see Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun*, p. 162. Lawrence's comments on mechanization are myriad, but see especially *Kangaroo*, (edition cited, p. 182), where together with 'abstraction', 'mechanization' is described as 'that worst of male vices'. In *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover* Lawrence remarks 'the machine has killed the earth for us, making it a surface, more or less bumpy, that you travel over', (pp. 86f), while in *Mornings in Mexico* he remarks 'thank God, in Mexico at least one can't set off in the "machine"'. (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1986, p. 15).

metaphor; the bells have reached the sky to the extent that the moon, a star, and the night itself, as well as the trees and a passing car, are all touched by the sound. Unlike Yahweh of the biblical babel narrative, however, these unwilling hearers leave the church to its 'droning', its 'shadows and wailing', and its 'ghosts'.

The last stanza shows Lawrence's ability to control his poetic form, as lengthening lines provide a sombre atmosphere, reminiscent of the evening hymns that might be about to be sung in the church, and with which Lawrence was familiar from his youth. The ghosts have not yet reached their cenotaph in this version, and like the moon-as-coin never will. At the same time, the inhabitants of the heavens will continue to bicker:

- The wise old trees  
 [25] Drop their leaves with faint sharp hiss of contempt;  
       A car at the end of the street goes by with a laugh  
       As by degrees  
       The damned bells cease, and we are exempt,  
       And the stars can chaff  
 [30] The cool high moon at their ease; while the droning church  
       Is peopled with shadows and wailing, and last ghosts lurch  
       Towards its cenotaph.

The bells, now 'damned', cease 'by degrees', but exactly who is the referent of 'we', and from what 'we are exempt' is unclear. Stars, now plural, and moon continue to provide insufficient contrast with bells-as-church because they succeed in providing the

alternative only of celestial bickering. The church, whose bells have at least lured ghosts, is peopled only with 'shadows and wailing', and has (or is?) only a cenotaph as its place of welcome for these approaching, lurching ghosts.<sup>24</sup>

By 1916, when *Amores* was published, Lawrence had, in Keith Sagar's words, 'radically revised' his attitude to Christianity<sup>25</sup> and was reading the letters of St. Bernard.<sup>26</sup> Has Lawrence, by the time of *Collected Poems*, once more grown critical of the rituals of Christianity, at least in so far as they fall short of his expectations, and hardened his attitude to the Church that he tries to symbolize with the bells? Parallel hardenings of his attitude to Clifford Chatterley suggests that the Church was not the only institution incurring Lawrence's wrath, but with it much of the fabric of English society.

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24. As the story "Glad Ghosts" makes clear, the tragic ghosts are the living ones, who are presumably intended here.

25. Keith Sagar, *D.H. Lawrence: Life into Art*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1985. pp. 253ff.

26. See Lawrence's letter of 16.07.16 to Catherine Carswell, *Letters* II:633, (# 1263). Carswell reproduced this letter in *The Savage Pilgrimage*, (republished by Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981), see pp. 49-57, explaining that it was a response to a letter of hers in which 'I certainly told him his attitude to property seemed to admit something of the Christian Spirit.' *Savage Pilgrimage*, p. 52. Paul Tillich's theology of Eros, though not traceable to any influence of St Bernard, shares a common affirmation of the erotic.

Lawrence's attitude to Christianity itself is not entirely dismissive. But he is critical of its failure to live up to and to re-present its central symbols with any potency, and it is this failed Church that he symbolizes in the bells-as-church metaphor of this poem.

It is a tribute to Lawrence that he was prepared to turn back and rework such an unimportant poem as this. Nevertheless his intention in this poem is muddled by a perspective that changes from the cosmic personifications of moon and stars to the localized anthropomorphisms of trees and car. Yet it is precisely in its rawness, despite twenty-one or more years of sporadic attention, that "Weeknight Service" becomes a key to Lawrence's attitude to the Christian Church and to the central symbols of the faith:

Long after Lawrence had ceased to believe  
in Christianity, he still needed its  
potent symbolism as a means of  
understanding himself in relation to the  
whole.<sup>27</sup>

For Lawrence the Church as represented in this poem is no more than a tomb, a sepulchre to a previous age and

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27. Keith Sagar, *Life into Art*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1985, p. 300.

a previous people.<sup>28</sup> The sacking of the Catholic Church in the "Auto da Fé" chapter of *The Plumed Serpent*, and the replacement there of traditional Catholic icons with the symbols of Lawrence's 'dark gods', or the 'entombment of Christianity' to which Lawrence refers in "Resurrection",<sup>29</sup> are explorations of the same malaise. So too are his words to Catherine Carswell, 'The great Christian tenet must be surpassed, there must be something new: neither the war, nor the turning the other cheek [sic]'.<sup>30</sup> The events that lay behind Lawrence's change of perspective were primarily the events of global war, 1914-1918. For Lawrence this represented

the end of democracy, the end of the ideal of liberty and freedom and democracy, the end of the brotherhood of man, the end of the idea of the perfectability of man, the end of the belief in the reign of love, the end of the belief that man desires peace, tranquility, love, and lovingkindness all the while. The end of Christianity, the end of Jesus. The end of idealism, the end of the idealistic ethic. The end of Plato and Kant, as well as Jesus. The end of science, as an absolute knowledge. The end of the absolute power

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28. Even a people whose remains, by definition of a sepulchre, remain elsewhere.

29. *Death of a Porcupine*, p. 233: 16-19.

30. See *The Savage Pilgrimage* p. 53, also *Letters* II:634.

of the Word. The end, the end, the end.<sup>31</sup>

Karl Barth responded in a similar way to the outbreak of war. Barth, influenced by the same schools of liberal theological scholarship that influenced Lawrence via the Rev'd Reid's Congregationalism, experienced bitter disillusionment with the liberal theologians who courted the Kaiser's favour, and who failed to speak out against his expansionist programmes:

So there had been [for Barth] a twilight of the gods; the foundations had been shaken.<sup>32</sup> Here a theologian had instinctively noticed what a writer like Hermann Hesse ... had understood in his own way. On 1 August 1914 the world had become a different place: the old gods had been cast down, the old foundations shaken, the old securities shattered.<sup>33</sup>

Lawrence clearly did not write his poem, in or before 1907, with such lofty sentiments, but as the revisions went on he sought to make it a vehicle for his

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31. From *The Frieda Lawrence Collection of D.H. Lawrence Manuscripts: A Descriptive Bibliography*, edited by E.W. Tedlock, New Mexico, 1948, and quoted by Keith Sagar, *Life into Art*, p. 256. Since Sagar quoted this passage it has been reproduced in *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*, "On Taking the Next Step", p. 387, ll. 20-28.

32. A phrase borrowed from Paul Tillich. See *The Shaking of the Foundations*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1949.

33. Karl-Josef Kuschel, *Born Before All Time?* p. 62. Barth became christologically neo-orthodox, and sociologically a socialist, joining the Socialist Party of Switzerland in 1915.

awareness that post-Schleiermacher Christianity, or the Christian pietism and liberalism of the Eastwood Chapel to which he had been exposed, had failed to address the annihilation of pre-war Europe:

If I had lived in the year four hundred,  
pray God, I should have been a true and  
passionate Christian. The adventurer. But  
now I live in 1924, and the Christian  
venture is done. The adventure is gone out  
of Christianity. We must start on a new  
venture towards God.<sup>34</sup>

The bells observed in the poem were ringing out only a midweek service; this must be held in tension with Lawrence's sympathetic treatment of Ursula Brangwen's search for 'the Sunday world' of Christian symbolism, and the sense of the extra-ordinary that 'day of resurrection' should ideally represent. Nevertheless it must be concluded that throughout the twenty-one years of revision of this poem Lawrence increasingly emphasizes his initial sense that the 'old church' has provided no adequate symbolism framework for his search for 'dark gods'.

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34. From the essay "Books", quoted in Keith Sagar, *Life into Art*, p. 257; see *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, p. 200.

## B. "SONG OF A MAN WHO HAS COME THROUGH".

The title of this poem, from the *Look! We Have Come Through!* sequence is, like the volume title, a resurrection motif.<sup>35</sup> The poem was written when Lawrence married Frieda Weekley, when imagery of new life and new beginnings were clearly on his mind. He wrote to Sallie Hopkin 'I don't feel a changed man, but I suppose I am one'.<sup>36</sup> The poem is more exultant than the letter, a celebration not of 'coming through', but of 'being through', 'born to the new direction of time'. The sequence is

pivotal in his description of the self. On the one hand it represents the old world (and the old self it has produced) that is only gradually passing away; on the other it treats of the process of individual renewal through the destruction of the old self, which can serve as a model of regeneration for others.<sup>37</sup>

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35. Erwin Steinberg refers to this poem as 'a pivotal poem', (*D.H. Lawrence Review*, Vol 11, Spring 1978). Gail Porter Mandell sees the entire *Look!* sequence as one of death and resurrection, (see *The Phoenix Paradox*, pp 79 ff), while Herbert M. Orrell refers to Lawrence as 'poet of death and resurrection' in his article of that name, *Cresset*, Vol 34, March 1971.

36. Letter of 13.06.14; *Letters* II:196 (# 756).

37. Gail Porter Mandell, *The Phoenix Paradox*, p. 80. The motif of marriage as resurrection appears also in *Women in Love*: 'this marriage with her was his resurrection and his life.' Penguin edition, p. 417.

This wind that blows through the 'poet-persona' blows not into the 'softness' or the 'heart full of security' of the previous poem,<sup>38</sup> but through the 'chaos of the world' to the realm of the 'Hesperides', where the poet himself may become a 'good well-head'.<sup>39</sup> It is the task of the poet to be open to the Muse, who is the motivity, the unconscious,<sup>40</sup> or what Sagar calls the 'invisible wandering energies',<sup>41</sup> of the world. The poem celebrates the 'Not-I' wind, acknowledges the authority and impact of the muse, just as in the biblical phrase it echoes<sup>42</sup> a higher authority than the

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38. "Song of a Man who is Loved", omitted from the original publication of *Look!* at the insistence of the publishers. See Ferrier, "The Earlier Poetry," Vol I, p. 22; and Lawrence's letter to Pinker of 03.08.17, *Letters* III:145f (# 1437).

39. For Lawrence a well-head is 'the true unconscious' and 'the fountain of real motivity.' *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, Penguin edition, p. 207. qv. "Study of Thomas Hardy": 'a man is a well-head built over a strong, perennial spring and enclosing it in, a well-head whence the water may be drawn at will.' *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, p. 32 (32:5ff).

40. '[I]f we could fathom our own *unconscious* sapience, we should find we have courage and to spare.' *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, p. 221. Lawrence's emphasis.

41. Keith Sagar, *Life into Art*, p. 32.

42. Joseph's response to the Pharaoh, 'Not I, but God' (Genesis 41.16). Claus Westermann remarks that Joseph 'rejects a commendation that he does not deserve ... the answer will not be a demonstration of his skill in interpreting; the interpretation like the dream will come from God.' *Genesis 37-50: a Commentary*, translated by John Scullion, SPCK, London, 1987, p 89. Lawrence, like Joseph, seeks to credit his inspirational source rather than himself: for Joseph the source is Yahweh, while for the poet-persona it is the dark god of sexuality, the 'Not-I'.

self is acknowledged and invoked. Underlying the poem is the Hebrew *ruarch* of God, the Old Testament word normally translated into English as 'wind', 'ghost' or 'spirit'.<sup>43</sup> In Lawrence's pneumatological scheme it is often the task of the Spirit/Ghost to bridge the chasm between Father and Son, to reconcile opposites. In this poem, where a number of opposites are set up and contrasted, there takes place a point of merging, the merging that is the task of Lawrence's Holy Ghost, the *ruarch*. The fact that it is the poet-I who is being reconciled and merged with an opposite by the intervention of the 'Not-I' is inevitable at this time in Lawrence's life, for there are many reconciliations of opposites at work in Lawrence's life at this time.<sup>44</sup>

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43. So too Keith Sagar, *Life into Art*, p. 32. For a comprehensible but brief historical account of the word *ruarch* see Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, translated by Margaret Kohl, SCM, London, 1992, pp. 40-42. Moltmann finds the origins of the word to be onomatopoeic, a 'tempest', good or evil, such as that which 'parted the waters' at the Exodus. Lawrence never moves far beyond his Congregationalist upbringing in his theological language. He uses 'wind' in this way in *Kangaroo*, though that was written in 1922: Penguin edition, p. 134.

44. Lawrence is, as Gail Porter Mandell remarks, entering into 'the first sustained experience of otherness through sexual union': *The Phoenix Paradox*, p. 80. For a hypothetical dating of this poem see Jules Zanger, "D.H. Lawrence's Three Strange Angels", *Papers in English Language and Literature*, Vol 1, 1965, pp. 185-186:

Since Frieda's long awaited divorce decree, delayed by her unwillingness to give up her children, had finally been granted on May 28, 1914, and she and Lawrence were married on July 13 in Kensington, it would reasonably appear that the triumphant conclusion, to which the 'three strange angels' of the poem refers, was the marriage of Lawrence and Frieda.

Male and female, in biblical terms, are merged as 'one flesh' in the act of marriage. The *ruarch* is traditionally seen to be the 'feminine' aspect of God,<sup>45</sup> in Jungian terms the '*anima*', with which the *animus* of Lawrence must merge in his commitment to Frieda. This was also the time at which European politics were coming to a head, and that the two nations represented by Lawrence and Frieda were about to be caught up on opposite sides of global conflict.

Many of the poems in the sequence leading up to this "Song" are poems of darkness: 'I wish it would be completely dark everywhere,/ inside me, and out, heavily dark,/ utterly',<sup>46</sup> and 'In the darkness we are all gone, we are gone with the trees,/ And the restless river; - we are lost and gone with all these.'<sup>47</sup> In the darkness, even in face of the fear of mutilation, Lawrence dares to hope:

She has not chosen me finally, she suspends her choice.  
Night folk, Tuatha de Danaan,<sup>48</sup> dark Gods govern her sleep,

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45. For the femininity of *ruarch*/Spirit see eg. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, pp. 157-158; for the feminine *sophia*, which influenced both christology and pneumatology, see K-J Kuschel, *Born Before All Time?*, pp. 185-207.

46. From "And Oh - That the Man I am Might Cease to Be", an annihilation-wish title preceding the resurrection titles of 'being loved' and 'coming through.' *ibid* p. 205.

47. From "In the Dark", *ibid.*, p. 211.

48. See also *Kangaroo*, Penguin edition, p. 251.

Magnificent ghosts of the darkness, carry off  
[her decision in sleep,  
Leave her no choice, make her lapse me-ward, make her,  
Oh Gods of the living Darkness, powers of Night.<sup>49</sup>

space frightens and confounds me.<sup>51</sup>

Out of this pain the longed for breakthrough comes, and the poet becomes first 'a man who is loved', then recognizes himself as having 'come through'.<sup>52</sup> It is eventually 'between her breasts' that Lawrence finds a home, and in so doing knows himself resurrected.

'Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!' The exultant tone of this opening and ironically verbless line can only be understood in the context of the poems Lawrence has placed before it. He has challenged us to read the poems sequentially, regardless of their order of composition:

These poems should not be considered separately, as so many single pieces. They are intended as an essential story, or history, or confession, unfolding one from the other in organic development.<sup>53</sup>

He has already warned us to expect some form of resurrection:

The conflict of love and hate goes on  
between the man and the woman, and between

51. From "Song of a Man Who is not Loved", *Collected Poems*, p. 222.

52. He has come through the fear that Frieda would turn away from him to return to her children, swallowed up by the mores of a society that would not accept or recognize the love-claim Lawrence was placing upon her.

53. Foreword to "Unrhyming Poems": *Complete Poems*, p. 191.

these two and the world around them, till it reaches some sort of conclusion, they transcend into some condition of blessedness.<sup>54</sup>

And he has provided a key by which to interpret the 'wind' that 'blows through me'. It is the wind that 'is blowing in the new direction of Time',

The quivering, nimble hour of the present, this is the quick of Time. This is the immanence. The quick of the universe is the *pulsating, carnal self*, mysterious and palpable.<sup>55</sup>

Lawrence has captured the significance of an eternal present, and opted to be caught up into it, liberated to do so by Frieda's decision to join and be married to him. He was later, in the midst of war, to write to Lady Cynthia Asquith: 'The fact of resurrection is everything now: whether we dead can rise from the dead, and love, and live, in a new life, here,'<sup>56</sup> holding his own breakthrough in relationship with Frieda in tension with the near apocalyptic events of First World War Europe.

Lawrence has stressed, in "Poetry and the Present", his commitment to *vers libre* as vehicle for

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54. "Argument" to "Unrhyming Poems:" *ibid.*

55. "Poetry of the Present", *ibid.*, p. 183.

56. *Letters* II:420 (# 1033).

the poetic thought of 'all will-be and has-been'. But his finely tuned sense of rhythm and his ear for rhyme gave his 'free verse' a structure more associated with earlier, traditional forms.<sup>57</sup> Close analysis of the opening line of this poem reveals the following stress pattern:

x /    x /    x x /    x /    /    x  
Not I,| not I,| but the wind| that blows| through me.

Emphasis is placed on the iambic 'not I', while the action of the wind, the 'Not-I', is portrayed by an expansion of the iambic syllables, as it were 'flowing over' to the end of the line. Syllables 5-11 of the line are less weighted than the opening four, relying on longer vowel sounds. The shift of rhythm following the fourth syllable, from the 'heavy' iambs (x/|x/) of the opening, through the anapaestic rapidity of 'but the wind', (xx/), to the symmetrical iambic and pyrrhic construct of the final four syllables, (x/|/x), forms a caesura: 'Not I, Not I' forms for the ear a sentence in its own right, a truth-claim of which the following words are explanation, dilution, or enlargement.<sup>58</sup>

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57. This is one reason why Hebe Mace's challenge to apply close critical techniques to Lawrence's poetry should be taken seriously, a challenge to apply to Lawrence's poetry an ear and eye open to rhythms 'more complex than a standard scansion might indicate'. Hebe R. Mace, "The Genesis of Lawrence's Poetic Form", p. 194.

58. The heavy stress placed on the disclaimer 'Not I, not I' supports my belief that Lawrence is 'singing' of the 'Not-I' itself, rather than its impact on the poet.

'Not I' becomes a noun rather than a disclaimer, a naming of the wind that is to be the subject of the second part of the line.

The major stressed syllables in the second line are 'new' and 'time', with 'fine', 'blow', the middle syllable of 'direction', and perhaps 'wind' each receiving a slightly lesser stress:

x / x(?)! x / x! x /! x / x! x /  
A fine wind! is blowing! the new! direction! of time.

The shorter bi-syllabic feet of the second line, ('the new' and 'of time'), provide emphatic stress, and like the four opening syllables of the poem are 'heavy' iambs. The remaining metrical units are tri-syllabic: 'a fine wind', 'is blowing', and 'direction', each in an unstressed/stressed/unstressed (x/x) pattern, though the stress on 'wind' may be read as equal to that on 'fine'. 'New' and 'Time' are the key concepts Lawrence wants us to extract from the poem, and from the *Look!* sequence of which it is a part, so he places these words into shorter metrical units, giving the reader's voice a chance to fall more heavily on them. And he allows an adjectival ambivalence to open the line; this 'fine' wind is both a 'good' and an 'accurate', 'selective', or 'narrow' wind, blowing through the poet to the eternal present that is the Bergsonian 'new direction of time'.

In the third line the poet opens himself to the wish to be borne by the Not-I. The emphasized phrase is 'carry me', which is repeated, and which is prefigured in the first wish 'if only I let it bear me'. Lawrence now introduces onomatopoeic effect, with long vowel sounds emphasizing and echoing the presence and work of the wind:

If only I let it bear me, carry me, if only it carry me!  
If only I am sensitive, subtle, oh, delicate, a winged gift!<sup>59</sup>

Lawrence's lines 3-4 express his wish for greater intimacy with and yielding to the Not-I.<sup>60</sup>

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59. Lawrence unknowingly approaches the rapture of Hopkins, who uses similar method:

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.  
(from "God's Grandeur").

Hopkins' lines are equally 'windy', and are similar in length, rhythm, and the exclamatory syllable. Each poet is celebrating his experience of the Holy Ghost, the *ruarch* that has impacted upon his consciousness. Hopkins' poems were not published by Bridges until 1918, so there can be no question of mimesis, yet there is a sense in which each poet is a nature poet, celebrates a dark God or gods, and is powerfully aware of the rhythm and sound of his words, in poetry and prose alike.

60. Line 4 contains one of only two known textual alterations by Lawrence to the poem, from 'If only I am sensitive, subtle, oh, delicate as a winged gift!' to 'If only I am sensitive, subtle, oh, delicate, a winged gift!': the corrected version is rhythmically more terse, with a slight caesura applying a brake before the key wish that is expressed in the three following lines. The change also means Lawrence replaces the simile with a stronger metaphorical construction, while avoiding the overdone sibilance of the first half of the line, which in the revised version



god, as ... in Mesopotamia and Egypt.<sup>61</sup>

Lawrence would have been exposed to chaos-imagery not only from his Congregationalist upbringing, but also from his fascination with the legends and gods of other cultures.

The darkness of ancient cosmogonies is not the absence of light but the presence of a sinister threat, a threat of destruction to the natural order. It is present not only in Hebrew mythology: 'we find the doctrine that the world came out of darkness among the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Indians, the Greeks, the Chinese'.<sup>62</sup> The Dionysian rites that were later to become a hallmark of Lawrence's religious consciousness are a celebration of darkness, a ritual attempt to ward off the fear of chaos by embracing and celebrating its presence. Christopher Pollnitz draws attention to this Laurentian celebration of darkness, quoting the poem "Grapes": 'Our pale day is sinking into twilight, / and

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61. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, p. 104; the Hebrew word is *chosek*.

62. H. Gunkel, *"Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen 1 und Ap Joh 12"*, quoted in Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-12*, p. 104. This article of Gunkel was published in 1895 (reprinted 1921): while Lawrence was no biblical scholar the findings of the religio-historical school, of which Gunkel was a leading representative, were freely accessible and enormously influential - as pervasive as the philosophy of Bergson - by 1914. cf Stephen Neill, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1961*, second edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1966, pp. 240 & 244.

if we sip the wine, we find dreams coming upon us / Out of the imminent night.'<sup>63</sup> Keith Sagar also comments on "Grapes" and on the *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* collection, noting that Lawrence's adoption of an animistic, non-European consciousness is a move towards 'the dark gods of his own soul'.<sup>64</sup>

Pollnitz makes clear that this journey towards celebration of darkness begins far earlier than "The Song of a Man Who Has Come Through", and is apparent in the early poem "Discord in Childhood". Pollnitz suggests that this fascination with darkness has its roots in Lawrence's relationship with his father. Freudian analysis of a corpus of writings can be a risky and conjectural process, but it is worth noting the significance of the strong man who emerges daily from the underworld, the wrathful father who neither Lawrence nor his siblings can easily appease. Certainly in the same way that Blake choreographs a marriage of heaven and hell, Lawrence increasingly celebrates the

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63. *Complete Poems*, p. 286. See Christopher Pollnitz, "Raptus Virginis", in Mara Kalnins (ed), *D.H. Lawrence: Centenary Essays*, Bristol Classical Press, Bristol, 1986. p. 126.

64. See *Life into Art*, p. 210.

fusion of Pluto and Persephone.<sup>65</sup>

In line 5 the poet expresses the longing to be borrowed by the Not-I, and it is the Not-I that, in line 7, 'takes its course through the chaos of the world'. The subject of the poem is the Not-I's impact on the I; the subject of each sentence, therefore, shifts perspective from I to Not-I, from self to wind, as the poet explores this impact.<sup>66</sup> Having voiced the longing to be 'borrowed' by the chisel-like wind, the poet yearns further to be 'keen and hard like the sheer tip of a wedge / Driven by invisible blows'. It is at this point that the Pluto/Persephone myth - or its focal symbolism - can become an important interpretive key.

In the myth Pluto, or Dis,<sup>67</sup> carries Persephone to the underworld, holding her captive. She is permitted

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65. Perhaps he sees a redemption of the unhappy coming together of his own parents in the fusion of his life with that of Frieda Weekley. It is the legitimizing of this fusion, Lawrence and Frieda, that has been the work of the Not-I, the *ruarch* of this "Song".

66. Ross Murfin, in approaching these central lines of the first stanza, confuses the relationship between the subject, the 'I', (the poet's self), and the object to which this 'I' yields in line 5, the Not-I. See *The Poetry of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 53. Certainly it is not the 'world', as Murfin suggests, that is the wind, nor is the 'world ... like a fine, an exquisite chisel.'

67. 'Dis' is both an alternative name for Pluto and an alternative name for Hades, the underworld where Pluto dwells.

to return to her mother above ground for six months of every year. Persephone therefore becomes a symbol of nature's processes of renewal and regeneration,<sup>68</sup> while Pluto is a symbol of masculine sexuality.<sup>69</sup> Lawrence is here therefore affirming sexual freedom as a catalyst for personal and societal regeneration.<sup>70</sup>

M.J. Lockwood sees "Song of a Man Who has Come Through" as adding 'some kind of symmetrical roundedness',<sup>71</sup> to the *Look!* sequence, while at the same time preparing the reader for the integration and regeneration myths of *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, in which Pluto and Persephone continue to feature strongly. In "Pomegranate" Lawrence creates what Christopher Pollnitz refers to as an 'arcane' poem

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68. The seasonal cycle so important to Lawrence in *The Rainbow*.

69. Lawrence is never wholly consistent in his use of the 'dark gods' of ancient mythologies and tends to confuse the roles of his deities. Pluto takes on attributes of Dionysus: unlike Pluto, Dionysus is not an abductor or a rapist, but his rites are orgiastic.

70. A theme further explored in works such as "St Mawr", where the stallion symbolizes male sexuality, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and the last travel book, *Etruscan Places*: it is a theme that has appeared as early as *The White Peacock*, where the Dionysian love songs of Bizet's opera *Carmen* form a background of 'wild feeling' and 'hints of freedom' for the wedding night of George and Meg. George, however, squanders away his potency, and ends his life in ruin, or *mauvais fois*, for Lawrence was at that time not yet prepared to offer his own resurrection symbolism.

71. *Poetry of D. H. Lawrence*, p. 88.

within the greater poem.<sup>72</sup> Within this inner poem, says Pollnitz, 'the speaker lays claim to an ancient knowledge, the knowledge of an initiate'. The poem operates on at least two narrative levels,<sup>73</sup> referring not only to the fruit, but to the stone quarry or 'latomy' at Syracuse (l. 4). This quarry is described by Thucydides as 'a deep and narrow place',<sup>74</sup> particularly recognizable as a yonnic<sup>75</sup> symbol when it is noted that the latomy at Syracuse is the place where more than 7000 Athenian youths died of starvation in 413 ad.: Lawrence refers to a tradition whereby the women of Syracuse 'laughed above the latomia',<sup>76</sup> the Magna Mater laughing at the absorption of the phallus within the yonni, knowing that in this act there is both the destruction of masculine potency and the beginning of regeneration. The mutilation feared by Lawrence in the poem "Mutilation" is separation from Frieda; the mutilation that is absorption into the

72. Christopher Pollnitz, *"Raptus Virginis"*, p. 113. I am following Pollnitz' reasoning in discussion of the poem "Pomegranate".

73. See S. Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1981.

74. Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book VII. Pollnitz is referring to the edition translated by Benjamin Jowett, Oxford. 1900. Vol II, p. 87.

75. ie. vaginal: For similar conclusions see Gail Porter Mandeli, *The Phoenix Paradox*, p. 106, where she compares the 'fruit' poems of the *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* collection to the penultimate chapter of *Fantasia of the Unconscious*.

76. *Letters* III:509, n. 1.

'fissure' ("Pomegranate" l. 19) is a regenerative mutilation.<sup>77</sup> Only as the poet-persona of "Song of a Man Who has Come Through" yields to the will and impact of the wind, which Frank Kermode sees as a phallic impetus,<sup>78</sup> will the rock split like the later latomy image from Syracuse, and wonder and the Hesperides be attained. Lawrence later wrote in a letter to Philip Hesselstine 'When man and woman come together in love, that is the great *immediate* synthesis.'<sup>79</sup>

The Hesperides are mythical maidens in an Eden-like garden, guarding the tree that bears the golden apples of Aphrodite.<sup>80</sup> The synthesis in Lawrence and Frieda of male and female, in contrast to the global coming together in war of the nations from which they originated, provides atonement, setting aside of

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77. In *The Golden Bough* Frazer emphasizes that the pomegranate was sacred to Dionysus, whose orgiastic cult Lawrence has entwined with the Pluto/Persephone myth.

78. Frank Kermode, *D.H. Lawrence*, Fontana Press, London, 1973, pp. 141-142. Alexander Irwin draws attention to similar usage in Paul Tillich's thought, wherein 'Eros becomes the drive towards the reunion of the separated' (*Eros Toward the Word*, p. 7), and 'eros has the greatness of a divine-human power' (*ibid.*, p. 1, quoting Paul Tillich's *Love, Power, and Justice*, Oxford University Press, New York and London, 1954, p. 117).

79. Letter of 22.11.15, *Letters II*:448 (# 1066). Daniel J. Schneider comments on the homophobic tone of this letter in *The Consciousness of D.H. Lawrence*, The University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 1986. pp. 94-97.

80. So Keith Sagar, *Life into Art*, p. 32.

division, a re-entry into Eden,<sup>81</sup> into some pre-lapsarian bliss of 'wonder that bubbles into my soul'. (line 11).

Lawrence's 'coming through' is marked by the shift to the present tense in line 11, ('Oh for the wonder that bubbles'), and by the shift to the plural in line 10, ('we shall come ... we shall find ...'). The poet-persona now offers himself as a 'fountain' and a 'well-head'. These self-offerings again operate at more than one level, for the poet is offering himself to both the Muse-Wind as a poet, and to Frieda and the phallic-Wind as lover. The images of fountain and well-head, together with the actions of whispering and of 'self-expression' are as much images of lovemaking as they are of the poetic and prophetic task. Sagar comments

The fountain is life itself, the free flowing of all that sustains it, fertility, creativity. Again it is impossible to tell whether Lawrence is thinking of his art or his life. The distinction disappears.<sup>82</sup>

In both cases the self-offering is made to the Not-I,

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81. As also in the poem "Paradise Re-entered", *Complete Poems* pp. 242-3, also from the *Look!* series: 'Back beyond good and evil / Return me. Even dishevel / Your hair for the bliss drenched revel / On our primal loan.'

82. *Life into Art*, p. 32.

the Holy Ghost, *ruarch*, who is in Lawrence's scheme a source both of creativity, (and hence a Muse), and of libidinal energy, procreative and recreative sexuality.

The true unconscious is the well-head, the fountain of real motivity. The sex of which Adam and Eve became conscious derived from the very God who bade them be not conscious of it - it was not spawn produced by secondary propagation from the mental consciousness itself.<sup>83</sup>

The Not-I remains external, an Other, but the offering to it is out of the deepest recesses of the poet's self, the well-head and fountain that are the root of sexuality, creativity, and therefore regeneration.

Who or what then are the angels? Sagar rightly identifies them with the three messengers whose approach to Abraham at the Oak of Mamre heralds the beginning of the lineage of Abraham and Sarah, the birth of a new age, and heralds the imminent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>84</sup> In the biblical

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83. *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, Penguin edition, pp. 207-8.

84. Gen. 18: 1-11. Sagar is following the finding of Raphael Levy, who in "Lawrence's SONG OF A MAN WHO HAS COME THROUGH", (*Explicator* Vol 22, February 1964), refutes the earlier view of Robert Hogan, (*Explicator* Vol 17, April 1959), that the three strange angels are the Hesperides. Levy's view has dominated since; it should however be noted that in *Kangaroo* the motif appears again, this time clearly associated with the imagery of Rev. 3:20, Luke 15:36, etc., and combined explicitly with the famous (but tacky) painting of Holman Hunt. In this *Kangaroo* passage unrelated deities become a triunity that Somers calls 'the unknown'. See *Kangaroo*, Penguin edition, p. 314.

narrative the two strands, one of annunciation of a new birth, and the other of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, should be read together, though they represent different textual traditions.<sup>85</sup> The three figures who promise fertility become the two strangers who are threatened with rape.<sup>86</sup> Underlying Lawrence's imagery is the promise of the regeneration of a society that emerges in the union of Abraham and Sarah, together with its corollary, the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the implications of those two biblical motifs for the new life of Lawrence and Frieda and the simultaneous seemingly apocalyptic destruction of the 1914-18 war.

For the Lawrences, now one flesh, regeneration is the fused energy of a shared life, sharing in 'the new direction of Time', while their respective nations fought each other and other nations across the face of Europe. The influence of Bergson is again apparent: this moment in which the rock splits, this consummate 'coming through', is not unlike Eliot's

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85. For full commentary see Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, translated by John J. Scullion, SPCK, London, 1986. pp. 272-282, 294-309.

86. This is presumably anal rape, when the angels accept the hospitality of the righteous Lot in the city of Sodom. The questions of anal sexuality are not at issue here: where I later deal with anal intercourse as a Laurentian resurrection metaphor it is in the context of mutual consent, not rape.

moment not out of time, but in time, in what we call  
 history: transecting, bisecting the world of time, a  
 moment in time but not like a moment of time,  
 A moment in time but time was made through that moment:  
 for without the meaning there is no time, and  
 that moment of time gave the meaning.<sup>87</sup>

For Lawrence this is a fusion of *animus* and *anima*, the rolling together of the world in one small ball, and the as yet unclear hope that in his 'coming through' with Frieda a new life will rise above the ashes of Europe.<sup>88</sup> Ten years after this poem, in "Glad Ghosts", Lawrence was to write of the unbarring of one of the characters' breast. It is a metaphorical action representing the opening up of the man's being to body-love and to creative carnal knowledge,<sup>89</sup> the opening up of the character to be 'blown through' by the spirit of his deceased wife, who he failed to love adequately in the flesh. It is the potential, the beginning of this process that he celebrates in this poem.

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87. T.S. Eliot. *Choruses from "The Rock"*, pt VII.

88. A hope that is also integral to the elusive vision of Rannim. For an alternative, Nietzschean reading of this poem, see Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, p. 172. I find, however, that at this point Milton's emphasis on the Nietzschean influence on Lawrence unnecessarily overrides the more immediate influence of his Protestant, biblical upbringing in Robert Reid's Eastwood Congregationalism.

89. ie. 're-creative', not necessarily 'pro-creative.' "Glad Ghosts" was written at the same time as *Lady Chatterley*, and deals with more sensitivity and humour than all but the second version of the longer work, with the same issues.

## C. "THE SHIP OF DEATH".

This poem is one of a series on human mortality and the hope or possibility of future existence. I will explore its development of the two-fold process of rejection of Protestant orthodoxy, previously implicit in the bells of "Weeknight Service", and the establishment of a new resurrection symbolism that has begun to emerge by the time of "The Song of a Man Who has Come Through". As with "Weeknight Service", textual variants and developments to this poem will be important.<sup>90</sup>

As it evolved "The Ship of Death" underwent considerable revision,<sup>91</sup> which M.J. Lockwood summar-

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90. As Gail Porter Mandell points out, revisions to the poems that were to become the *Collected Poems* would have been fresh in Lawrence's mind at this time, and revisions to these 'last poems' will show some similarities of image and purpose of revision. See *The Phoenix Paradox*, p. 143. This work has also provided the basis of my comparison of Lawrence's textual revisions.

91. This can be traced by a comparison of the two notebook texts on which Aldington based his edition of Lawrence's *Last Poems*. MS A contains all the poems published by Aldington as *Last Poems*; MS B, designated MS 98 by Ferrier, contains the nineteen poems previously published as *Pansies*, further poems subsequently published as "More Poems", and the series published as *Nettles*. I will be referring to the two forms of this poem as the "A" and "B" versions, corresponding to the MSS in which they appear. In this I am following the work of Gail Porter Mandell, who sets out both texts in *The Phoenix Paradox*, Appendix T, pp. 221-227.

izes as being one of a shift from 'more exact and thoroughgoing allegorical development' to 'that much broader and looser type of mythopoetic writing more natural to Lawrence'.<sup>92</sup> From the opening line this revision is apparent: 'I sing of autumn and the falling fruit' is altered to become 'Now it is autumn and the falling fruit'; the poet's presence is removed to give the poem universality. The autumn symbolism is no mere personal or particular experience but a universal that is to govern the whole poem.

The revision of the first paragraph, which is to become the first "canto" of the MS A version, continues this process of de-particularizing:

MS B

I sing of autumn and the falling fruit  
and the long journey  
~the apples f~ towards oblivion

The apples falling like great drops of dew  
to bruise themselves an exit for themselves.

These lines are extended to become

MS A

Now it is autumn and the falling fruit  
and the long journey towards oblivion.

The apples falling like great drops of dew  
to bruise themselves an exit for themselves.

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92. *A Study of the Poems of D.H. Lawrence*, p. 195.

[A 5] And it is time to go, to bid farewell  
       to one's own self, and find an exit  
       from the fallen self.

The subject of line B:1 is reintroduced at A:6, but now in the form of an abstract pronoun, developing the universality of these opening lines.

The following lines, having received only punctuative revision,<sup>93</sup> challenge the reader to face mortality with the same readiness that the poet-persona demonstrates.<sup>94</sup> By recognizing the poignancy of death, Lawrence suggests, humanity can grasp the power

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93. Changes again indicative of Lawrence's finely tuned sense of rhythm: he alters

[B 5] Have you built your ship of death, oh, have you?  
       Build then your ship of death, for you will  
               {illeg.~n}eed it!

to

Have you built your ship of death, Oh have you?  
   O build your ship of death, for you will need it.

Each version contains the same number of syllables, but the later text minimizes the awkward isolation of 'oh', and strengthens the continuity of the lines by replacing 'Build then' in MS B with the half-rhyme 'O build' in MS A. The equal stressed (spondaic: //) rhythm of the B version, 'Build then...' is changed to the iambic structure (x/) 'O build...', while the rhyme of 'Oh' with 'O' carries the previous line forward in the reader's consciousness while the eye moves on.

94. The poem was written in the same period as "The Man Who Died", in which the Christ-figure is presented as a 'universal man' who, having escaped physical death on the cross now recognizes and rectifies his earlier failure previously to live an authentic existence.

to live.<sup>95</sup>

Lawrence continues with a portrayal of tactile responses to the death event:

The grim frost is at hand, when the apples will fall  
thick, almost thundrous, on the hardened earth.

And death is on the air like a smell of ashes!  
Ah! can't you smell it?

And in the bruised body, the frightened soul  
finds itself shrinking, wincing from the cold  
that blows upon it through the orifices.

The unambiguous imagery of 'the cold / that blows upon it [the soul] through the orifices' of the deteriorating human mind and body is held in tension with the cyclic imagery of autumn (A: 10-11) and Lent.<sup>96</sup> He would have been aware of the imagery and

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95. The same motif motivates Lawrence in writing *Lady Chatterley*, see below. Compare this again with Paul Tillich, to whom fulfillment of human potential lies in an erotic re-orientation towards God, a re-orientation that he calls 'New Being'; 'Personal "self relatedness" is maintained and strengthened as the person finds and draws on the empowering force of integration into the New Being', and 'Participation in the New Being is a relational transformation in which a changed relation to God and a healed relation to the world are inextricably interwoven.' (Alexander C. Irwin, *Eros Toward the World*, p. 30). Pauline theology (nb 1 Corinthians 15.54f) and John Donne's "Holy Sonnet" No 10 achieve the same end in an orthodox Christian framework.

96. The powerful liturgical symbolism of Lent was on Lawrence's mind in 1930, when he wrote "The Ship of Death"; it appears in *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, where he refers to 'the wild coruscations in the steady heaven of the Church' (*Apropos*, Martin Secker, 1931. p. 60), and lists among other things 'the sadness of Lent, the delight of Easter, the wonder of Pentecost.' (*ibid.*, p. 61).

rites of Ash Wednesday, first day of the Lenten cycle<sup>97</sup> and may have been aware that ashes, in both Judaism and Roman (and Anglo-) Catholicism were a symbol not only of penitence,<sup>98</sup> but also of purification. These ashes of line A:12 may be a part of the Christian cycle of birth, death and rebirth, as well as the cycles of other religions, including those of the Phoenix, whose burning precedes rebirth, and the Etruscan death rites,<sup>99</sup> which provide the main metaphorical vehicle for this poem.

It is the symbolic frost, in MS A, that causes the 'shrinking' of the soul. But Lawrence had struggled

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97. T.S. Eliot's "Ash Wednesday", which had been appearing in print since 1927, was completed and published in 1930; "Salutation", later Part 2 of the completed poem, was published in 1927, "Perch' io non spero" (Part 1) in 1928, and "Al som de l'escalina" (Part 3) in 1929. (see Philip R. Headings, *T.S. Eliot*, Twayne Publishers, (G.K. Hall and Co) Boston, 1982). Lawrence, in his last letter to Middleton Murry, in 1929, wrote of his awareness of Eliot's 'instinctive dislike' of 'the animal that I am', (see Harry T. Moore, *The Priest of Love*, pp 471f).

98. See Judith 9:1, Jonah 3:6, Luke 10:13, Matt. 11:21, and the liturgies for Ash Wednesday. Eliot incorporates the Jonah passage, albeit seen through the eyes of Anglican Lenten rites, into Part 1 of "Ash Wednesday"; (see Philip Headings, *T.S. Eliot*, p. 115f). For Lawrence's respect for these liturgical cycles see Hough, *The Dark Sun*, p. 253: '... Christianity, at any rate Catholic Christianity, was at least a guardian of the mystery in the midst of the desert of mechanized civilization.'

99. The tombs of Ceveteri contain both 'a little bronze ship of death that should bear him over to the other world' (*Etruscan Places*, Penguin edition, p. 10), and a 'stone house', as the Lawrence's guide called it, that reminded Lawrence of 'the Noah's Ark without the boat part' (*ibid.*, p. 14). The two images are collapsed together in the poem.

with the A version, altering

And out of the broken body, the homeless soul  
finds itself driven down to the endless sea  
washing upon the shore.

to

And in the bruised body, the frightened soul  
finds itself shrinking, wincing from the cold  
that blows upon it through the orifices.

In the later form,<sup>100</sup> the reality of the death experience is made more explicit than in the original metaphor of an approach to the sea. Lawrence elects not to re-use the 'ship' metaphor until A:27, avoiding overburdening the image. The frightened and chilled 'shrinking' and 'wincing' has been preceded by the exclamatory 'Ah! can't you smell it?', emphasizing the sensuality of the death experience, acknowledgement if not celebration of the scent of the funeral pyre.

Lawrence expands his scene by allusion to

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100. The earlier is crossed out in MS A.

*Hamlet*:<sup>101</sup> 'And<sup>102</sup> can a man his own quietus make / with a bare bodkin?'. The abstract 'one' now becomes a Hamletian 'everyman', caught in the pain of apparently jilted ('dispiz'd') love, and the sometimes life-or-death risk of high profile ('the insolence of office').<sup>103</sup> Lines A: 19-21 (= B 9-11) continue:

With daggers, bodkins, bullets, man can make  
a bruise or break of exit for his life ~and soul~  
but is that a quietus, oh tell me is it quietus?<sup>104</sup>

101. The allusion is to Hamlet's famous soliloquy:

To die to sleep,  
To sleep, perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub,  
For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause. There's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life:  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressors' wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of dispiz'd love, The Law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make,  
With a bare bodkin?

*Hamlet*, Act III, scene 1.

102. The addition of this 'And', absent in MS B, continues the metrical momentum developed in previous lines.

103. The strength of Shakespearian tragedy is that the tragic figures become representative of all human tragedy; Lawrence uses Shakespeare's technique to expand the context of his reflections on death - and on suicide - exactly as Eliot does by alluding to the death of Ophelia at the closing of "A Game of Chess".

104. At this point MS B provides a long didactic passage exploring the meaning of 'quietus' and the means by which it might be attained. The passage (B:12-67) lapses into a confusion of mythological symbols and theological notions, and was wisely and radically revised in the final version.

In MS A Lawrence omits reference, present in the earlier version, to partially visible hordes of souls failing to attain authentic 'quietus'. Value judgment is avoided in this later version, and darkness becomes the dominant background: 'darkness at one with darkness, up and down / and sideways utterly dark, so there is no direction any more.' (lines A: 68-69). Darkness here symbolizes not evil but the creative experience Lawrence calls 'lapsing out', the ultimate experience and expression of 'blood-consciousness'. The early version made clear that the darkness of death and its obliteration of the 'dark-red mantle of the body's memories' (line B: 69) is a creative darkness:

It indicates ... a remarkable coherence in Lawrence's writings that his manner of accepting death as a ritual voyage can also be identified with his ideology of 'blood-consciousness' in the abandonment of cerebral egoism; those instinctive and intuitive energies that Lawrence felt gave depth and integrity to life also carry one most naturally through death.<sup>105</sup>

To choose the ship of death is to continue the process

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105. Donald Gutierrez. *Lapsing Out*, (Associated University Presses, London and Toronto, 1980. p. 125) where attention is also drawn to the statement of Elizabeth Cipolla, *D.H. Lawrence Review*, vol. 2, no. 2, (Summer 1969), p. 118: 'Lawrence felt himself to be on the verge of the last great revelation, the knowledge that life and death and rebirth are one in an unfathomable mystery of being', and of Michael Kirkham, that the 'thought movement' of the *Last Poems* is toward 'the construction of a state of mind that will steady him in the face of death, 'survive' death in that sense.' *D.H. Lawrence Review*, vol 5, no. 2, (Summer 1972), p. 102.

of choosing life, avoiding the *mauvais fois* of Sartre,<sup>106</sup> and striving for the authentic existence that Lawrence calls 'blood-consciousness'. 'Lapsing out' now takes the 'authentic' or 'prepared' soul 'far from the grey shores / that fringe this world's existence.' (lines B: 72-73).

The earlier version includes a sequence of metaphors depicting the ties that the departing soul must abandon,<sup>107</sup> metaphors that become accumulative and unwieldy, and are wisely omitted in MS A. These however end with a traditional simile of tomb-as-womb, much used in the rites of Good Friday:<sup>108</sup>

shadows folded on deeper shadows  
and deeper, to a core of sheer oblivion

106. Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, translated by Hazel E. Barnes, Philosophical Library, New York, n.d., pp. 47-67. qv Frederick Copplestone, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol IX, *Maine de Biran to Sartre*, Search Press, London, 1974, pp. 348 & 358. For a brief comparison of Lawrence with Sartre and other existentialists see Martin Jarrett-Kerr, *D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence*, pp. 154-157.

107. Lines B: 76-92

108. This liturgical tradition is based on an amalgam of Johannine and Pauline theology: for Paul baptism is a 'grafting on' to the death and resurrection of Christ, while the Johannine Christ discusses with Nicodemus the event of being 'born again' in baptism as similar to the watery birth-event. These two sources underlie subsequent Christian teaching on Baptism: see Raymond Burnish, *The Meaning of Baptism*, SPCK, London, 1985. For pre-Christian antecedents see F.W. Dillistone, *Christianity and Symbolism*, second edition, SCM, London, 1985, pp. 183-220. For the notion of 'tomb-womb' see, (eg.), Donald Gutierrez, *Lapsing Out*, p. 69, where *Etruscan Places* is described as 'the tomb-womb of an impressively humanistic aesthetic.'

like the convolutions of shadow-shell  
 or deeper, like the foldings and involvings of a womb.  
 (lines B: 89-92).

The early employment of this image is marred not so much by the familiarity of traditional Christian usage, but by the inappropriate applications of the nouns such as 'foldings' and 'involvings' to the womb,<sup>109</sup> the vehicle of the metaphor, and by the presence of florid and inflated philosophical questionings:

Oh lovely last, last lapse of death, into pure oblivion  
 at the end of the longest journey  
 peace, complete peace - !  
 But can it be that also it is procreation?

This florid language is omitted in MS A, and Canto IX provides more coherent exploration of the same re-incarnational possibilities:

Is it illusion or does the pallor fume  
 a little higher?

Ah wait, wait, for there's the dawn,  
 the cruel dawn of coming back to life  
 out of oblivion.  
 (lines A: 86-90).

The final version has avoided the didactic discursions of MS B, while images that are developed fully in the

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109. qv. lines B: 95-97:

And ~*illeg* the penultimate porches, the darkened mantle  
 of the body's memories slips and is absorbed  
 into the shell-like, womb-like convoluted shadow.

earlier, B-text reappear as metaphors in MS A.

"The Ship of Death", like "The Song of a Man Who has Come Through", opens in its final form with a sentence ungoverned by a verb. The second clause, 'the long journey towards oblivion', is governed by the verb 'to be' which, in the present indicative form, has also governed the first clause of the stanza. Thus 'life's long journey' (line A: 2) is superimposed on the season of the first line. Life's journey and the seasonal cycle are inseparably related, and the events of birth and death are therefore seen from the opening of the poem to be cyclical. Herein lies as strong a resurrection image as any Lawrence is to produce: the death cycle and the solar cycle are as one.

It is bruising, with implications of pain and of failing flesh, and made possible only by a fall, that provides an 'exit' from life. Lawrence is suggesting that it is the experience of fallenness, that liberates in death; with no 'fall' there is no bruising of the self, and therefore no exit.<sup>110</sup>

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110. To St. Paul, 'flesh' (*sarx*) is a metaphor for human fallenness; matter-in-itself is not evil (the dualist view), but the legacy of the biblical 'Fall' is experienced in 'the flesh', which is contrasted with 'the spirit' (*ta pneuma*). The flesh is governed by Law (*Torah* or *nomos*), the spirit by grace (*charis*). For the place of *sarx* in Pauline theology see Leander E. Keck, *Paul and His Letters*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1979, pp.

Lawrence is not romanticizing death or the death process. The frost that heralds the fall of the fruit is 'grim', (line A: 10), and the earth 'hardened'. The soul that dwells in the 'bruised body' shrinks and winces from the forthcoming passage out of life. Nor can an acceptable exit from life be made by a violent, or particularly a suicidal end. In his search to find authenticity of death Lawrence answers 'no' to Hamlet's question; 'daggers, bodkins, bullets' cannot 'a quietus make'. Instead authentic death must be attained by a *via media* between the unacceptable extremes of unpreparedness born of the failure to accept mortality and the unpreparedness born of a sudden and bloody end. The quietus that Lawrence calls 'the deep and lovely quiet / of a strong heart at peace' is attainable only in the process of unflinching preparation that he symbolizes by the building of a ship, and by the taking of 'the longest journey' through the 'long and painful death / that lies between the old self and the new'. (lines A: 29-30).

...Continued...

105ff, and Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, pp. 96-89. Lawrence, like many critics of Christianity, is inaccurate in his understanding of Christianity's attitude to the body, confusing *sarx* and *soma*; see eg. *Apocalypse*, Penguin edition, p. 65: "He must not achieve divinity in the flesh". Eastern Orthodoxy since Maximus Confessor (d. 662 a.d.) has taught precisely the opposite!

At this point in MS A Lawrence posits a theory of necrosis. 'Already our bodies are fallen, bruised, badly bruised / already our souls are oozing through the exit / of the cruel bruise'. Whether the plural here refers to all humanity, or merely to those who are authentically prepared for death, is unclear, and remains unclear in the following lines: 'Already the dark and endless ocean of the end / is washing in through the breaches of our wounds, / already the flood is upon us'. Biblical imagery dominates, as Lawrence turns the imagery of flood and ark<sup>111</sup> into a crisis of readiness for rebirth. In this Lawrence closely follows New Testament and early Christian baptismal imagery, in which the primeval waters, the waters of birth, of cleansing, and of death are all entwined. Jungian analysis proposes water as a universal symbol,<sup>112</sup> and it has been prominent in several Laurentian death

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111. Associated in the Judaeo-Christian scheme with the continued effect of the Fall.

112. 'The maternal significance of water belongs to the clearest symbolism in the realms of mythology, so that the ancients could say: The sea is the symbol of birth. From water comes life (Cf. Isa. 48:1); ... All that is living rises as does the sun from the water and at evening plunges into the water. Born from the springs, the rivers, the seas, at death man arrives at the waters of the Styx in order to enter upon the 'night journey on the sea.' The wish is that the black water of death might be the water of life; that death with its cold embrace, might be the mother's womb, just as the sea devours the sun, but brings it forth again out of the maternal womb.' C.G. Jung, *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, edition not cited, p. 165, quoted in F.W. Dillistone, *Christianity and Symbolism*, p. 186.

passages, most notably the flood of *The Rainbow*, the destruction of the images in *The Plumed Serpent*, the breaking of the sluice in *The Virgin and the Gypsy*, and the streams and bays of "The Man Who Died". Egyptian and Sumerian cosmogonies, as well as those of Phoenicia, Orpheus, Babylon and Thales, all trace human origins to a primeval sea, as Lawrence was aware.<sup>113</sup> In 1917, in letters to the novelist Waldo Frank, Lawrence stated his understanding of flood imagery:

alas, in the world of Europe I see no Rainbow. I believe the deluge of iron rain will destroy the world here, utterly: no Ararat will rise above the subsiding iron waters. There is a great *consummation* in death, or sexual ecstasy, as in *The Rainbow*. But there is also death which is the rushing of the Gadarene swine down the slope of extinction.<sup>114</sup>

and, more flippantly, 'what I would like is another Deluge, so long as I could sit in the ark and float to the subsidence';<sup>115</sup> The first letter reveals the psychological thought that lay behind *The Rainbow*, and, incidentally, provides an earlier contrast of authentic and inauthentic death; the second in all its flippancy

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113. For consideration of these symbols within the Judaeo-Christian scheme see Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology*, translated by John Galvin, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1987, p. 89, and Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, pp. 105-106.

114. Letter of 27.07.17, *Letters III*: 142f, (# 1435).

115. Letter of 15.09.17, *Letters III*: 160, (# 1455).

reveals the thought underlying the hopes of Rananim.

In Canto VI the primeval waters become a more threatening image: 'Piecemeal the body dies, and the timid soul / has her footing washed away, as the dark flood rises.' This dark flood too is a means to liberation for the 'timid soul', as long as this soul accepts the inevitability and universality of necrosis:

We are dying, we are dying, we are all of us dying  
and nothing will stay the death-flood rising within us  
and soon it will rise on the world, on the outside world  
(lines A: 42-44).

The individual soul, no matter how 'timid', must be embraced by the same deluge that Lawrence had seen engulf Europe between 1914 and 1918, which had been on his mind when he had written to Waldo Frank. The timid individual soul could not afford to reject all existential responsibility, even when 'our strength leaves us, / and our soul cowers naked in the dark rain over the flood, / cowering in the last branches of the tree of our life' (lines A: 46-48).

There will be struggle in the soul's acceptance of necrosis:

After such tremendous unison as the womb implies, no wonder there are storms of rage and separation. The child is screaming itself rid of the old womb, kicking itself in a blind paroxysm into freedom, into separate, negative indepen-

dence.<sup>116</sup>

Though Lawrence writes here of birth, the struggle is no less true of the rebirth that is the death experience, the final lapsing out. With this recognition of the death within, necrosis, the soul must make appropriate adjustment and preparation for the future. For Lawrence there remains a creative, hope-filled option: 'Now launch the small ship, now as the body dies / and life departs, launch out, the fragile soul / in the fragile ship of courage, the ark of faith' (lines A: 55-57). The dying person is to gather food and utensils for the festivity, for death, to the Etruscan, appears to have been a festive occasion.<sup>117</sup>

The dying man, like Noah, is without control over his destiny: 'upon the sea of death, where we still sail / darkly, for we cannot steer, and have no port.' Just as there is no Mount Ararat, so at this point the poem rejects any resurrection imagery, if by

116. *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, Penguin edition, p. 222.

117. So, in *Etruscan Places*:

The dead man ... reclines upon his banqueting couch with his flat wine-dish in his hand, resting on his elbow, and beside him, also half risen, reclines a handsome and jeweled lady in fine robes ... holding up to him the garland - the garland of the female festive offering.

Penguin edition, Harmondsworth, 1985, p. 36.

resurrection a return to present life experience is implied:

And everything is gone, the body is gone  
completely under, gone, entirely gone.  
The upper darkness is heavy as the lower,  
between them the little ship  
is gone  
she is gone.

It is the end. It is oblivion.  
(lines A: 74-80).

The uncharacteristically short lines and clauses combine to reinforce the absolute finality of death.

This point is a dénouement in the MS A text, roughly corresponding with the penultimate stanza of the earlier MS B version:

Oh lovely last, last lapse of death, into oblivion  
at the end of the longest journey  
peace, complete peace - !  
But can it be that it is also procreation?

The earlier version, which provided a minutiae of preparative detail, is proposing at its conclusion not only a wordier death, but also more organic and deterministic imagery, linking death to new life in a spritual-organic 'handing over' of existence: 'peace' becomes 'procreation'. MS A deliberately blurs this determinism: 'a thread / separates itself out of the blackness' and becomes 'the cruel dawn of coming back to life / out of oblivion' (lines A: 76f, 83f). The thread image may bear echoes of the deterministic MS B

image of sperm generating new life, an image familiar from *The Plumed Serpent*. But as in many of the *Last Poems*, the move is towards no more than a bare hint, a suggestion or even no more than mere speculation at the nature of post-death. Hough is right in asserting

There are many ways of contemplating and writing about death; and Lawrence has avoided almost all the traditional ones. He has not accepted the Christian dilemma - neither its terrors nor its consolations. He is without trace of that denial of humanity, the Stoic apatheia, and has even less interest in the Roman compensations of after-fame and human respect.

What, then, does he propose?

All that remains for him then is to face death with naked human simplicity; and in these [*Last Poems*] he has presented more fully than any other what must always be for man the inescapable paradox - the necessity to accept death as absolute darkness, and the impossibility of accepting the darkness as absolute.<sup>118</sup>

There is no existential continuance, and the annihilation must be total before a hint of rebirth can enter Lawrence's thanatology. Yet oblivion is the fore-runner to renewal; 'A flush of rose, and the whole thing starts again.' (line A:90). And nothing must detract from the totality of oblivion, the complete existential discontinuity prior to the Laurentian

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118. Both quotations are from *The Dark Sun*, pp. 215-216.

resurrection:

The promise of a new life through the acceptance of death involves, however, an extreme act of faith, for what must be accepted is the obliteration of the egoistic core of one's consciousness.<sup>119</sup>

Only then is there complete realization of the process spoken of by Rupert Birkin. 'You've got to learn not-to-be, before you can come into being',<sup>120</sup> whether that process pertains to an individual, like Birkin-Lawrence, to a nation, like England or Germany, or to and entire civilization such as Etruria or, Lawrence paradoxically feared and hoped, Europe.

Yet as soon as the poem has opened the tantalizing possibility of post-death life, then the poet turns his attention once more, and finally, back to the necrotic volition to oblivion, 'Oh build your ship of death, oh build it! / for you will need it. / For the voyage of oblivion awaits you.' Lawrence ultimately refuses to allow any more than a 'maybe' to enter his thoughts: 'maybe life is still our portion / after the bitter passage of oblivion', he conjectures in the poem

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119. Donald Gutierrez, *Lapsing Out*, p. 49.

120. *Women in Love*, Penguin edition, p. 48.

"Difficult Death".<sup>121</sup> Gutierrez writes<sup>122</sup>

A new part of one's self has been born,  
perhaps, or a new self from the old -  
Lawrence deliberately makes these  
associations ambiguous.

It is with the ambiguities, courageous in the face of  
his own impending death, that Lawrence leaves us.

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121. Placed after "The Ship of Death" in *Last Poems* by Aldington.

122. Donald Gutierrez, *Subject-Object Relations in Wordsworth and Lawrence*, UMI Research Press, Ann Arbor, 1987, p. 103.

## CONCLUSION

These three poems studied in detail provide insight into three aspects of Lawrence's doctrines of death and resurrection. In "Weeknight Service" Lawrence rejects the traditional symbolism of Christianity, or more specifically the symbolism of the Eastwood Congregationalism, with its liberal Protestant heritage, with which Lawrence grew up.

The pivotal event of Lawrence's marriage to Frieda provides a new option for interpretation of death and resurrection, operative within a one-life perspective. Both on a global and a personal scale there was much that was dying in Lawrence's experience at the time "Song of a Man Who has come Through" was written, yet there was also the joy of new birth, of 'coming through' itself. Lawrence and Frieda, in the poem, emerge to a shared rebirth, and to openness to the *ruarch*-wind, the Holy Ghost muse, despite the accusations of treachery and immorality that are aimed at him and them during their wartime sojourn in England. They 'come through'. Europe it seems, cannot.

It seems that resurrection experience is the lot of only a few - just as Rananim was to be the exper-

ience of only a few. The masses of "The Ship of Death" remain like Europe, stranded on the shores, unable to face the quasi-Etruscan rites of oblivion. Lawrence holds to the hope that some, himself and the Etruscans included, can face chaos-oblivion, darkest of all the gods, squarely, and thereby accepting some resurrection hope. He is repeating the hope he has expressed in *The Rainbow*, where Ursula sees 'the triumph of horrible amorphous angles and straight lines',<sup>123</sup> but sees also the rainbow itself, and the hope that 'new clean, bodies would rise to a new germination',<sup>124</sup> of which she is a part.

Such is the scheme that might be tentatively suggested following a reading of these three poems, taking them as keys to Lawrence's thought. If Lawrence is 'thinking in poetry', then these ideas should receive similar but more sustained development in his other, longer works, and the common conclusion of *The Rainbow* and "The Ship of Death", attained after the bitter struggle of 'coming through' should receive more complete attention.

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123. *The Rainbow*, p. 547.

124. *ibid.*, p. 548. qv. Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, pp. 158-160.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE RAINBOW

Referring to the prophet figure of "The Man Who Died", Graham Hough writes

One who has suffered, as the prophet has done, the extremity of physical and spiritual torment has in effect died; and if his vital powers should, miraculously or unmiraculously, return, it is a real rebirth.<sup>1</sup>

Lawrence knew both physical and spiritual suffering, and projected that suffering onto the lives of his characters.<sup>2</sup> Suffering, death and resurrection may be interpreted as either physiological experience or as a passage within individual or communal experience - as deaths or as 'little deaths'. And 'little deaths', as well as the awareness of mortality, were a powerful force in Lawrence's own life:

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1. Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun*, p. 248.

2. 'There is so much of the pure "prophet" in Lawrence, - and increasingly so as he grew older': Martin Jarrett-Kerr, *D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence*, pp. 25-26.

God, but it is good to have died and been trodden out  
trodden to nought in sour, dead earth,  
quite to nought,  
absolutely to nothing  
nothing  
nothing  
nothing.<sup>3</sup>

In dealing with *The Rainbow* I will to some extent treat it as a unit with *Women in Love*, with which it shares common origins, (as *The Sisters*), characters and themes:

one cannot understand the full resilience of Lawrence's imagination or its exploratory daring unless one supplements criticism of the finished texts with knowledge of their growth from the one seed into an organic whole.<sup>4</sup>

This is perhaps the least 'auto-biographical' of Lawrence's major novels; there is no consistent auto-biographical persona. And this is an intensely religious novel; it opens in the shadow of a church tower, and the same tower is to make its final appearance within the last forty lines of the book.<sup>5</sup>

The tower stands 'above' and 'beyond' the Brangwens,

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3. *Complete Poems*, p. 258.

4. Charles L. Ross, *The Composition of The Rainbow and Women in Love: A History*, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1979, pp. 3-4.

5. References are to the Penguin edition of 1981, (repr. 1989): here to p. 41. In "Weeknight Service" Lawrence has demonstrated that a church tower is not for him necessarily a symbol of rich mystical tradition. See also his references to the tower in letters: *Letters* I:57 (# 51): 64 (# 54): 67-69, (# 55). Contrast these with the 'Gothic arch' of *Sons and Lovers*, Penguin edition (repr. 1981) p. 219.

and the Brangwen women are a fiercely independent group for whom the 'above and beyond' is an affront:

the Brangwen wife of the Marsh aspired  
beyond herself, towards the further life  
of the finer woman, towards the extended  
being she revealed<sup>6</sup>

It is to the third generation of Brangwen women that I wish primarily to turn. But prior to Ursula's birth the two Lensky-Brangwen women have been significant, even to some extent redemptive influences on the lives of Brangwen men.

Tom Brangwen's near descent into the alcoholic way of Walter Morel and George Saxton is halted by his encounter with Lydia Lensky, dressed in black. In the poem "Two Wives" it is, in the early drafts, the dark woman who emerges triumphant from encounter with the dying man, knowing that her love has touched and transformed him. Only in the final draft is the white wife, 'bowed / with misery, no more proud' permitted the triumphant dismissal 'stand / Back, you understand'. In the 'unwatched' versions of the poem the dark woman's raw flame of love, like Lydia Lensky's, provides means by which the man's existence is transformed.<sup>7</sup>

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6. *Rainbow*, p. 45.

7. qv. Gail Porter Mandell, *The Phoenix Paradox*, pp. 60-64.

Lydia's effect on Tom is likewise transformative: 'The world was submitting to its transformation. He made no move: it would come, what would come.'<sup>8</sup> This proves to be the case:

In his breast, or in his bowels, somewhere in his body, there had started another activity. It was as if a strong light were burning there, and he was blind within it, unable to know anything, except that this transfiguration burned between him and her, connecting them, like a secret power.<sup>9</sup>

Language of transfiguration is central to the struggle-encounters of two of the three generations of the *Branwensaga* - and not to those two novels alone. The biblical Transfiguration-saga symbolizes the in-breaking of eschatological experience, a momentary translation through time of the post-resurrection Jesus to his earthly ministry. For Lawrence, in *The Rainbow*, transfiguration is a momentary attainment of authenticity realized in moments of sex encounter. It is momentary attainment of status as the 'New Man', 'wonderful, distinct individuals like angels', of which

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8. *Rainbow*, p. 67.

9. *ibid.*, p. 74.

Rupert Birkin is an attempted study in *Women in Love*,<sup>10</sup> a transient, if enriching experience.

Tom Brangwen matches the symbolic darkness of Lydia's clothing<sup>11</sup> with his own.<sup>12</sup> He accepts the darkness, and only then can express his wants, and propose marriage. Lawrence follows the proposal immediately with an explicit resurrection metaphor:

He returned gradually, but newly created, as after a gestation, a new birth, in the womb of darkness. Aerial and light everything was, new as a morning, fresh and newly begun. Like a dawn the newness and the bliss filled in.<sup>13</sup>

Between Tom and Lydia there has been total though temporary oblivion; loss of individuality in duality:

10. See Emile Delavenay, *D.H. Lawrence and Edward Carpenter: A Study in Edwardian Transition*, Heinemann, London, 1971, p. 140. In *The First Lady Chatterley* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973) Constance understands 'transfiguration' to be 'A man suffused with the brightness of God' (p. 79), a correct interpretation of the symbolism of Exod. 34.29-35.

11. *Rainbow*, pp. 63-64.

12. *ibid.*, p. 79.

13. *Rainbow*, p. 81. Here are seeds of the later resurrection experience of the Christ-figure in "The Man Who Died", though his resurrection experience remains unsatisfactory until he has encountered the atonement of intercourse with the priestess of Isis; see "The Man Who Died", in *Love Among the Haystacks and Other Stories*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1960 (repr. 1979):

I am like a grain of its perfume, and the woman is a grain of its beauty. Now the world is one flower of many petalled darkness, and I am in its perfume as in a touch.

The referent of 'it' is the star-lit night sky.

'for a few seconds, he went utterly to sleep, asleep and sealed in the darkest sleep, utter, extreme oblivion': the darkness has been 'fecund'.<sup>14</sup>

John Turner recognizes the impact of such moments of 'passage' on Lawrence's own life and milieu:

This was ... the challenge for the disaffected European intellectual of the time: to make history; to live a life that could resist the destructive morality of bourgeois civilization and prefigure a saner world beyond it; to find a discourse that could shrug off the tragic potential of the past and usher in a more creative future. Look! We Have Come Through. Yet who are the 'we' who have come through if not also, as Lawrence very well knew, the same 'we' as before.<sup>15</sup>

Lawrence must find words to convey this sense of passing through to new being, at the same time acknowledging the continuance of previous states of being. Tom Brangwen and Lydia Lensky momentarily encounter a pinnacle of human experience, what Tillich calls 'the erotic "seeing which unites", permitting us to see in "transitory things" that which is "eternal"',<sup>16</sup> and

14. *ibid.*, p. 81. As the newly engaged couple emerge from the tomb-womb of their embrace they discuss the difference in their ages: it is the same as that between Lawrence and Frieda. (p. 82; see note 15 in the Penguin edition).

15. John Turner, with Cornelia Rumpf-Worthen and Ruth Jenkins, "The Otto Gross-Frieda Weekley Correspondence", *D.H. Lawrence Review*, Volume 22, No 2, Summer 1990, p. 141.

16. Alexander C. Irwin, *Eros Toward the World*, pp. 96-97; references are to Tillich's *The New Being*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1955, pp. 41 & 129.

which Lawrence attempts to convey by the biblical language of transfiguration.

Lawrence carefully outlines Lydia Lensky's past experience to emphasize the degree to which experiences of death and resurrection have shaped her life. Her marriage and 'obliteration'<sup>17</sup> in her husband's crusades, the death of two children and subsequent internalization of her grief, and the eventual relief she experiences at the death of her husband all establish a pattern of fluctuating death and resurrection that is to continue throughout her marriage to Tom Brangwen.

It is struggle, emotional and psychological, not sex itself, that is the breeding ground of resurrection experience. Tom is to experience fluctuations from death to life, not only in relationship to Lydia, but in relationship with his stepdaughter, Anna. This non-phallic battle of wills is dominated by Tom's masculine cruelty, and reveals a distinct break-point, the breaking of the child's tantrum.<sup>18</sup>

Anna herself undergoes personal rites of passage

17. *Rainbow* p. 86.

18. *ibid.*, pp. 115-116. For the relationship between 'will' in Lawrence's thought and that of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche see Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, Chapter 1.

long before the dawning of her adult - or adolescent - sexuality. There is for her a Blakean passage from innocence to experience, as she sits too long in the pub awaiting the return of her step-father. There she 'shut herself away' from the drinkers, awaiting with single-mindedness her step-father's return: 'When she had become blank and timeless he came, and she slipped off her seat to him. like one come back from the dead.'<sup>19</sup> Anna then accompanies her stepfather to an eating house that is a 'dark place', a 'dark vaulted place'.<sup>20</sup> Anna too has experienced a descent to the tomb, though there is for her as yet no rebirth.

Tom, Lydia, and Anna all experience some kind of death-resurrection process that suggests that Lawrence is drawing demonstrably but coincidentally close to the Tillichian belief in 'eros toward the world',

a passionate yearning drawing us toward the forms of the created universe and at the same time toward the divine power that expresses itself through and dwells within created forms.<sup>21</sup>

19. *Rainbow*, p. 124.

20. *ibid.*

21. Alexander C. Irwin, *Eros Toward the World*, p. 98. Tillich's reference to divine eros was preceded by that of Denys the Areopagite, (d ca. 500 ad.) who writes of God's erotic extroversion towards creation, revelation, and incarnation. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, Vol I, *Seeing the Form*, translated by Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, edited by Joseph Fessio SJ and John Riches, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1982, pp. 121-123.

This 'divine power' is for Lawrence represented by the dark gods, and is expressed in the dynamics of authentic relationship born in struggle with other human beings, with sexuality, and with religious awareness. For Lawrence,

'salvation' is described in terms of losing oneself to find oneself, and of dying before being resurrected to new life ... Consummation is described in a language approaching that of religious mysticism; it is a union of darkness, of purely sensuous communion.<sup>22</sup>

Biblical and sacramental language are used freely by Lawrence; transfiguration, baptism, confirmation, glorification, a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud, all appear in quick succession as Tom finally loses himself to and in his marriage to Lydia, and in his stepfatherhood of Anna. As the early chapters come to an end Anna finds herself 'free to play in the space beneath, between' her new parents, no longer 'called upon to uphold with her childish might the broken end of the arch.'<sup>23</sup> Tom has attained the 'beyond' that Leavis sees to be, together with the 'rainbow', the Omega point to which the Brangwen generations are

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22. Margaret Masson, "The Influence of Congregationalism", p. 233.

23. *Rainbow*, p. 134.

striving (or evolving).<sup>24</sup>

Anna, now Anna Brangwen, is 'too much the centre of her own universe',<sup>25</sup> to 'mingle' with her younger half-brothers, Tom and Fred. Jarrett-Kerr rightly maintains 'Lawrence would not have remained satisfied with ... the solipsistic conclusions of ... Sartre',<sup>26</sup> For Anna there must be a growth out of solipsistic childhood to an experience of 'shared solipsism', a shared exclusivity.

Anna's first sexual awakening takes place in a church. She becomes 'aware of a strange influence entering in to her, which she enjoyed. It was a dark, enriching influence she had not known before';<sup>27</sup> the fits of laughter that cause Anna such embarrassment are proposed by Lawrence as a contrast to the constrictions of the liturgical rituals, rituals that he has

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24. F.R. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, p. 123. 'Omega point' is the end to which creation is striving in the thought of Teilhard de Chardin.

25. *Rainbow*, p. 134.

26. Martin Jarrett-Kerr, *D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence*, p. 155. But see also Lawrence's letter of 03?.03.15 to Gordon Campbell: '*La race humaine, c'est moi.*' (emphasis in original). *Letters* II:301, (# 881), and in his "Georgian Poetry: 1911-1912", where he writes 'Everything that ever was thought and ever will be thought, lies in this body of mine.' *Selected Literary Criticism*, p. 74. Colin Milton sees in this strong Nietzschean influence: *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, p. 57.

27. *Rainbow*, p. 148.

suggested in "Weeknight Service" symbolize inauthentic religion. The Church has provided no opportunity for 'blood-knowledge', or for encounter with the 'dark gods', but this new libidinal awakening does.

When Anna and Will walk out amongst the sheaves of corn they enter into a scene of phallic and yonic symbolism that parallels their own nascent sexuality. Cornfields are to feature again,<sup>28</sup> externalizing Ursula's sexuality, but on this occasion the parallels are explicit. In these fields of corn 'the shocks rode erect; the rest was open and prostrate.'<sup>29</sup> Lawrence has used the words that he uses of sexual readiness; he writes for example, of Ursula: 'she was very beautiful then, so wide opened, so palpitating, exquisitely vulnerable'.<sup>30</sup> Will and Anna harvest the crop, sharing a rite that is erotic and sensual, a dance celebrating emergence from aloneness to togetherness, eventually ending in a kiss and betrothal.

Exclusivity is unacceptable, as Anna and Will Brangwen recognize early in their marriage:

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28. See my comments on Ursula and Skrebensky's lovemaking, below. Cornfields first appear in the scene-setting passages of the first chapter of *The Rainbow*, p. 43.

29. *ibid.*, p. 159.

30. *ibid.*, p. 348.

It was all very well at night, when the doors were locked and the darkness drawn round the two of them. Then they were the only inhabitants of the visible earth, the rest were under the flood.<sup>31</sup>

Even honeymooners are forced to admit the intrusion of a world beyond them; 'the world was there, after all',<sup>32</sup> and their eden is soon invaded by the serpent of Will's 'dark passionate soul' which 'recoiled upon itself ... clinched and coiled around a centre of hatred'.<sup>33</sup> Will and Anna briefly perfect shared solipsism. But their intimacy cannot be maintained, and exists only at night, 'when the doors are locked and the darkness drawn round the two of them.'<sup>34</sup> At those times 'it was as if they were at the very centre of all the slow wheeling of space',<sup>35</sup> but the workaday world beckons: 'Wasn't there some duty outside, calling him and he did not come?'<sup>36</sup>

Marital conflict therefore begins with the

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31. *ibid.*, p. 184.

32. *ibid.*, p. 187.

33. *ibid.*, p. 193.

34. *ibid.*, p. 184.

35. *ibid.*, p. 185.

36. *ibid.*, p. 184. This is an example of Lawrence's subconscious echoing of biblical texts: see Matt. 24.37//, and possibly Matt. 11.17//. Yet it may not be wholly subconscious: Lawrence is also making the point that the 'outside world' may be more 'necessary to salvation' than the intimacy of an isolated couple.

partners' volition towards the outside world:

She was less hampered than he, so she came more quickly to her fullness, and was sooner ready to enjoy again a return to the outside world<sup>37</sup>

while Will 'wanted to have done with the outside world, to declare it finished for ever'.<sup>38</sup> With that contrast in attitudes there begins the struggle that Hough calls 'the shifting facets of the relationship between a man and a woman in marriage',<sup>39</sup> and, more tellingly, 'irrational and pointless fluxes and revulsions of feeling.'<sup>40</sup> It is a chilling but realistic portrait of a struggle of a couple towards and away from each other in marriage.<sup>41</sup> Their hatred is passionate: 'He seemed to hurt her womb, to take pleasure in torturing her',<sup>42</sup>

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37. *ibid.*, p. 191.

38. *ibid.*

39. Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun*, p. 62.

40. *ibid.*, p. 63.

41. Colin Milton sees this conflict in terms of Nietzschean conflict, foreshadowed by the couple's dance beneath the moon: 'as their relationship continues through courtship and marriage, misunderstanding and frustration are inevitable as they are in any living relationship.' *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, p. 147.

42. *Rainbow*, p. 193. For the womb as locus of feminine consciousness see my discussions of Constance Chatterley, below.

while she dances 'his non-existence',<sup>43</sup> but so too is their lovemaking: 'they lay still and warm and weak, like the new-born, together.'<sup>44</sup>

Will's initially tentative rebirth in the struggle with Anna becomes a dramatic transformation in the encounter with Lincoln Cathedral.<sup>45</sup> The imagery is Freudian, a return to an immense womb,<sup>46</sup> a locus at which 'east and west ... dawn and sunset' are collapsed together. Will's soul is transported to 'the apex of the arch'<sup>47</sup> of the Cathedral, but Anna's has settled

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43. *ibid.*, p. 225. In existentialist terms this is the most vulnerable point of human consciousness. For a possible source of this dancing scene see the Frieda Weekley correspondence with Otto Gross, *D.H. Lawrence Review*, Vol 22, No 2, (Summer 1990): 'Yesterday I danced around in my room dressed only in a shawl, while the worthy Philistines went to church.' Connie Chatterley dances creatively, rather than destructively, in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (Penguin, 1990) p. 230; cf. *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, (Penguin, 1973), p. 257.

44. *Rainbow*, p. 197.

45. The Cathedral as a symbol of Christianity's resurrection theology appears in a letter to Gordon Campbell, dated 21.12.14: 'That was why man built the Cathedral. He didn't say "Out of my breast springs this cathedral." But "In this vast Whole I live and move and have my being."' (*Letters II*: 246, # 828). (nb. ref to Acts 17.28, in turn an allusion to ancient Stoic formulations: see Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*, various translators, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, p. 524, n. 3).

46. *Rainbow*, p. 243. The imagery is androgynous, however, for the Cathedral is also 'a great, involved seed, whereof the flower would be radiant life inconceivable'. *Rainbow*, pp. 243-244.

47. *ibid.*, p. 244.

'under the arch of the rainbow';<sup>48</sup> she 'lapses' into her childbearing and 'vague content',<sup>49</sup> rather than a dynamic journey towards blood consciousness. Yet it is Anna who sees beyond the architectural limitations of the cathedral, to recognize that the 'open sky' is a greater and more awesome dimension. She sees the cathedral as restriction, rather than liberation or exultation - or if exultation then the exultation of an extinct age: 'God burned no more in that bush.'<sup>50</sup>

Yet her disillusionment with the Cathedral proves liberating for Will:

He thought of the ruins of the Grecian worship, and it seemed, a temple was never perfectly a temple, till it was ruined and mixed up with the winds and the sky and the herbs.<sup>51</sup>

48. *ibid.*, p. 238. But Anna's soul has 'beneath the arch' since the marriage of her mother Lydia, to Tom Brangwen, at the conclusion of Chapter 3 (p. 134).

49. *ibid.* For Lawrence on procreation see 'Italians in Exile':

'When Northern Europe, whether it hates Nietzsche or not, is crying out for Dionysic ecstasy ... Southern Europe is breaking free from Dionysos, from the triumphal affirmation of life over death, immortality through procreation.'

(*Twilight in Italy*, in the *D.H. Lawrence and Italy* collection, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1985, p. 136, and cited in Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, p. 15.)

50. *Rainbow*, p. 245.

51. *ibid.*, p. 248.

Lawrence proposes a beyond that is greater than the exclusivities of Christian theology or architecture, or the soteriology that proposes that some must be 'saved' while others remain 'lost'.<sup>52</sup>

Anna and Will emerge from the Cathedral and open themselves up to the possibilities of post-Christian religion. Will continues to love the Church, but 'had lost his absolute'.<sup>53</sup> Anna tends her children, Will tends the fabric of the church, but neither has attained the realm of the dark gods. They are in a state of limbo:

It would seem as if each soul, detaching itself from the mass, the matrix, should achieve its own knowledge. Yet it is not so. Many a soul which we feel should have detached itself and become distinct, remains embedded, and struggles with knowledge that does not pertain to it. It reached a point of distinctness and a degree of personal knowledge, and then became confused, lost itself.<sup>54</sup>

52. cf:

'I am tired of class, and humanity, and personal salvation. What care I whether my neighbour feels he is saved or not - saved, completed, fulfilled, consummated? I am tired to death of the infant crying in the night. I am sick of protesting Job, cursing his birth and his begetting. Is he so important, or his sufferings of such moment? Let him have done.'

Letter of 28.01.15 to E.M. Forster, *Letters II*: 266 (# 850).

53. *Rainbow*, p. 248.

54. From "Study of Thomas Hardy", Chp V, (*Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, p. 43 (43: 34-39)).

F.R. Leavis is right in seeing both Anna and Will 'subsiding' into life after the Cathedral experience,<sup>55</sup> and Lawrence increasingly turns his attention away from them to the new generation, whose members are 'drinking life' from Anna 'to make a new life',<sup>56</sup> as she continues to authenticate her own existence only 'in her latest baby'.<sup>57</sup>

Yet there is in the Will/Anna relationship a recovery. Following Will's clandestine liaison with Jennie, the warehouse girl in Nottingham, the marriage undergoes a sexual re-awakening and liberation.<sup>58</sup> The passage was a late addition to the text, and appears to have been, in the editing process insisted on by Methuen, carefully crafted to demonstrate the authenticity of the eventual, new-found relationship, and the final assertion of both personalities:

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55. F.R. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, p. 127.

56. *Rainbow*, p. 255.

57. *ibid*, p. 262. (cf *ibid.*, p. 238). This inauthenticity continues until Anna is nearly forty, when she finally 'began to emerge from the sleep of motherhood.' *ibid*, p. 468; qv Lawrence's letter of 16.07.16 to Catherine Carswell, *Letters* II:635: 'It is a mistake for Ivy to have children (*don't tell her*). For her that is a clutching of the past, the back origins, for fulfillment. And fulfillment *does not lie in the past.*' (Lawrence's emphases). (# 1263).

58. Paul Morel undertakes similar liaisons in *Sons and Lovers*, finding refuge in 'a place where he could flirt with a barmaid who was no more to him than the brass pump-handle she drew' (p. 502). It is part of his slow resurrective recovery from the death of his mother.

In the revision of the final manuscript Lawrence has stressed that the exorbitant and even sinister sexual revels through which Will and Anna experience 'Absolute Beauty' are a passion of death. He revised the proofs to accentuate this impression.<sup>59</sup>

Will's new sense of liberation, born out of an erotic re-awakening, leads him to a new sense of life's purpose.<sup>60</sup> No longer willing merely to repair the props of religious ritual, to 'keep the church fabric and church ritual intact',<sup>61</sup> Will has 'come through' to an ability to contribute to the community beyond the rituals. The Cathedral of religiosity has become like a collapsed Grecian temple, open to the Beyond: 'The house by the yew trees was in connection with the great human endeavour at last. It gained a new vigour thereby.'<sup>62</sup> Will's personal resurrection experience becomes a microcosmic foretaste of the phallic-based resurrection of European culture for which Lawrence

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59. Charles L. Ross, *The Composition of The Rainbow*, pp. 50-51.

60. I use the Tillichian, Platonic word *eros* to emphasize the 'wholeness' of the re-awakening, being libidinal and far more than libidinal: 'Without the animating force of eros, the shared passion of scholarly enquiry and the sustaining bonds of the spiritual community would dissolve.' (Paul Tillich, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol 13, p. 353, translated and quoted in Alexander Irwin, *Eros Toward the World*, p. 44). For Will Brangwen the erotic re-awakening is spiritual-societal, rather than scholarly, but 'resurrection' must embrace all of human experience.

61. *Rainbow*, p. 251. This is the type of ritualism that produced the bells of "Weeknight Service".

62. *Rainbow*, p. 281.

longed, and Will's participation in a societal and educational mood change is based on his release from the 'secret dread of "Absolute Beauty"'.<sup>63</sup>

Ursula Brangwen, like her mother, is a study in solipsism from childhood. 'There was nothing in the world but her own self', able to harden herself into her own self's universe.<sup>64</sup> From infancy she has turned inward, away from the world and from the father she loves, but who periodically hurts and betrays her. She tasted near-death experience when she and her father leaped off a bridge together and nearly drowned, and when they added to that a swing boat ride that left her vomiting she entered into an emotional death away from Will, a temporary but formative experience: 'her soul was dead towards him.'<sup>65</sup> Ursula becomes now the key to the novel, as she moves through adolescence swamped by the number of her siblings, and her need of an alternative reality: 'She could never be herself, no she was always Ursula-Gudrun-Theresa-Catherine - and later even Billy was added on to her.'<sup>66</sup>

63. *ibid.*, p. 280. Will's interest in woodwork, bathos to some critics, remains from Lawrence's early drafts, and is combined with the later addition of a sexual reawakening, to be symbolic of a new aesthetic that accompanies the erotic and can seek to liberate the Brangwen heritage.

64. *ibid.*, pp. 266-267.

65. *ibid.*, p. 269.

66. *ibid.*, p. 307.

Ursula comes to loathe the notion of 'storms of babies', and grabs moments alone in her room, or in the church, thankful to be alone in her fantasy world. Unlike either Tom or the early Will Brangwen, she adequately masters her schooling, rejoicing in languages and maths, and incorporates these within her fertile imagination. But these elements of her weekday world are unable to match the freedom and blessedness of her Sunday. The observance of Sunday provides a routine that is an alternative to the trials of siblings;<sup>67</sup> 'She was free only on Sundays.'<sup>68</sup>

Sunday is the day for Ursula on which the routines of the week can be placed in abeyance and the fantasy world of her literature, languages, even mathematics, can be celebrated. The family was placed in quiet after Church, and in the quiet Ursula 'found herself in a strange, undefined place, where her spirit could wonder in dreams, unassailed.'<sup>69</sup> The Sunday world provides Ursula with a powerful symbolic or mythological alternative to weekday 'reality'.

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67. Gudrun, too, comes to revel in the Sunday world, but it is Ursula's connection to it that Lawrence develops most completely.

68. *Rainbow*, p. 315.

69. *ibid.*, p. 318.

Religious motifs are not, for Ursula, a subject to be demythologized, or 'de-symbolized'. Like Will, she reverts to a non literal application of the scriptures.<sup>70</sup> Unlike Anna, who has seen Christianity as a moral code, in the liberal Protestant tradition, this next generation of Brangwens 'wanted a sense of the eternal, not a list of rules'.<sup>71</sup> Jesus must be an adequate visionary focus, the 'Christ of faith' as theologians would put it, rather than the 'Jesus of history'.<sup>72</sup> Ursula is looking for a more energized and powerfully mystical religion: 'it was the jealousy of vulgar people which must insist on the humanity of Christ'.<sup>73</sup>

Ursula's preference for 'the Christ of faith' is

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70. *ibid.*, p. 318, cf p. 213.

71. *ibid.*

72. The terms are derived from German theologian Martin Kähler, (1835-1912), who differentiated between the 'historical' (*historisch*) Jesus and the 'historic' (*geschichtlich*) Christ: see *The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historical, Biblical Christ*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1964, (a translation of *Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtlich biblische Christus*, Leipzig, 1896). Paul Tillich was a student of Kähler.

73. *Rainbow*, p. 319. Lawrence is depicting a time when Protestant Christianity was moving towards a 'rehumanized' Christ, following the impact of theologians such as Ludwig Feurbach (1804-1872), and in the wake of Friedrich Nietzsche. See Lloyd Geering, *Faith's New Age*, Collins, London, 1980, especially the chapter "From Theology to Anthropology". Lawrence, in a letter of 20.12.14 to Gordon Campbell, complains of Christianity's surrender of the Resurrection for a 'mean' emphasis on 'the smarts of the crucifixion'. *Letters* II:248, (# 828).

part of the same psychological need that she demonstrates in her approach to her school subjects,<sup>74</sup> or to Tennyson:<sup>75</sup> they have always 'a magic in them'.<sup>76</sup> The magic is a substitute for the idealized father-figure she was losing, of whom she once thought everything he did was 'magic',<sup>77</sup> but against whom, in her adolescence, a 'fire of mistrust and defiance burned in her, burned away her connection with him.'<sup>78</sup>

So Ursula fixes her attention for a while instead on a 'beautifully remote',<sup>79</sup> Jesus, and fantasizes about the seduction of the daughters of men, herself included, by the Sons of God.<sup>80</sup> She becomes increas-

74. *Rainbow*, pp. 313ff.

75. *ibid.*, p. 309.

76. *ibid.*, p. 314.

77. *ibid.*, p. 282.

78. *ibid.*, p. 312.

79. *ibid.*, p. 320.

80. *ibid.* qv. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Penguin, 1990, p. 182. Colin Milton stresses the relationship between Lawrence's 'sons of gods' and Nietzsche's 'superman':

the superman is one in whom the 'animal' qualities have been retained and strengthened and serve as the basis for intellectual and capacities far greater than those possessed of less powerful impulses; Lawrence's 'sons of God' are those with the same completeness of being.

(Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, p. 169). This underlies the extreme passions and intellectual flamboyance of Lawrence's characters, and has implications for any reading of the 'Shame'

ingly aware of the annual liturgical cycle: 'Sunday followed Sunday, trailing a fine movement, a finely developed transformation over the family.'<sup>81</sup>

But the cycle seems to understate, for Ursula, the new life that follows the death. 'A small thing was resurrection, compared with the Cross and the death'.<sup>82</sup> The risen Christ is but a shadow of his former self, and *nole me tangere* comes to signify for Ursula the inauthenticity of the Christian post-Easter imagery. The Ascension becomes no more than a removal of the now ethereal risen Christ from human sight, even from her mystical sight. The Christian liturgical cycle fails her in her version of the search for Lawrence's cthonic deities, its 'earthing' of Jesus in the crucifixion and immediate removal of him in the resurrection and ascension working against her need for a mystical yet fleshly vision.<sup>83</sup>

For Lawrence at this time two religious

...Continued...

chapter of *The Rainbow*, and the anal intercourse scenes of *The Rainbow* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

81. *Rainbow*, p. 325.

82. *ibid.*

83. The two are not mutually exclusive, as the mediaeval mystic tradition demonstrates: in these mystic forms of 'Jesu-ology' the ascended Jesus becomes a source of nurture, breasts on whom the mystic suckles, (see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1982. *passim*). In some cases the mystics' language approaches eroticism.

fundamentals were 'mistrust and beware of ... states of exultation and ecstasy',<sup>84</sup> and 'the crucifix and Christ are only symbols'.<sup>85</sup> There are echoes of these sentiments particularly in the first "Widening Circle" chapter of *The Rainbow*. Ecstasy betrays the Brangwens:

How passionately the Brangwens craved for it, the ecstasy. The father was troubled, dark-faced and disconsolate, on Christmas night, because the passion was not there, because the day was become as every day, and hearts were not aflame.<sup>86</sup>

Ecstasy is unsustainable, and for that reason Ursula cannot remain moved by the liturgy, or translate it into daily experience. Liturgical cycles become 'a mechanical action',<sup>87</sup> vacillating from ecstasy to sorrow, from Christmas to Good Friday, but for Ursula a

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84. Letter to Gordon Campbell, 20.12.14. (*Letters* II:246, # 328). The Cathedral is a symbol constantly present in this letter, confirming the degree of correlation between Lawrence's personal thought and experience and that of his characters: 'in the medi-aeval period Christianity did not insist on the Cross but on the Resurrection: churches were built to the glorious hope of resurrection.'

85. *ibid.*, p. 248. Lawrence also mentions that he was reading Mrs Jenner's *Christian Symbolism* at the time.

86. *Rainbow*, p. 324.

87. *ibid.*, p. 325. Lawrence cautions Campbell, states of exultation and ecstasy

send you ... so far beyond the centre of gravity in one direction, there is the inevitable swing back with greater velocity to the other direction, and in the end you exceed the limit's of your soul's elasticity, and go smash, like a tower that has swung too far.

(*Letters* II:246).

failure. For her neither Christ nor phoenix arises from the ashes of Lent and Good Friday. She and her family are well exposed to the annual liturgical cycles:

So the children lived the year of Christianity, the epic of the soul of mankind. Year by year the inner, unknown drama went on in them, their hearts were born and came to fullness, suffered on the cross, gave up the ghost, and rose again ...<sup>88</sup>

There is potential for these cyclical symbols of the liturgy to realize themselves in the lives of the participants, but it remains unrealized because the rites become 'mechanical':

it was becoming a mechanical action now, this drama: birth at Christmas for death at Good Friday. On Easter Sunday the life drama was as good as finished. For the Resurrection was shadowy and overcome by the shadow of death, the Ascension was scarce noticed, a mere confirmation of death.<sup>89</sup>

Automation of the Christian rites has killed their potential for regeneration. Ursula is irritated by the enacted humility of the Christian life, disappointed by the inadequacy of its rites, and longs for a more carnal Jesu-ology: 'she craved for the breast of the

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88. *Rainbow*, p. 325.

89. *ibid.*

Son of Man, to lie there.'<sup>90</sup> She remains irritated by the moral imperatives of biblical religion:

Did she want to sell her pearl-backed brush and mirror, her silver candlestick, her pendant, her lovely little necklace, and go dressed in drab like the Wherrys: the unlovely, uncombed Wherrys, who were the 'poor' to her? She did not.<sup>91</sup>

For Ursula this failure of the Church led to a search for significant symbols and experiences in rites not related to Christian orthodoxy.

Ursula's rejection of Christian symbolism began with rejection of the 'Sunday world', and she now decides 'only the weekday world mattered.'<sup>92</sup> But the aftertaste of religious experience remains, 'a

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90. *ibid.*, p. 331. Ursula feels 'ashamed in her soul', yet, as Will and Anna have demonstrated, shame can be a part of the discovery of carnality, and therefore a part of the process of liberation and resurrection. This has implications, once again, for the chapter "Shame". There are in Ursula's thought at this point echoes of the 'beloved disciple', who reclines on the breast of Christ - see John 13.23.

91. *ibid.*, p. 330. The gap between inadequate ritualism and moral demand was likewise to irritate Lawrence:

the Catholic Church has fallen into the same disaster as the Protestant: of preaching a *moral* God, instead of Almighty God, the God of strength and glory and might and wisdom: a 'good' God instead of a vital and magnificent God.

From the review of Eric Gill's *Art Nonsense and Other Essays*, in *Book Collector's Quarterly*, October-December 1933, and *Phoenix*, p. 396. Quoted in Martin Jarrett-Kerr, *D.H. Lawrence and Human Existence*, p. 139.

92. *Rainbow*, p. 329.

transference of meaning from the vision world to the matter-of-fact world.'<sup>93</sup> It is into this spiritual vacuum that Anton Skrebensky steps. He is momentarily juxtaposed with Ursula's Jesus, who is still portrayed as a passionate lover in her fantasy. Skrebensky has an 'easy mobility' in his voice,<sup>94</sup> and gains a 'movement of his life over against her.'<sup>95</sup> Lawrence begins to use Christological language of Skrebensky: 'he did not ask to be rendered before he could exist' and 'He was irrevocable in his isolation'.<sup>96</sup>

Skrebensky, like Ursula's fantasized Jesus, is to fail her in her search for authenticity of relationship. She decides to 'lay hold of him at once for her dreams. Here was one such as those Sons of God who saw the daughters of men, that they were fair? He was no son of Adam.'<sup>97</sup> Lawrence's recurrent use of the 'sons of God/daughters of men' motif, prevalent at this

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93. *ibid.*, p. 331.

94. *ibid.*, p. 334.

95. *ibid.*, p. 336.

96. *ibid.*, cf. John 1.12, 1 John 1.1; cf. Hebrews 1.4. K-J Kuschel's metaphorical understanding of these Johannine passages suggests that the early Church saw the 'pre-existence' phraseology in a very similar way to that which Lawrence uses it, as 'ideal' rather than 'real'. See especially Kuschel's discussion of the (German) Expressionists, contemporary with Lawrence, and their use of pre-existence metaphors: *Born Before all Time?*, nb pp. 68-78, and *passim*.

97. *Rainbow*, p. 337.

period in his writings, was an allusion to Gen 6:12. It appears in a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell:

We will be Sons of God who will walk here ... on earth, not bent on getting and having, because we know we inherit all things. We will be aristocrats, and as wise as the serpent in dealing with the mob. For all the mob shall not crush us nor starve us nor cry us to death.<sup>98</sup>

This letter is an early exploration of Lawrence's Rananim hope, a community to rise out of the ashes of First World War destruction: 'After the war, the soul of the people will be so maimed and so injured that it will be horrible to think of.'<sup>99</sup> In a piece of demythologized<sup>100</sup> Pauline christology, Rananim was to be a civilization in which Lawrence and his cohabitants were to be the new adams. To Paul Christ is 'the new adam'.

That Skrebensky is not going to succeed in his rôle as Jesus-substitute is foreshadowed from the

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98. Letter of 01.02.15, *Letters* II:273 (# 854).

99. *ibid.*, p. 272.

100. Or, perhaps 'remythologized', as an *Übermensch*, (= superman), the New Human rising out of the ashes of global destruction. On 08.04.15 he wrote to Lady Ottoline Morrell: 'Today I have begun again my philosophy - *Morgenrot* is my new name for it' (*Letters* II: 315, # 896), an allusion to Nietzsche's *Morgenröte*, though this venture lapsed on or by 07.07.15 (see letters to E.M. Forster, *Letters* II:360f, # 948; nb p. 360, n. 4, and Ottoline Morrell, *Letters* II: 362, # 950; in the latter he makes reference also to 'correcting the proofs of the *Rainbow*.') qv. Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, p. 21.

start. In the first place he is a soldier, and therefore caught up in the war machinery that Lawrence so despised.<sup>101</sup> He is also described in terms of the 'aristocrat', a type of which Lawrence, in "Study of Thomas Hardy", has been deeply scornful. But Lawrence is less scornful of the female, Tess, than he is of the male, Alex D'Urberville. While Tess 'awaits her own consummation' and the 'addition of the male complement' in her possession by D'Urberville, Lawrence uses the term 'aristocrat' of her to express potential for a positive quality, and the possibility for her of escape from destructive solipsism:

She does not see the other person as an extension of herself, existing in a universe of which she is the centre and pivot. She knows that other people are outside her. Therein she is an aristocrat. And out of this attitude to the other person came her passivity.<sup>102</sup>

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101. Note Michael Squires' passing comment: 'Lawrence hated war, and in *The Rainbow* exposes the hollowness of Anton Skrebensky, a soldier.' *The Creation of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, pp. 70-71. Colin Milton expresses this in Nietzschean terms:

For all his undoubted physical bravery, Skrebensky lacks the more demanding kind of courage needed to take emotional, moral or intellectual risks and his lack of enterprise is underlined by the fact that it is juxtaposed with Ursula's more active exploration of life and its possibilities.

(Colin Milton, *ibid.*, p. 142).

102. *Study of Thomas Hardy*, p. 95 (95:26ff). Here again are echoes of the mediaeval 'still point of the turning world'. Lawrence's greater sympathy towards female aristocrats may be based on his seeing *Frau Baronin*, Frieda, (Letter to Edward Garnett, 28.07.13, *Letters* II:51, # 619) as 'a German of good

Ursula, like Tess, is an embodiment of this passivity, and therefore potentially of some sort of feminine wholeness, resurrection or redemption experience. But the male, Skrebensky, is not dissimilar in nature to Alex D'Urberville: 'such a man adheres to the female like a parasite.'<sup>103</sup> Ursula, in admiring Skrebensky, sees him as an 'aristocrat', yet this is why, in the Laurentian scheme, she must destroy him. The aristocrat, as a masculine type, has to Lawrence 'always existed as something other than themselves';<sup>104</sup>

Hence the inevitable isolation, detachment of the aristocrat. His one aim, during centuries, has been to keep himself detached. At last he finds himself, by his very nature, cut off.<sup>105</sup>

Such a figure cannot be the source of authentic resurrection experience for Ursula, though in her relationship she is to find hints and masquerades of the fulfillment she is seeking.<sup>106</sup>

...Continued...

family - in Germany she thinks herself very aristocratic'. (Letter of 28.01.15 to E.M. Forster, *Letters* II:265, # 850).

103. *Study of Thomas Hardy*, p. 96 (96:7).

104. *ibid.*, p. 99 (99:24).

105. *ibid.*, p. 99 (99:26-28).

106. That search is eventually to be fulfilled in the non-aristocratic (but Lawrencesque) Rupert Birkin, through more fulfilling, less nihilistic struggle with him. Gudrun sees through Skrebensky: '"You look really floppy," she said. "I am floppy," he answered.' *Rainbow*, p. 340.

The first kiss of these two lovers is followed by a walk that is a forced recapitulation by Lawrence of the courtship of the previous Brangwen generations, on the site 'where her grandfather had walked with his daffodils, and where her mother had gone with her young husband'.<sup>107</sup> Their next kiss is described in the terms that Lawrence has used in "Study of Thomas Hardy", of 'exquisite assertion against the male',<sup>108</sup> and at the same time in the yonnice terms already noted, 'she would open her female flower like a flame'.<sup>109</sup> Lawrence now once more echoes biblical language: 'it was good, it was very, very good.' This language is of what is, in Pauline theology, the 'first creation', the creation that included 'the first Adam', but not the re-creation of humanity in the post-resurrection experience of the Christian Church. Their love is, in Leavis' phrase, 'a very ordinary thing'.<sup>110</sup>

Ursula remains deluded, a delusion that is re-

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107. *ibid.*, p. 345.

108. *ibid.*, p. 349.

109. cf. Lawrence's Letter of 24.09.20, *Letters* III:600 (# 2090), and the yonnice imagery of the poem "Figs" (*Collected Poems* p. 282). Although this poem was written six years after *The Rainbow*, the coitus imagery can be traced back to the *Sisters* period: in *Women in Love* Gudrun 'felt, with horror, as if [Gerald] tore at the bud of her heart, tore it open.' (Penguin edition, p. 502).

110. F. R. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence: Novelist*, p. 116.

emphasized when the peak of this phase of her relationship with Skrebensky takes place in a car, the machine-symbol despised by Lawrence. After this pinnacle of ecstasy in the car Ursula allows Skrebensky to farewell her with only a fleeting kiss on the hand, 'school-girl brief'. Like her grandparents, Ursula is 'transfigured', but their transfiguration 'burned between'<sup>111</sup> them, and later became 'perpetual wonder'<sup>112</sup> in their married life. Ursula's transfiguration is fleeting and naïve: 'But the next day she knew he had gone. Her glory had partly died down'.<sup>113</sup> Though Ursula misses Skrebensky, she misses only an idealization of him, which is all she had known, much as she had known only an idealization of Jesus:

All the time she dreamed of him, sometimes definitely, but when she was happiest, only vaguely. He was the warm colouring to her dreams, he was the hot blood beating within them.<sup>114</sup>

That it is no more than an idealization is clear when the couple come to discuss soldiering. 'What do you fight for, really?', Ursula asks, and refuses to accept Skrebensky's personification of the nation as an

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111. *Rainbow*, p. 74.

112. *ibid.*, p. 133.

113. *ibid.*, p. 352.

114. *ibid.*

acceptable cause.<sup>115</sup> Unsatisfied with Skrebensky in reality, she therefore begins to consider him non-existent, striking at his existential self as Anna Brangwen once sought to strike Will by dancing his non-existence. Ursula's lovemaking becomes now an expression of the comparative wholeness of her person, who is both 'quarry and hound', and an extended expression of her desire to annihilate Skrebensky. He wants a woman only physically, and is so focussed on that purely libidinal urge that he fails to notice that it is to the moon, not to him, that 'her body opened wide like a quivering anemone',<sup>116</sup> and with whom she dances or makes love, while she goes through the motions of dancing or making love to him. His frottage is an attempt to possess Ursula sexually, but frottage is no more than autosexuality, and it is in any case her perception that she has become the moon.

Less ambiguously than Anna, Ursula emerges from the sexual act as victrix, destroyer of a male ego. Skrebensky's sexuality comes to be described in terms

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115. *ibid.*, p. 357.

116. *ibid.*, p. 365. For the rôle of the moon in this passage, which is one of what I have called the 'recapitulation' passages, and which Charles Ross calls 'scenic echoing', see *The Composition of The Rainbow and Women in Love*, pp. 84-87: 'The moon becomes for Anna, as for Ursula and Tom, the symbol of the unknown beyond human life with which she desires communion.'

of a 'metallic-corrosive' metaphor,<sup>117</sup> as 'warm, soft iron' to which Ursula becomes 'like corrosive salt',<sup>118</sup> becomes triumphant, 'she held him there, the victim, consumed, annihilated. She had triumphed: He was not anymore.'<sup>119</sup>

The destruction of Skrebensky has begun, though there is to be great cost to Ursula. In the recapitulative corn-field passage Ursula dances - with the moon - to find herself and her place in the Beyond. Anna, in her earlier dances, became 'like an ear full of corn',<sup>120</sup> a Laurentian (and biblical<sup>121</sup>) death and resurrection association: 'My father died in the harvesting corn', writes Lawrence in the poem "Nostalgia".<sup>122</sup> But unlike Anna, Ursula is not prepared to revert from victory into inauthenticity, nor to allow the vanquished male's defeat to be only temporary. It is to be a struggle to the emotional death, and Skrebensky's inadequacy for the contest is fore-

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117. On the basis of the introduction of this metaphorical framework to the text Charles Ross finds these passages from the time of Skrebensky's return to have been written in or around March 1915: see *Composition*, pp. 33-36.

118. *Rainbow*, p. 368.

119. *ibid.*

120. *ibid.*, p. 225.

121. John 12:24.

122. *Complete Poems*, p. 173.

shadowed when he sends Ursula a parting gift of 'a bag of sweets'.<sup>123</sup> Anton Skrebensky thereafter exists 'in her own desire only',<sup>124</sup> can be created in her imagination into whatever she wishes; the concrete evidence implied by his postcard means nothing to her when it comes. Her sexuality, however, is now frustrated, and it into that void that the relationship with Winifred Inger is born.

I do not believe that the 'shame' of the title of this chapter lies in the lesbian sexuality.<sup>125</sup> The lesbian encounter is for Ursula a creative resurrection experience, liberation from the strains of the first rounds of relationship with Skrebensky and his auto-sexual narcissism. For Anna, a generation earlier, the 'shame' of the nascent sexuality that dawns on her in church,<sup>126</sup> and for Will and Anna the unlocking of

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123. *Rainbow*, p. 373. So too does Tom Brangwen, her uncle, who in relationship with Winifred Inger, reveals his volition towards inauthenticity and *mauvais fois*.

124. *ibid.*, p. 379.

125. See the conversation between Methuen's lawyer and the bench recorded in Charles Ross, *Composition*, p. 57. In the second draft of *Lady Chatterleys Lover*, Connie muses: 'The true, sensitive flow of sex, women sometimes had with one another.' (*John Thomas and Lady Jane*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, p. 105). This from a work emphasizing the 'resurrection of the body', including sexuality, as appropriate resurrection. Mellors invective against 'the Lesbian sort' (*Lady Chatterley's Lover* p. 211) inveighs against bi-sexual androgynism rather than Lesbian sexuality of the sensitivity of that shared between Winifred Inger and Ursula Brangwen.

126. *Rainbow*, pp. 147-150.

'natural and unnatural acts of sexual voluptuousness' which the narrative voice describes as 'delightful shame',<sup>127</sup> are a re-creative force in relationship, to one another and the world. The latter rebirth in particular is a release from the *mauvais fois* into which Anna subsided after her 'victory' over Will,<sup>128</sup> while Will, in his reborn sexual exchange with Anna, finds the source of renewed vigour with which to enter into public life.

Similarly, Winifred Inger coaxes Ursula's mind and body into a new understanding of herself and the world she lives in, a theological and philosophical re-orientation in which religion becomes 'clothing to a human aspiration'. In the case of Christianity this 'clothing' provides release from the *angst* of the existentialists, a release won by embrace of the symbol of crucifixion. Sexually and psychologically Winifred liberates Ursula; the water in which they consummate their eros makes Ursula 'cold, and a deep bottomless silence welled up in her, as if a bottomless darkness were upon her.'<sup>129</sup> This is a baptism, an immersion into

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127. *ibid.*, pp. 279-281.

128. This sexual rebirth includes the first hints of anal sexuality, to re-appear in *Women in Love*, Chapter 30, and to be the climactic sexual scene of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, at which point I will discuss more fully its ambivalence.

129. *Rainbow*, p. 387.

the symbolic Christian-baptismal or Jungian womb, while the typically Laurentian darkness of the water emphasizes the resurrective potential. Here, however, Ursula opts out, wanting to be away from the intimacy of the darkness, 'glad to be on the station platform with a crowd of Saturday night people, glad to sit in the lighted, crowded railway carriage.'<sup>130</sup> Ursula's encounter with Winifred, an encounter that is not so horrific to her that she fails to 'take her leave' of the older woman, is an opportunity for therapeutic, regenerative love: 'Ursula developed rapidly during the few months of her intimacy with her mistress.'<sup>131</sup>

The 'shame' of the chapter lies in part in Ursula's eventual rejection of the feminine bond with Winifred. Lawrence celebrates the intensity of their love but is ultimately unable to see or to portray a future for it. But more significant is the shame that lies in Winifred's eventual marriage to Tom Brangwen, whose life revolves around the mechanization of the pit. Ursula rejects this vast industrialized pit that destroys human lives, but masterminds Winifred's marriage to Tom. Together they then elect to live with and feed the great, mechanized pit, 'cynically reviling

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130. *ibid.*, p. 388. Lawrence therefore remains ambivalent about same-sex love.

131. *ibid.*, p. 388.

the monstrous state and yet adhering to it'.<sup>132</sup> Ursula longs to smash the machine,<sup>133</sup> whereas Winifred turns from her erotic intellectual honesty and sexual passion merely to produce children for Tom Brangwen, and to 'acquiesce to his growing inertia'.<sup>134</sup> Therein lies the 'shame', not in the 'closed door'<sup>135</sup> of lesbian sexuality that Ursula was never again willing to open.

Another friend, Maggie Schofield, gives Ursula two small volumes of poetry when she leaves her first teaching post at St Philip's School. The teaching experience is a traumatic one for Ursula, but at the end of two years she looks back on the experience with gratitude. Despite feeling 'terribly non-existent',<sup>136</sup> in her exposure to the Standard Five class, she 'comes through, achieving 'a strong cruel move towards freeing herself'.<sup>137</sup> The two volumes of poetry Maggie selects for her, one each of Swinburne and Meredith, are signs of creative victory, for Lawrence equated his own experience of rejection as a poet with that of

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132. *ibid.*, p. 397.

133. *ibid.*, p. 398.

134. *ibid.*, p. 400.

135. *ibid.*, p. 457.

136. *ibid.*, p. 425.

137. *ibid.*, p. 456.

Meredith,<sup>138</sup> and is to consider Swinburne 'the last fiery spirit among us.'<sup>139</sup> Maggie Schofield's choice of poetry is a recognition of Ursula's tenacity in surviving and mastering the education system as she (and Lawrence) found it.<sup>140</sup>

Ursula has changed dramatically, as is now apparent in her renewed relationship with Skrebensky.<sup>141</sup> This renewed relationship is now a struggle to the emotional death in exploration of the possibilities of genital sexuality. Ursula, in her sexuality, is immediately portrayed in androgynous terms, 'proud and erect', but also 'like a flower'.<sup>142</sup> Their encounter is a descent into darkness, in which she momentarily becomes a personification of woman-

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138. Letter to Arthur McLeod, 09.02.14, *Letters* II:146, (# 704).

139. Letter to Barbara Low, 11.09.16, *Letters* II:654, (# 1283).

140. At the same time that Ursula 'graduates' from her student teaching position to move on to College her family also 'graduate' from Cossethay to Beldover, Will 'graduates' from a dull clerical post to a reputable Education Department post, and Anna finally ceases her long period of childbearing, 'graduating' to possibilities of a more authentic existence. Gudrun moves on to art school, and even Theresa completes High School.

141. New levels of self-confidence that Ursula has gained since ridding herself of Skrebensky's narcissistic pseudo-love, gains made in relationship with Winifred Inger and in the classroom, are now tested in renewed struggle with her former lover. Two other friendships, non-genital, have also furthered Ursula's self-confidence: those of Maggie Schofield and Dorothy Russell.

142. *Rainbow*, p. 495.

kind;<sup>143</sup> Skrebensky becomes the 'living darkness upon her'.<sup>144</sup> As they make love Ursula, too, becomes 'all dark'

So they stood in the utter, dark kiss,  
that triumphed over them both, subjected  
them, knitted them into one fecund nucleus  
of the fluid darkness.<sup>145</sup>

This fecundity is confirmed in the subsequent pregnancy, and the spontaneous termination of that pregnancy is a narrow escape from the slavery to procreation that Lawrence portrays the lot of Anna to be.

In reading the courtship of Skrebensky and Ursula it is important to be aware of some Laurentian signals. Ursula has created an idealization of Skrebensky in her mind, and never moves beyond that. She is in love with love, rather than with Skrebensky. There is in her mind transfiguration, but it lacks the genuineness of that of her grandparents: "It is like it was before." she said. Yet it was not in the least as it was before.<sup>146</sup> And prior to this there is another laconic authorial observation: 'they were enemies come together in a

143. *ibid.*: 'she was Woman', she was the whole of Woman in the human order.'

144. *ibid.*, p. 497.

145. *ibid.*

146. *ibid.*, pp. 495-496.

truce.<sup>147</sup> This is no creative relationship.

Their next sexual encounter is to be a turning point, 'their final entry into, the source of creation',<sup>148</sup> a passage of death and resurrection more dramatic than any so far in the novel:

She passed away as on a dark wind, far,  
far away, into the pristine darkness of  
paradise, into the original immortality.  
She entered the dark fields of immortality.<sup>149</sup>

Ursula has now become 'another, stronger self that knew the darkness', even though this has been on her part no more than an autosexual act, a means to an end: 'the man, what was he?'. Skrebensky, unlike the later Birkin, has never been any more than a convenient externalization of Ursula's own struggle towards independent womanhood, a convenience to replace the equally idealized Jesus of her adolescence.

She took him, she clasped him, clenched  
him close, but her eyes were open looking  
at the stars, it was as if the stars were  
lying with her and entering the  
unfathomable darkness of her womb,

147. *ibid.*, p. 493.

148. *ibid.*, p. 500.

149. *ibid.*, p. 502. Helena, in *The Trespasser*, has similarly experienced a 'passing', or in her case 'melting' away when making love; 'she melted down on him, like metal sinking on a mould', (*The Trespasser*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1960, p. 52), and later feels 'destroyed' by Siegmund. See Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, pp. 218-219.

fathoming her at last. It was not him.<sup>150</sup>

From the time she tolerated his frottage to their final coitus, her lovemaking has always been with the moon, and he no more than an instrument by which to attain the Beyond. Even in their masquerade as man and wife they never attain a unity.

She believed she was the young wife of a titled husband on the eve of departure for India. This, the social fact, was a delicious make-believe. The living fact was that he and she were man and woman, absolute and beyond all limitation.<sup>151</sup>

Their brief life together as a couple is unsuccessful because, like Will and Anna, they are an exclusive couple, isolated by their obsession with each other, and by Ursula's fantasies, 'wandering' towards a death.<sup>152</sup>

The death is to some extent Skrebensky's, accelerated when he first leaves Ursula in London to return to the military world, and to the alcohol from which Tom Brangwen had narrowly escaped two generations before. The smell of whisky now frequently enters the narrative. Skrebensky begins to flirt with other women, including Gudrun, which irritates Ursula back towards

150. *Rainbow*, p. 516.

151. *ibid.*, p. 505.

152. *ibid.*, p. 507.

him once more, and produces the sojourn at the cottage of Dorothy Russell. This final encounter produces moments of intense, but destructive passion, transfiguration again in the mind of Ursula, but it remains too a fantasy for her. For Skrebensky it is deadly serious, a struggle for his own life, and eventually, in their final sex-act, a 'struggle for consummation'.<sup>153</sup> Skrebensky enters into a death of body and spirit from which he never psychologically recovers.

And Ursula, too, in that final sex-encounter, nearly dies a psychological death:

She broke from her tense cramp of agony gradually, though each movement was a goad of heavy pain. Gradually, she lifted her dead body from the sands, and rose at last. There was no moon for her, no sea. All had passed away. She trailed her body to the sea.<sup>154</sup>

It is an eschatological metaphor, an allusion to eschatological vision of John of Patmos: 'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away now, and there was no longer any sea.'<sup>155</sup> For Ursula, though, (or perhaps because), she 'lapses out' into severe illness, there

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153. *ibid.*, p. 532,

154. *ibid.*

155. Revelation 21:1. There is also an echo of the resurrection of Jesus as described in Mark 16:6; the 'trailing' of Ursula's body to the cottage is later echoed in "The Man Who Died".

is a resurrection from this death, and eventual rebirth in relationship with Rupert Birkin. For Skrebensky there is no resurrection, only the hasty choice of a wife, and flight with her to India.

Margaret Masson says of Ursula,

even before she receives Skrebensky's curt cablegram: 'I am married', her encounter with the horses and her subsequent illness force her through a kind of death, when she is stripped of everything but what Lawrence describes as her most essential identity, the bedrock and core of her being.<sup>156</sup>

The 'everything' of which Ursula is stripped are her fantasy love creations.<sup>157</sup> But she is now ready for an authentic love encounter, which she finds in the struggle encounter and eventual 'coming through' with Rupert Birkin. Her readiness for that encounter is symbolized by the rainbow, while her encounter with the horses in the final chapter is a Freudian nightmare image,<sup>158</sup> an externalization of her internal encounter with her sexual self. Her recovery of health is a rediscovery of the erotic, especially of sexual

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156. Margaret Masson, "The Influence of Congregationalism", p. 268.

157. She also creates a fantasy out of education, but the impact of the Skrebensky relationship on her College career and its implications for interpreting Lawrence's ideas of education lie for the most part outside the scope of this thesis.

158. Horse symbolism is to appear in this way most notably in "St Mawr".

passion, awaiting its proper unlocking in the more equal relationship with Birkin. Ursula attains resurrective salvation<sup>159</sup> by the psychological destruction of Skrebensky.

For Ursula, and the other figures of the "Brangwen-saga", attainment of resurrection experience remains largely an individual experience. Yet they are participating in a wider societal experience:

As she sat at her window, she saw the people go by in the street below, colliers, women, children, walking each in the husk of an old fruition, but visible through the husk, the swelling and the heavy contour of the new germination.<sup>160</sup>

The rainbow appears not as an individually apposite symbol, but germane to a wider society.<sup>161</sup> Following completion of *The Rainbow* (and *Women in Love*) and the individual phase of 'coming through' in his own life, Lawrence becomes more concerned with this need for a

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159. Kate Millett sees Birkin as a saviour figure (*Sexual Politics*, p. 262), but fails to note that Ursula attains her own salvation before meeting Birkin. She notes Ursula's destruction of Skrebensky only as 'an object lesson in how monstrous the new woman can be.' She also neglects to mention that the feminine Saviour redeems the male in "The Man Who Died".

160. *Rainbow*, p. 547.

161. If there is a hint here of a wider application for Ursula's resurrection experience, it is held in abeyance in *Women in Love*, where society, apart from Birkin and Ursula, is seen to be essentially corrupt. In *Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent*, Lawrence turns to a societal resurrection hope, resurrection led by an authoritarian and charismatic figure.

societal resurrection motif, particularly in the light of the destruction of Europe in World War One. To explore that need he turns to the leadership novels; *The Plumed Serpent* in particular providing an important exploration of the religious dimensions of societal resurrection.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *THE PLUMED SERPENT*

The evocative opening chapter of *The Plumed Serpent*, with its vivid descriptions of the bull fight, and of related scenes and exchanges, is a portrayal of a society desperately needing an injection of otherness, of a mystery that will lift it beyond the mundane and the sterile. Whether Lawrence's religious scheme provides a satisfactory alternative to the Mexico he depicts is questionable, but *The Plumed Serpent* is an attempt to provide a vital, powerful religious consciousness of the sort that Ursula Brangwen has sought, imposing that new consciousness not merely on an individual but on society.

*The Plumed Serpent* was begun, after numerous false starts,<sup>1</sup> when Lawrence was living in Chapala, Mexico, and was at least in part a result of his desire to 'write a novel on the American continent (I don't mean about it: I mean while I'm here)'.<sup>2</sup> In it Lawrence

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1. See *Letters* IV, letters of 02.05.23, 09.05.23, 15.05.23. (## 2809, 2819, 2822). Lawrence appears to have made a solid start by 26th May (# 2827).

2. Letter of 21.04.23 to Amy Lovell, *Letters* IV:429, (# 2796). Lawrence's emphasis. qv. letter to Middleton Murry, 26.03.22, (*Letters* IV:446): 'I sort of wanted to do a novel here.'

again depicts what Masson describes as a 'Wasteland', which, though often muddled by Lawrence's own ambivalence about Mexico, is now presented with greater maturity and complexity than was *The White Peacock*.

The bull fight that offends Kate Leslie corresponds to Lawrence's own experience of a bull fight which he attended on April 1st 1923. Lawrence makes no mention of this event in his letters of the time, preferring to allow it to dwell in his mind until it re-emerged in fiction. A subsequent visit to a bull fight in October of the same year is similarly not mentioned, but it does appear as a metaphorical vehicle in a letter to Willard Johnson, written on November 19th.<sup>3</sup> Lawrence was sheepish about his observations of the blood-sport, preferring that his experience should be translated into a mythic symbol rather than expressed in personal correspondence.

When the bull fight appears in writing it does so as an image of decay, contrasting poorly with the animistic rites of 'the Hopi snake dance' of *Mornings in Mexico*, or the Hopi influenced rhythms of the

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3. *Letters* IV:536, (# 2965).

dancers of 'submerged Indian races'<sup>4</sup> of *The Plumed Serpent*. The bull fight is seen by the Westerners, Owen Rhys, Kate Leslie and Bud Villiers only as a tourist's experience of a foreign culture, a slice of culture dislocated from its European origins, displaced on Mexican soil. To emphasize the dislocation and inauthenticity of the ritual, Lawrence stresses that the bulls themselves are imported, the local animals lacking the necessary vigour. Lawrence allows an accumulation of images of decay and inauthenticity to pile upon one another in the opening chapter: the 'busted car' in which the tourists travel is a Ford taxi, the stadium is a 'big concrete beetle trap', in which a 'thrill' can be induced only by the tourists' 'will-to-happiness'.

In "The Hopi Snake Dance" Lawrence uses a similar method of contrasting cultures, animism with decay, by contrasting the rites of the dancers with the 'automobile after automobile' of the curious and dislocated tourists.<sup>5</sup> In "The Bull Fight" both spectacle and spectator are displaced, and Lawrence allows the descriptions at times to border on

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4. A page previously Lawrence has spoken of 'a strange, *submerged* desire in the people for things beyond the world' (emphasis mine). *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin (1990) edition, pp. 296-7; Cambridge (1987) edition pp. 260-1. References to both editions will be given in notes.

5. *Mornings in Mexico*, p. 69.

surrealism: the women's powdered faces 'like white marshmallows', hats and oranges flung back and forth, and even the westerner Bud Villiers glaring 'like a bird that would stab with its beak if it got the chance.' To Lawrence these are 'the mass', and as individuals are stereotyped, the men black suited and fat, the women powdered.

The fight itself is devoid of glamour, gallantry or charm. The horses, whose sole function is to be gored and disemboweled by the irritated but unspectacular bull, are moribund, and, despite Lawrence's ironic authorial exclamation 'Oh shades of Don Quixote! Oh four Spanish horsemen of the Apocalypse!'<sup>6</sup> are the antithesis of such horses as St Mawr, the horses of the final chapter of *The Rainbow*, or the horses with whom 'the real drama' of *Apocalypse*, Lawrence's last work, begins.

Rain, which has threatened throughout the opening scene, provides a cue for Kate's exit, and for her first encounter with the life-imbued Don Cipriano, who is to introduce Kate to an alternative to this Baudelairean horror, these 'mongrel men of a mongrel city'.<sup>7</sup>

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6. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 47; Cambridge 15:24f.

7. See Lawrence's letter of 04.04.23 to Nina Witt: 'Mexico City not bad, but very American on the one hand, and slummy on the other: rather a mongrel town.' *Letters* IV:417 (# 2772).

From the first encounter the general makes an impact: his cape is pale blue, in contrast to the blackness that has predominated, while, despite his veneer of westernization, 'superficially assured', his underlying character is apparent to Kate, who sees him to be 'perhaps half-savage, shy and farouche, and deprecating.'<sup>8</sup> He is Kate's first contact with what Lawrence in a letter calls 'half civilized, half wild' Mexican Natives.<sup>9</sup> This is the introit to the blood-knowledge of Quetzalcoatl, with which western civilization is to be contrasted. It is a contrast that had been on Lawrence's mind since his second week in Mexico City: 'The peons, Indians, are attractive, but Mexico City rather ramshackle and Americanised.'<sup>10</sup>

Lawrence approaches methods of caricature in the second chapter. Owen and Villiers become 'like carrion birds, repulsive',<sup>11</sup> while Cipriano, too, is 'something bird-like'.<sup>12</sup> Lawrence in describing the general

8. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin, p. 54; Cambridge 21:35f.

9. 'Sie sind halb-civilisiert, halb wild.' Letter of 31.05.23 to Anna von Richthofen, *Letters* IV:451 (# 2834). This letter refers to a procession of Corpus Christi, perhaps in Lawrence's mind as he wrote the "Auto da fé" chapter; 'a feeble little procession of children within the church' - *Plumed Serpent* Penguin p. 313; Cambridge 277:25f.

10. Letter of 11.04.23 to Catherine Carswell, *Letters* IV:423, (# 2780).

11. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin, p. 60; Cambridge 28:2f.

12. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 62. Cambridge 30:11f.

approaches tones of 'noble savage' anthropology.<sup>13</sup> The 'little general' Cipriano, who has 'black inhuman eyes' because he is a caricature, 'an Indian, pure and simple',<sup>14</sup> is favourably and naïvely contrasted with Judge Burlap, after which Lawrence briefly juxtaposes both Don Cipriano and Don Ramón with Judge Burlap and Major Law, representatives of Europeanization and Americanization, at the Norris tea party. Ramón and Burlap sit at each hand of Mrs Norris at the Tlacolula table, the native and the colonial on either side of the benevolent party host. It is only a brief juxtaposition, not explicitly developed in the novel, but provides an undertone that continues throughout, a contrast of what Kate calls those who had 'blood in their veins ... columns of dark blood', who have the potential to lead a nation to revolutionary resurrection, with 'the other bloodless acidulous couple ... with their nasty whiteness...'<sup>15</sup>

Marxism and Catholicism together have contributed

13. It is this naïvete that gives so outspoken a critic as Terry Eagleton good basis on which to base his comment "'spontaneous creative life" in Lawrence seemed happily to co-exist with the most virulent sexism, racism, and authoritarianism'; Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: an Introduction*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983, p. 42. John Orr notes Cipriano's behaving 'like a brutal Latin American *caudillo*, with little sense of human justice.' John Orr, *The Making of the Twentieth Century Novel*, MacMillan, London, 1987, p. 41.

14. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 62; Cambridge 30:20.

15. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 79; Cambridge 47:24f.

to the sterility of Lawrence's Mexico, and in "Fortieth Birthday" these regimes are together set up and torn down, contrasted with the rites of Quetzalcoatl, which receive their first mention in the form of a news item from 'Sayula, Jalisco'.<sup>16</sup> Kate, the seer, identifies the problem posed by this juxtaposition of ideologies:

You aren't Mexico. You aren't even Mexican, really. You are just half Spaniards full of European ideas, and you care for asserting your own ideas and nothing else. You have no real bowels of compassion.<sup>17</sup>

Whether this inauthentic Europeanization is any less compassionate than the iconoclastic and even murderous rites of Quetzalcoatl and Huitzilopochtli is questionable, when the dispatch of Quetzalcoatl's enemies on 'the long journey / Beyond the star'<sup>18</sup> is considered, for this rite is sadistic in its lottery and brutal in execution. From her earliest encounters with Cipriano Kate has seen this murderous potential, 'the intensity and crudity of the semi-savage',<sup>19</sup> and admired it.

Out of her recognition of the seediness of Mexico

Kate begins to accept the need for an experience of

16. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 88; Cambridge 56:19.

17. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 86; Cambridge 54:18ff. Italics in original.

18. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 421; Cambridge 385:27f.

19. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 100; Cambridge 67:21.

rebirth for herself and for the moribund society in which she has found herself, and for the gods and the religion of that society. 'Even the gods must be born again. We must be born again.'<sup>20</sup> John Orr sees in Kate Leslie a continuation of the Rupert Birkin/Ursula Brangwen persona, while in Cipriano he finds an 'exotically transposed' version of Gerald Crich/Gudrun Brangwen,

given a new lease of life through a mysticism which can be exotically misrendered by the Anglo-Saxon imagination in search of primitive vitality.<sup>21</sup>

Orr rightly notes Lawrence's 'exotic misrendering' of Mexican mysticism, a rendition marred by the same idealism that made the charismatic Australian 'Kangaroo' such a peculiar and not wholly convincing figure, and an idealism that since the 'Branwensaga' had tended to represent a collective rather than an individual experience. Orr doesn't note it, but Kate Leslie, in her marriage to James Joachim Leslie, had married a man not dissimilar to the first husband

20. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 91; Cambridge 59:9f.

21. *The Making of the Twentieth Century Novel*, p. 41. Orr's separation of the ideological functions of the two couples from *Women in Love* and superimposing of those separate rôles onto Kate Leslie and Don Cipriano is in the end too simplistic, ignoring ideological developments made by Lawrence in the period of *Aaron's Rod* and *Kangaroo*, but he is correct to see in Kate Leslie a continuation of what I have suggested to be Ursula Brangwen's search for an authentic resurrection experience.

of Lydia Lensky, the Polish 'fire eater'.<sup>22</sup> Unlike the widowed Lydia, however, Kate strikes out to discover not merely a personal rebirth or resurrection, but to participate in the attempted resurrection of ancient gods. Don Ramón encourages her to find her own womanhood,<sup>23</sup> a feminine equivalent of Lawrence's own programme described in the poem "To Let Go or to Hold On":

shall a man brace himself up  
and lift his face and set his breast  
and go forth to challenge the world?  
gather his will and energy together  
and fling himself in effort after effort  
upon the world, to bring a change to pass?<sup>24</sup>

Kate recognizes the need 'to find her womanhood', to embrace the Mexican (and Mexicans') pull 'down to the dark depths of nothingness',<sup>25</sup> or 'to be drawn down, down till you send roots into the deep places again. Then you can send up the sap and the leaves back to the sky'.<sup>26</sup> It is for this that she remains in Mexico.

As Lawrence moves Kate inland, towards the heart

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22. *Rainbow*, p. 86.

23. See *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 107; Cambridge 74:25-38.

24. *Collected Poems*, p. 428.

25. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 109; Cambridge 76:39.

26. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 113; Cambridge 80:22f.

of Mexico, he uses images suggesting procreation; sexual metaphors of the beginning of resurrection experience. The chapter is called "The Lake", a womb image, but the passage of Villiers and Kate is up a river, a river both Styx- and urethra-like. Because the motorboat has broken down, symptomatic of the decay of imported American and European civilization,<sup>27</sup> the two are ferried by a crippled boatman, (Charon?), who takes the couple from a narrow river to a wider one,<sup>28</sup> upstream on 'sperm-like water'.<sup>29</sup> At the point where the river meets the lake is the run down hotel that is their destination: by the time the boatman leaves them he has already hinted at his involvement in the cult of 'the old dead gods',<sup>30</sup> and has gently hinted that he recognizes the hold of that cult on Kate. Later in the novel she is to remark 'There is more than one way of becoming like a little child':<sup>31</sup> this rebirthing, it seems, is one of them, if only as a symbol of Lawrence's ideal of the rebirth of a people.

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27. For this insight see Louis L. Martz. "Quetzalcoatl: The Early Version of *The Plumed Serpent*", *D.H. Lawrence Review*, Vol 22, No 3, Fall 1990, p. 291.

28. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 122; Cambridge 89:23. For the suggestion that the ferryman is a Charon figure see also Louis L. Martz, "Quetzalcoatl", p. 291.

29. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 127; Cambridge 93:30f.

30. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 128; Cambridge 94:36.

31. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 428; Cambridge 393:19f.

Kate's brief stay at the hotel at Orilla adds to the litany of horror stories Lawrence uses to depict his wasteland and its decay. The stories of brutal murders illustrate a society in which, in Yeatsian terms, 'the centre cannot hold'. There is also in this passage a scattering of images that suggest that Kate's sojourn in Orilla was a period of gestation, ending with her virtual expulsion of Villiers.

What purpose has the American served, and what is the significance of Kate's ridding herself of him? He has been unable to grasp the significance of the ancient world and its mystique, and Kate's rejection of him is a rejection of the West and its myopic values. Her journey towards Sayula in the ancient centre of Mexico, continues without vestiges of Europeanization. As she travels Kate shares a 'communion' of oranges and sandwiches with her new boatman,<sup>32</sup> and muses on his nature and on the 'half-made' nature of men and women, 'half-made creatures on two legs, eating food and degrading the one mystery left to them, sex.'<sup>33</sup> To degrade sex, as Lawrence

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32. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 141; Cambridge 107:29. Note also the quasi-eucharistic reference to 'unbroken blood' in the previous paragraph (Cambridge 107:25).

33. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 140; Cambridge 106:7.

makes clear in *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*,  
is to denude life of meaning.

Sayula offers Kate a first encounter with the  
rites of Quetzalcoatl. The 'townscape' is now one of  
ennui rather than of decay:

the plaza was very full, and along the  
cobble streets stretching from the square,  
many torches fluttered and wavered upon  
the ground, illuminating a dark salesman  
and an array of straw hats, or a heap of  
straw mats called *petates*, or pyramids of  
oranges from across the lake.<sup>34</sup>

Ennui provides potential for an injection of vitality,  
which the decay of Mexico City and of Orilla do not:  
'life in the plaza was dense and heavy with potency.'<sup>35</sup>

It is into this potential that the first drum beat  
of Quetzalcoatl's rites breaks, at around nine o'clock  
in the evening, accompanied by a flute. The community  
gather *en masse* to witness and participate in the rite,  
and for the first time in the novel's narrative there  
is an energy 'surely this was a new kindling of  
mankind!'<sup>36</sup>

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34. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 151; Cambridge 117:1-5. Punctuation here follows the Cambridge edition.

35. *ibid.* Cambridge 117:7.

36. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 156; Cambridge 122:19. Previous 'energy' has existed only in the conversations of Cipriano and Ramón.

Kate Millett is repeatedly critical of the patriarchalism of the Quetzalcoatl cult and of the rôle of Kate Leslie in the novel as a 'female impersonator'.<sup>37</sup> There is much material on which to base her objections, and if it were not yet clear that Kate's function in the novel is to be one of 'Falling under Cipriano's spell',<sup>38</sup> and

to observe the 'living male power', the 'ancient phallic mystery,' and the 'ancient god-devil of the male Pan,' 'unyielding forever,' 'shadowy, intangible, looming suddenly tall, and covering the sky, making a darkness that was himself and nothing but himself',<sup>39</sup>

then these liturgical rites would now begin to reveal the implicit chauvinism, which becomes increasingly explicit. The 'women of these men',<sup>40</sup> participate in these rites only as adjuncts to the men, as observers or as a foil for the driving masculine rhythms and actions.

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37. *Sexual Politics* p. 284. Millett's comments, it should be noted, have been largely disowned, at least for their superficiality, by feminist critics of Lawrence: 'Sexual Politics is a piece of propaganda for lesbianism and masturbation and is full of hatred for heterosexuality. Hardly the basis for an open-minded approach to D.H. Lawrence.' Sheila MacLeod, *Lawrence's Men and Women*, Heinemann, London, 1985, p. 14. See also Carol Dix, *D.H. Lawrence and Women*, p. x and *passim*.

38. *Sexual Politics*, p. 283.

39. Kate Millett, *ibid.*, pp. 283-284, quoting *Plumed Serpent*, Viking edition, New York, 1951, p. 342; cf. Penguin edition p. 347, Cambridge 311:15f.

40. *Plumed Serpent* Penguin p. 156; Cambridge 122:35.

The speech of the 'man with the banner of the sun' is the first of many that presents the rites of Quetzalcoatl as a replacement to those of Christianity, or of the 'old caterpillar stage of Christianity evolving into something else.'<sup>41</sup> The replacement's god is a servant of 'the dark sun at the back of the day-sun',<sup>42</sup> a reincarnation of what Lawrence presumably, and Cipriano certainly, see to be the spent force of 'the Son of God', who is now proclaimed 'bled and dead ... bone'.<sup>43</sup> The new cult is heavy with the symbolism of the phallus and of male orgasm:

The Father has looked around, and has seen  
the Morning Star, fearless between the  
rush of the oncoming yellow sun, and the  
backward reel of the night.<sup>44</sup>

The dance celebrating the demise of Christian symbols is a pulsating, rhythmic dance, in which an outer 'wheel' of men surround an inner wheel of both sexes. The males' bodies are a 'pulsing pendulum',<sup>45</sup> while the dance is one of absorption into 'sex, but not

41. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 245; Cambridge 207:3f.

42. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 157; Cambridge 123:31f.

43. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 158; Cambridge 124:23.

44. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 159; Cambridge 125:17-20.

45. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 164; Cambridge 130:28.

the lesser sex.' There is here a hint of a reality beyond human experience, by which the human experience of coitus becomes only a shadow form of this greater sexual experience:<sup>46</sup>

She felt her sex and her womanhood caught up and identified in the slowly revolving ocean of nascent life, the dark sky of the men lowering and wheeling above. She was not herself, she was gone, and her own desires were gone in the ocean of the great desire. As the man whose fingers touched hers was gone in the ocean that is male, stooping over the face of the waters.<sup>47</sup>

The images become a conglomerate of womb-images, images of the 'waters of the deep' of Genesis 1:2. Out of this rhythmic re-entry to the womb it seems a new feminine and masculine consciousness is to arise,<sup>48</sup> to

46. I have no evidence that Lawrence was aware of the *kamasutra*, though its teachings on 'greater sex' beyond the normal experience of human sexuality would have been consistent with his thought at this point. A Korean article, "D.H. Lawrence-ui hyonshil-ui songgwa isang-ui song" ("D.H. Lawrence's Real vs. Ideal Sex"), a Masters thesis by Byung Chull Kim from Kyungnam University, 1985, is unaccessible to me. Lawrence is, through his relationship with the Brewsters, (and the poetry of Frederick Victor Branford - see *Letters* V:356, # 3567) well aware of vedantic literature, even translating his signature word 'phallus' into the typically vedantic 'lingam' in a letter to Earl Brewster. (*Letters* V:648f, # 3967). The phallus is 'lingam' in the only English translation of the *Kamasutra* of the time: that of Sir Richard Burton, which, though limited in circulation, should have been known to Brewster. For its publishing history see *The Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana*, translated by Sir Richard Burton and F.F. Arbuthnot, edited by W.G. Archer, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1963, pp. 11-14. For 'lingam' see eg. *ibid.*, p. 283.

47. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 165; Cambridge 131:20-25.

48. Sheila MacLeod notes that Kate has come to Mexico in search of 'rebirth' (*Lawrence's Men and Women.*, p. 130) and sees in this tantric dance 'the death of superconsciousness'. (*ibid.*, p. 131).

be focussed on the living icons of Quetzalcoatl, Huitzilopochtli and Malintzi. Yet Kate Millett is correct to note that the rôle-model of the feminine, focussed on Malintzi-Kate, is to be one of subservience, while the nameless man with whom she dances is 'Erect, strong like a staff of life,' and is to 'loosen all the sap of her strength and let it flow down into the roots of the earth',<sup>49</sup> so that when she is Malintzi she can recognize and affirm 'He is man, and a column of blood. I am a woman, and a valley of blood.'<sup>50</sup> To make this discovery is to be approaching the rebirth that Kate came to Mexico to find.

Kate has danced herself into a phallic consciousness, a new 'greater womanhood' that has been liberated by the masculinity of the rites. Anna and Ursula Brangwen have earlier done the same thing,<sup>51</sup>

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49. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 165; Cambridge 132:5f.

50. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 448; (Cambridge 412:23f). Lawrence occasionally depicts women in seemingly masculine terms: 'erect, tense little figure' with 'hidden, secretive powers', (Penguin p. 435; Cambridge 399:4f, cf 397:2), but even then the 'ancient mystery of the female power ... consists in glorifying the blood-male.' *ibid.*, Penguin p. 435 (Cambridge 399:9f). For further examples and comment, *contra* Kate Millett, see Carol Dix, *D.H. Lawrence and Women*, Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa, 1980, p. 85.

51. Anton Skrebensky's dancing with Ursula revealed only that he 'did not have an essential self', while Ursula discovered hers in dance: see M. Elizabeth Wallace, "Review of Peter Babert, *D.H. Lawrence and the Phallic Imagination: Essays on Sexual Identity and Feminist Misreading*, *D.H. Lawrence Review*, Vol. 22, No 3. Fall 1990, p. 331. Wallace also draws attention to Sheila Macleod's attack on Kate Millett in the same article.

dancing themselves to resurrective experience.<sup>52</sup> But here Kate is participating in a collective resurrection experience, the awakening of a society, rather than standing merely as a microcosmic symbol of the potential for a society to be reborn. Kate Millett refers to the sexuality of *Kangaroo* as 'sexual-political';<sup>53</sup> the beginnings of sexual-political resurrection that begin in *Kangaroo* continue from this point in *The Plumed Serpent*, where the Mexicans with their 'masks of Obsidian'<sup>54</sup> replace the trade unionists of Australia.

Kate begins to experience a contrast between the 'spiritual fear' she had known in Ireland, and a new 'blood fear' that she is coming to know in Mexico – the dark side of the contrast between her experiences of love and politics in Ireland and the new experiences of blood knowledge she is encountering in Mexico. Yet Lawrence makes clear that, despite the future actions of Cipriano and Ramón, 'When man tries brutally to return to the older, previous levels of evolution, he does so in the spirit of cruelty and misery';<sup>55</sup> This

52. As did Frieda Lawrence: see reference to "The Frieda Weekley-Otto Gross Correspondence" in my previous chapter.

53. *Sexual Politics*, p. 283.

54. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 164; Cambridge 130:32. qv. *Mornings in Mexico*, pp. 33, 67.

55. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 174; Cambridge 140:20f.

wasteland cannot be revived by some forceful reclaiming of past 'evolutionary stages' - an observation that rests unhappily with the subsequent violent imposition by Cipriano and Ramón of an ancient pantheon and collective religious *weltanschauung*.

Doña Carlota sees in her husband's obsession with the cult of Quetzalcoatl not only a religious rejection of Catholic Christianity, bringing back 'the old gods',<sup>56</sup> but also a sociological rejection of the Christian programme of charity<sup>57</sup> and its foci of hope, Jesus and the Virgin Mary.<sup>58</sup> To Doña Carlota these are the key to any hope of resurrection experience for her people: 'Ah, if we could be together, quietly loving, and enjoying the beautiful world, and *waiting in the love of God!*'<sup>59</sup> Such philanthropic Catholicism is not satisfactory to Lawrence, because it fails to embrace the darkness, and is therefore not transformative.

Ramón is described in terms both phallic and psychological. He is repeatedly described as 'erect',<sup>60</sup>

56. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 199; Cambridge 164:22 & 23.

57. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 192; Cambridge 157:25.

58. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 202; Cambridge 166:31f.

59. *ibid.*, (Cambridge 167:3-5). Italics in original.

60. *ibid.*, pp 205 (Cambridge 169:15), 208 (172:32); note also the clouds, p. 205, (169:2) and the blue eagle, p. 210 (174:8).

and he refers to the breaking open of the pomegranate, a fruit Lawrence has already noted for its yonnic significance.<sup>61</sup> Ramón's 'belly' becomes 'a flood of power': this is the solar plexus consciousness which, in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, Lawrence has argued as being 'the centre of primal, constructive consciousness';<sup>62</sup> Ramón is entering into his new religious awareness from depths of being far deeper than those reached by the philanthropic Catholicism of Doña Carlota. As a result of this greater religious awareness, his attainment of 'the other strength',<sup>63</sup> Ramón becomes not only a phallic symbol but becomes associated with John the Baptist, an equally sensuous and powerful character. It is this sensuality, which approximates Tillich's 'erotic', a 'divine-human power', that Ramón wins Kate back from the philanthropic concerns of Doña Carlota. Kate becomes Salome, seeking to know both Ramón and Cipriano with an inner vision: 'Let me close my eyes to him, and open only my soul.'<sup>64</sup> She is desiring a male-female blood-knowledge, and this desire means that Doña Carlota's attempts to steer her away from Quetzalcoatl decline in impact.

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61. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 215; Cambridge 179:25.

62. *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, p. 219.

63. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 205; Cambridge 169:19f.

64. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 221; Cambridge 184:22f.

For Ramón the Quetzalcoatl mythology is a means to the invigoration of his latent society, a fertilization with fire of a latent egg. Neither the 'old Dove of Europe' nor the lifelessness of the United States has an energy adequate for the re-vivification of the 'dark-skinned' people of Mexico.<sup>65</sup> But Ramón is painfully aware that he must offer his people more than a merely political programme, for the chinks of politicians' armour are soon exploited by their opponents. He therefore again, after discussion of his plans with Cipriano, returns in privacy to his phallic rites. He strips naked,

'The waters are coming,' he heard a servant say. He shut the doors of his room till it was black dark inside. Then he threw aside his clothing, saying: I put off the world with my clothes. And standing nude and invisible in the centre of his room he thrust his clenched fist upwards, with all his might ...<sup>66</sup>

In at least some ancient Christian practices neophytes in the faith were baptized naked:

"The putting off of evil would be fitly symbolized by the stripping off of the garments before immersion; the command to stand morally would correspond to standing up in the baptismal service after pros-

65. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 228; Cambridge 191:13-30.

66. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 230; Cambridge 192:40-193:4. (Punctuation here follows the Penguin edition).

tration in prayer"; and the reclothing after baptism would suggest the donning of the breastplate of justice and all other items in the Christian's spiritual armory.<sup>67</sup>

In his nudity Ramón has effectively exorcized himself of the possibility, raised in conversation with Cipriano, that his dream of a societal resurrection may be reduced to no more than a political programme. But there is more than that act of symbolic exorcism in this rite. Ramón has entered into a darkened room, a tomb no less than the tomb-womb<sup>68</sup> of death,<sup>69</sup> in order to face personal regeneration in preparation for the emotional, political and religious fray ahead. But he has also become himself a phallus within that womb, the agent of rebirth, reaching in his actions a moment of coital ejaculation:

And tense like the gush of a soundless fountain, he thrust up and reached down in the invisible dark, convulsed with passion. Till the black waves began to wash over his consciousness, over his mind, waves of darkness broke over his memory, over his being, like an incoming tide, till at last it was full tide, and he trembled, and fell to rest. Invisible in the darkness, he stood soft and relaxed ... feeling the dark fecundity of

67. Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1985, p. 31, quoting W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Elements in Pauline Theology*, SPCK, London, 1948 (fourth edition 1981), p. 129.

68. See my comments on 'tomb-womb' imagery in "The Ship of Death" above.

69. Or of Christian baptismal practice.

the inner tide washing over his heart,  
over his belly...<sup>70</sup>

Ramón has become a penis, while outside the climate is an eternalization of the rite within the womb, as the rains of renewal gather in readiness.<sup>71</sup>

This rite is an evening liturgical observance, with echoes of the Hopi Snake Dance that Lawrence has described in *Mornings in Mexico*.<sup>72</sup> Just as Ramón in private has, by removing his clothes 'put off' temptations posed in conversation with Cipriano, so now the day itself is 'put off'. 'I put away the day that is gone from upon me,'<sup>73</sup> in order to 'stand uncovered in the night of the gods.'<sup>74</sup> But to Lawrence, the night is a time not of passive renewal, as in the Christian rites of compline, but of active embrace of the dark gods. And so the 'serpent of the earth' is invoked, with all its Freudian connotations of sexuality, to

70. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 230; Cambridge 193:7-14.

71. This is once more confirmation of John Worthen's premise that Lawrence frequently creates 'extended parallels between human life and the natural world': "Introduction" to the 1982 Penguin edition of *The White Peacock*, p. 15.

72. But Lawrence introduces an important difference: in the Hopi rituals the snake is encouraged to set off *for* the centre of the earth: here the serpent is encouraged to come *from* the centre, an ambassador bringing the power of the earth's deep fires. See Ross Parmenter, *Lawrence in Oaxaca*, pp. 221-223 for the background to Lawrence's introduction of this imagery.

73. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 233; Cambridge 195:36f.

74. Cambridge 196:4f.

'kiss my knees and my inner thigh'.<sup>75</sup> The 'mysterious' and 'unseen' presence that appears to emerge from the underworld is an erotic force no less than the 'divine-human power' of Paul Tillich, and it is that that the 'dark-skinned' people of central America must embrace if they are to experience resurrection. And in the face of this all of the men and some of the women (not Kate, yet) become phallic symbols as Ramón had privately, thrusting their right arms 'Up! Up! Up!' into the night sky,<sup>76</sup> from where the 'roaming Bird of the Beyond', a phoenix image, with burnt feathers,<sup>77</sup> is invoked in turn.

Quetzalcoatl has himself undertaken 'the longest journey',<sup>78</sup> that is the death experience: he as a god, together with his religion, experienced death in the coming of Christianity, and can now experience rebirth,

75. *ibid.* (Cambridge 196:12f).

76. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 235; Cambridge 197:31f.

77. Burnt, as we later learn, from the volcano into which it descended following the arrival of Jesus and Mary in Mexico: see *ibid.*, Penguin p. 261; Cambridge 223:19-24.

78. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 263; Cambridge 225:21. p. 468:

A long and arduous journey awaited the souls of the Aztec dead, who at one place crossed the Plain of the Wind of Knives. These journeys were believed to imitate Quetzalcoatl's quest to the realm of the dead for assistance in creating mankind.

From the Explanatory Notes, Cambridge edition, p. 468.

having dwelt 'behind the sun.'<sup>79</sup> Ramón's co-religionists, like the Morning Star, who is Quetzalcoatl, remain between the domain of the phoenix and the serpent, seeking their empowerment to attain fullness of womanhood and manhood: 'All I want them to do is to find the beginnings of the way to their own manhood, their own womanhood', says Ramón to the skeptical and frightened Doña Carlota,<sup>80</sup> or, as he suggests to the Bishop of the West,<sup>81</sup> he seeks only to replace 'the high Christianity' with a religious experience that possesses 'the key-word to the Mexican soul.'<sup>82</sup>

For that dream to be enacted, however, the vision of the Third Hymn has to be realized: 'Send Jesus his images back, Mary and the saints and all.'<sup>83</sup> The 'crucified Jesus' must be replaced with the 'un-crucified and uncrucifiable Quetzalcoatl, who at least cannot be ravished.'<sup>84</sup>

It is the Auto da Fé chapter of this novel that

79. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 264; Cambridge 226:6.

80. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 247; Cambridge 209:34f.

81. The realm of the *setting* sun.

82. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 300; Cambridge 264:10f.

83. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 279; Cambridge 241:22. It is later solemnly pronounced 'Mary and Jesus have left you, and gone to the place of renewal.' (Penguin p. 374; Cambridge 337:10f).

84. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 308; Cambridge 272:36ff.

provides the central liturgical rite of collective resurrection.<sup>85</sup> As has been foretold in the hymns, the reign of Jesus over Mexico is to come to an end, and the images of Catholic Christianity are to be dispatched to the realm of 'the sleep',<sup>86</sup> or the 'Pool of Heaven',<sup>87</sup> wherein the newly deposed Jesus is to dwell. The rite follows the pattern of the liturgical rites of Maundy Thursday, in which the church is systematically 'stripped' of all adornments in preparation for the 'new birth' of Easter Day.<sup>88</sup> Here the sacred 'saints and ... Virgins' are processed to the lake to the accompaniment of a hymn of farewell and the ever-present drum beat. The hymn is put into the words of Jesus: it is his hymn of farewell. The solemn pronouncement of farewell made by the priest is made, like the absolution and doxology of traditional Catholic practice, on behalf of Christ, and, in this case, Mary: 'For the last time they bless you, as they leave you.'<sup>89</sup>

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85. By the time of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* Lawrence is more skeptical of the 'auto da fé': see *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Penguin edition, 1990, p. 227.

86. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 266; Cambridge 228:3.

87. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 315; Cambridge 279:35.

88. A similar pattern might be followed were a church to be de-consecrated.

89. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 317; Cambridge 281:14ff.

Following the 'adiós' of the people the church into which the people are staring is plunged into darkness. This too is similar to the rites of Maundy Thursday,<sup>90</sup> for the 'stripping' takes place while the lights are extinguished, and the church remains in near darkness until the lighting of the new fire and Paschal Candle at the first Mass of Easter.<sup>91</sup> In this case, however, the fire is to be the funeral pyre of the Christian icons, burnt on the island in the centre of the lake. Musically, too, there is a death and resurrection here, as the church bells give way for the deeper throbbing of the drum.

Changes have been made in the period between the original *Quetzalcoatl* and the final *Plumed Serpent* versions. In *Quetzalcoatl* a guitar, not the dominant drum, accompanies the singing of "Jesus' Farewell", while the removal of the icons takes place while the bell continues tolling, and is watched by a 'multitude' on the shore:

In *Quetzalcoatl*, while the bell tolls, the images are taken away in a series of small boats, led by the priest, who holds the large crucifix, with its image of the

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90. Note Lawrence's reference to 'the Dead Christ of Holy Week', Penguin p. 318; Cambridge 282:12ff.

91. These practices reach back at least to fifth century Christian worship: see J.G. Davies (ed), *A New Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, SCM, London, 1986, entries for 'New Fire' (pp. 388f) 'Paschal Candle' (pp. 424f) and 'Paschal Vigil' (pp. 425f).

bloody Christ, so that it faces the "multitude" on the shore. (Lawrence uses the word "multitude" twice, stressing the analogy with Christ on the shore of the lake of Galilee; the word is not used in the final version.) The effect is poignant, as the boats are rowed away.<sup>92</sup>

By 1920 Lawrence had developed a fascination with the Etruscans and with their rites of passage. These clearly add substance to the later version, yet, as Louis Martz sees it, the original "poignancy" is lost. The authorial voice follows the boat, now a single sail boat, to the island, rather than maintaining the shoreline perspective of *Quetzalcoatl*. Ramón dominates the later version, rather than the priest who leads the rite in the earlier account. In *The Plumed Serpent* the priest removes his cassock to reveal his true allegiance, which is to Quetzalcoatl.<sup>93</sup>

The hints of the procession of the sacred host, particularly associated with the feast of Corpus Christi, is lessened in the later version; in the early version the rite was fresh in Lawrence's mind, for he observed the procession on 31st May 1923: 'Today is Corpus Christi, and here too a procession.'<sup>94</sup> Clearly

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92. Louis L. Martz article "*Quetzalcoatl*", p. 294.

93. Louis Martz, *op cit.*, p. 295.

94. Letter to Anna von Richthofen, 31.05.23, *Letters* IV:451.

he had observed similar processions In Germany: 'But there are no lovely branches as in Ebersteinberg two years ago.'<sup>95</sup> This is mentioned in *The Plumed Serpent* a few days before the destruction of the images:

The day of Corpus Christi came, with high mass and the church full to the doors with kneeling peons, from dawn till noon. Then a feeble little procession of children within the church, because the law forbids religious processions outside.<sup>96</sup>

In between the first and second drafts of *Auto da Fé* Lawrence has, under pressure from Frieda, returned to Europe.<sup>97</sup> In the unhappy experience of that visit he has hardened his attitude towards Christianity and 'Europeanism', and decided that the ancient Etruscan rites, not the tired processions of Catholic or any other form of Christianity, should mark the death of the religion of Jesus and the birth of 'Quetzalcoatlism'<sup>98</sup> in Mexico. The funeral pyre marks the demise of Christ, and Ramón returns from the isle of Scorpions to lock up the door of the former Catholic church, pending restoration of the symbols of Quetzalcoatl.<sup>99</sup>

95. *ibid.*, p. 452.

96. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 313; Cambridge 277:24ff.

97. See Harry T. Moore, *Poste Restante: A Lawrence Travel Calendar*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1956, pp. 67-84 for a comprehensible chronology.

98. Ross Parmenter's term.

99. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 323; Cambridge p. 287.

The desecration of the churches becomes a ritualized preparation for the intense experience of death and rebirth that immediately follows in Kate's life. The attack on Ramón and the residents at Jamiltepec brings Kate face to face with the bloodshed that is all but intrinsic to Mexican life:

In these states almost every hacienda ... is smashed, and you can't live even one mile outside the village or town: you will probably be robbed or murdered by roving bandits and scoundrels who still call themselves revolutionaries.<sup>100</sup>

Having escaped physical death, and helped Ramón likewise to escape, Kate however feels a spiritual malaise: 'she felt indifferent to everything in the whole world'.<sup>101</sup> Cipriano, however, enters into this moribund state, becoming for Kate 'the ancient phallic mystery, the ancient god-devil of the male Pan.'<sup>102</sup> This demon-power Cipriano exudes is Tillich's 'divine-human power' once again, explicitly described by Lawrence as 'the power of blood' and 'a great pliant

100. Letter to Kai Götzsche and Knud Merrild, 23.04.23, *Letters* IV:430, (# 2798). qv *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 340 (Cambridge 303:37ff): 'These are not bandits. It was an attempt at assassination. But of course they would have robbed everything, everything, if they had killed Don Ramón'.

101. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 342; Cambridge 306:17f.

102. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 347; Cambridge 311:15f.

column', 'huge erection' between heaven and earth.<sup>103</sup> She has become Coleridge's 'woman wailing for her demon-lover',<sup>104</sup> and, as with Coleridge's vision, becomes herself a yonnic 'deep romantic chasm',<sup>105</sup> to Cipriano's 'mighty fountain momentarily ... forced'.<sup>106</sup> With this discovery of the attractiveness of Cipriano's sexuality Kate is able to marry him, though by the time of the ceremony she is carried 'on his will.'<sup>107</sup>

The churches are desecrated and resurrected as temples of Quetzalcoatl. Kate herself faces a spiritual malaise that is a death in all but medical terms, to be resurrected as Malintzi, though it is earlier suggested she should be Itzpapalotl.<sup>108</sup> As she enters into the church, now dedicated to the rites of Quetzalcoatl, Kate has a sense that she is to be a sacrifice, like the "Woman Who Rode Away" of the short story; she isn't herself sacrificed, but the cruel death of Doña Carlota becomes a vicarious death, death of the hold over Mexico of Catholic piety and charity. And while Doña

103. *ibid* (Cambridge 311:22-25); cf p. 443, (Cambridge 407:27): 'Man is a column of blood, with a voice in it.'

104. "Kubla Khan", l. 16; see *Plumed Serpent* Penguin p. 348, n. 2, Cambridge 312:4, and explanatory note p. 473.

105. "Kubla Khan" l. 12.

106. *ibid*, l. 19.

107. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 356; Cambridge 320:4f.

108. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 352; Cambridge 316:11.

Carlota lies dying, Kate hears and reads the hymn of "Welcome to Quetzalcoatl", the singing of which heralds a collective resurrection of the people of Mexico:

This strange dumb people of Mexico was opening its voice at last. It was as if a stone had been rolled off them all, and she heard their voice for the first time. deep, wild, with a certain exultance and menace.<sup>109</sup>

A 'new world had begun.'<sup>110</sup> The world of Catholic Christianity, foreign to Mexico, is the world in which, according to one of the Indian tribesmen of "The Woman Who Rode Away", 'white men don't know what the sun is',<sup>111</sup> where there is no blood-knowledge. That world, for Kate, has passed away, its last remnants dying with Doña Carlota, just as the sacrifice of the "Gringo Senora" marks the end of her world of arrogant white inauthenticity, and the birth of 'a world of metal, and a world of resistance.'<sup>112</sup>

In Cipriano's eyes, at least, the new religion is

109. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 386; Cambridge 350:20-23.

110. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 387; Cambridge 350:33.

111. *The Woman Who Rode Away*, p. 71. For an account of this story as symbolic of the death of white civilization, and the necessary 'resurrection' of more ancient religious cultures, (*contra* Kate Millett *et al.*, who predictably see it as a tale of extremes of masculist dominance fantasy), see Mark Kinkead-Weakes, "The Gringo Senora Who Rode Away", in *D.H. Lawrence Review*, Volume 22, Number 3, Fall 1990.

112. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 395; Cambridge 359:31.

a cargo cult, a movement born in reaction to a form of Christianity that has, in the eyes of the suppressed, combined religious faith with military power. Cargo cults normally take on a millennarian flavour, which Lawrence has portrayed faithfully. The adherents of the new religion recognize that the 'gringos' stole the 'second strength from behind the sun' of the native people, to enslave them. The same oppression has robbed Chilqui of their potency in "The Woman Who Rode Away", but the cult of recovery in *Plumed Serpent* is far more prolonged than a single, if brutal, act of sacrifice. Ramón and Cipriano find the 'second strength' and create a politically and religiously millenarianist movement around it, a movement in part a recovery of the animism of the ancient cultures of the region.<sup>113</sup>

Cipriano's understanding of the totemic animism remains incomplete until such time as Ramón induces him on a journey into 'living darkness',<sup>114</sup> until he experiences a fainting fit and loss of existential awareness. At that moment Cipriano can no longer identify himself: "Who lives?". "Who -!". Cipriano no longer

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113. Lawrence is incorrect in describing the 'old Indians of the north' as 'dancing to gain power over the *living* forces or potencies of the earth', and in naming this 'animistic dancing'. (*Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 400, Cambridge 364:23ff, italics in original). Few ancient rites seek to gain power over anything, but may seek to gain power *from* or the power of the forces of the cosmos, and the dance is *totemic* rather than *animistic*.

114. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 403; Cambridge 367:34.

knew.'<sup>115</sup> It is now a shared death experience, in which Cipriano enters the (tomb-) 'womb of undisturbed creation', and Ramón the 'death sleep'. Although the embrace in which Ramón has held Cipriano is not an act of homosexual eroticism, it is one of enormous intensity, following which both men fall into a deep relaxed sleep resembling post-coital exhaustion, a death-sleep from which they awaken, significantly, as night falls.<sup>116</sup> Cipriano has traveled 'to where there is no beyond', presumably 'behind the sun.' But the attainment of this beyond, at this point in the novel, remains an individualized experience, and Kate, faced with Cipriano's sense of having made the journey, allows her thoughts to turn back to the heartlands of Europeanized inauthenticity, 'London, Paris and New York,'<sup>117</sup> seen to be wastelands by Lawrence no less than by Eliot. Even 'Piccadilly, on Christmas Eve' is muddy, and its pavements, like Eliot's London Bridge, 'crowded with people under the brilliant shops.'<sup>118</sup>

Kate's decision to turn from this dream of European wasteland is downplayed by Lawrence. She has long

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115. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 404; Cambridge 368:27-8.

116. *ibid.*, Penguin pp. 404f; Cambridge 369:13-40.

117. *ibid.*, Penguin, p. 407; Cambridge 371:14.

118. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 468 (Cambridge 431:5): cf "The Wasteland", ll. 60-68.

since seen Cipriano's potential as a killer:

the curious blackness of his eyelashes  
lifted so strangely, with such intense un-  
conscious maleness from his eyes, the  
movement of his hand was so odd, quick,  
light as he ate, so easily a movement of  
shooting, or of flashing a knife into the  
body of some adversary<sup>119</sup>

so that it comes as no surprise to her, though it revolts or depresses her, to witness the brutal executions. When, however, she comes to see Cipriano, unlike Ramón, as a boyish sexual human being, she is able to accept the Huitzilopochtli mythology, and to embrace a mythology of herself as Malintzi. This is after she has recognized that submission to Cipriano means

a submission she had never made. It meant the death of her individual self. It meant abandoning so much, even her own very foundations. For she had believed truly that every man and every woman alike was founded on the individual.<sup>120</sup>

The acceptance of a rôle as Malintzi is a death experience for her, death of her western individualism, in order to be merged within the identity of her male counterpart, to become the 'sheath to his knife'. Yet Kate remains incomplete in her death to self. For just as 'there is more than one way of becoming like a

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119. *ibid.*, Penguin pp. 99-100; Cambridge 67:15-18. Punctuation here follows the Penguin edition.

120. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 425; Cambridge 390:11-15.

little child',<sup>121</sup> so there is more than one way to be a wife to the gods, as Teresa demonstrates.

Ramón marries Teresa to rescue her from the oppression of her brothers, thereby having 'saved her sex from ... insult.'<sup>122</sup> Kate, however, who has supposedly been reborn to a new consciousness in her union with Huitzilopochtli, remains 'torn between envy of Teresa's "subtle female power" (and not a little jealousy *vis-a-vis* Ramón) and a robust superconscious scorn.'<sup>123</sup> Teresa firmly believes that a woman must permit her soul to die, or to be absorbed into the male body, and in return to 'carry his precious seed in her womb.'<sup>124</sup> Kate, who believes she has died to her Europeanized self in her agreeing to become Malintzi, still remains fiercely western, resenting Teresa's ability to carry the presence of Ramón within her womb. She remains trapped within the *noli me tangere* attitude of the west,<sup>125</sup> unable to let her blood and that of Cipriano merge as 'one blood', a 'strange, marginless death of her individual self'.<sup>126</sup> The *bludbruderschaft* that

121. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 428; Cambridge 393:20.

122. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 432; Cambridge 396:35.

123. Sheila MacLeod, *Lawrence's Men and Women*, p. 133.

124. *Plumed Serpent*, Penguin p. 449; Cambridge 412:39f.

125. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 453; Cambridge 416:35.

126. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 454; Cambridge 417:17f.

Lawrence has sought to establish between males in both reality and fiction, is not yet acceptable in the hetero-sexual bond of Kate Leslie and Don Cipriano, at least in her eyes.

But Kate's evolution continues; 'it was not her spirit alone that was changing, it was her body, and the constitution of her very blood.'<sup>127</sup> It is only after a long internal struggle that she begins to recognize 'I am like Teresa, really'.<sup>128</sup> Only then does she become one with nature, communing with a snake, as Lawrence has in his poetry, and in an Eden-image, finally coming to feel 'a certain reconciliation between herself and it', a reconciliation between her Europeanized sexuality and the deeper Indian sexuality she has recognized in Teresa and married in Cipriano.<sup>129</sup>

By the end of *The Plumed Serpent* Lawrence is straining towards the point at which *Lady Chatterley's Lover* takes off, the affirmation that it is 'the greater sex, that could fill all the world with lustre'<sup>130</sup>

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127. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 458; Cambridge 421:9f.

128. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 461; Cambridge 424:27, cf 421:28: 'She had become almost like Teresa in sureness'. (Penguin p. 458).

129. *ibid.*, pp. 461f. (Cambridge pp. 424f).

130. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 476; Cambridge 439:12f.

that is the appropriate resurrection motif either for individuals or for an entire community. Ramón has seen this: 'Tell them in your Ireland to do as we have done here',<sup>131</sup> is his advice to Kate as she plans to return to Europe. 'Let them find ... their own gods.' Kate recognizes the source of her ambivalence; she is torn between two selves, two worlds:

It was as if she had two selves: one, a new one, which belonged to Cipriano and Ramón, and which was her sensitive, desirous self; the other hard and finished, accomplished, belonging to her mother, her children, England, her whole past.<sup>132</sup>

The one is her sexually liberated, yonnice-conscious self, the other her inauthentic, Europeanized self, out of touch with the sacred sex<sup>133</sup> of ancient peoples. As she reflects on this 'greater sex', she slowly turns her back on the possibility of a return to Piccadilly and its wet, Christmas mud, and to accept instead the Christmas poinsettias, the *nochebuenas*<sup>134</sup> of Mexico. It is the 'hot, phallic passion' of Cipriano's voice that finalizes her decision to remain, the decision that marks her 'coming through'.

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131. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 463; Cambridge 426:34f.

132. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 466; Cambridge 429:9ff.

133. see *ibid.*, p. 473 (Cambridge 436:9ff): if Lawrence had not read the *kamasutra*, he encapsulates its ethos in this notion of 'sacred sex'. See note 45, above.

134. *ibid.*, Penguin p. 467; I have followed the Cambridge spelling, Cambridge 430:36.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER

In *The Rainbow* Lawrence tends toward an individual, personal model or experience of resurrection, and in the leadership novels, culminating in *The Plumed Serpent*, he proposes a societal, collective model. However, he has Kate return to her lover because of her individual physical, libidinal attraction to him, rather than any collective societal resurrection hope. His experiences of the failed Rananim vision,<sup>1</sup> of

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1. The connection between the failure of this dream and the tone of *Lady Chatterley* is seen clearly by Derek Britton, *Lady Chatterley: The Making of the Novel*, Unwyn Hyman, London, 1988:

The demise of the Rananim ideal marked a turning-point in Lawrence's life and ideology. His view of the world was largely egocentric, the direction of his thoughts often being governed by how circumstances affected him personally. Communal life having proved ... to be a failure, it was henceforth Lawrence's destiny to spend much of his time alone with Frieda, with whom he would have to find new means of living at ease. Perhaps, then, it was a response to his own situation that eventually brought him to the point of view expressed in *Lady Chatterley*, where the vision of a proper harmony between man and woman replaces the community ideal of 'the completeness of us all as one'.

(p. 7; Britton is quoting Lawrence's letter of 01.02.15 to Lady Ottoline Morrell, *Letters* II:271, # 854).

living under the fascist dictatorship of Benito Mussolini, of awaiting his death in his growing struggle with tuberculosis,<sup>2</sup> and his growing interest in the Etruscans, made him increasingly skeptical of collective resurrection experience or hope, and more fiercely determined to authenticate his own life experience by discovering and affirming a personal philosophy of resurrection-in-life.

In the three versions of his last major prose work the individual experience of salvation<sup>3</sup> in sexuality is juxtaposed with the lost hope of collective resurrection for England or Europe:

whereas *The Rainbow* achieves realizations that have primarily personal significance, *Lady Chatterley* generally pushes Connie towards realizations that have both per-

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2. The film version *The Priest of Love* makes much of the earthquake Lawrence experienced in Mexico, but it receives only one, passing mention in a letter to Ada Clarke (30.01.25, *Letters* V:209, # 3349). It possibly worried Frieda more than Lawrence (see note 1 to Letter # 3349); for mention of it and the future fate of the Lawrences' house in Oaxaca see Ross Parmenter, *Lawrence in Oaxaca*, pp. 39f. See also Jeffrey Meyers, *D.H. Lawrence: A Biography*, MacMillan, London, 1990, p. 329. Lawrence is, however, clearly concerned at the deterioration of his health: Aldous Huxley talks about 'the horror of that creeping disease ... painfully visible between the lines of the letters' written by Lawrence at this time. See Derek Britton, *Lady Chatterley: the Making of the Novel*, p. 126.

3. In "Morality and the Novel", written in 1925, Lawrence describes his idea of salvation: 'Our life consists in this achieving of a pure relationship between ourselves and the living universe about us'; *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, (ed.) Bruce Steele, p. 172:8-9.

sonal and social significance.<sup>4</sup>

and

The salvation of the working class will come not through the mystical worship of pagan deities and demagogues, as in *The Plumed Serpent*, but through the reform of social priorities and the intelligent use of ritual.<sup>5</sup>

The focus is now on the contrast between the resurrection of the body recognized and affirmed by Connie<sup>6</sup> and Mellors,<sup>7</sup> and the immortality of the soul tenaciously believed in by Clifford.<sup>8</sup> And part of Clifford's doctrine of the immortality of the soul is the notion of a continuation of a ruling class in which 'the individual hardly matters',<sup>9</sup> but in which some nebulous concept of 'industry' rules supreme, and in which 'the function determines the individual.'<sup>10</sup>

4. Michael Squires, *The Composition of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 144.

5. *ibid.*, p. 185. Squires is basing this conclusion in part on the study of many of the passages canceled from the final version of *Lady Chatterley*, passages in which Mellors aspires 'to teach the men to dance again, the old dances.' *ibid.*, p. 184.

6. 'The resurrection of the body! even the true Christian creed insisted on it.' *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, p. 90.

7. 'I stand for the touch of bodily awareness between human beings': *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 290.

8. 'He had always believed in the immortality of the soul, or rather of the spirit, and the comparative worthlessness of the body.' *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, p. 204.

9. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 191.

10. *ibid.*

As when, years before, Lawrence had rejected orthodox christology on the basis of the question of theodicy, human suffering in the slums of Sneinton,<sup>11</sup> so now it was in part the failure of a section of society to grasp a programme or opportunity of salvation that helped Lawrence put behind him hopes of collective resurrection.

*Lady Chatterley* ... owes its splicing of the themes of erotic renewal and societal reunification to Lawrence's shocked encounter with the despair and class hatred engendered by the imminent collapse of the miners' strike in the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire area in September 1926.<sup>12</sup>

The hope of personal authentication and resurrection dominates any collective hope, though a pessimistic evaluation of society's self-destruction continues: 'One England blots out another'.<sup>13</sup>

Clifford's broken body operates at two narrative

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11. A return passage through Sneinton appears to have provided a basis for the Tewsons' home in 'Sheffield': Nottingham's St Ann's Well Road becomes 'Stanswell Road', 'King Edward Street' becomes 'King Alfred Street'. See *The First Lady Chatterley*, p. 185 (ff), *John Thomas and Lady Jane* p. 348. Derek Britton notes these similarities, *Lady Chatterley: the Making of a Novel*, p. 94.

12. Derek Britton, *Lady Chatterley: the Making of a Novel*, p. 33.

13. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 163.

levels.<sup>14</sup> Lawrence warns his reader, in the earliest edition of the story, how to approach Clifford's paralysis at a primary narrative level: 'His terrible accident, his paralysis or whatever it was, was really symbolical in him.'<sup>15</sup> This warning is tastefully removed from later editions, but its tone remains: 'when [a man has] got none of that spunky wild bit of a man in him, you say he's got no balls.'<sup>16</sup> As Connie walks with Mellors in the dark she tries to discuss Mellors' post-pneumonia delicacy. Mellors, however, contrasts any damage his body may have suffered as a result of the disease with Clifford; Mellors may have suffered some weakness of his heart and lungs, but Clifford, even without his 'symbolical' injuries, lacks something more serious. He is 'sort of tame', lacking natural virility or potency. The torch, as they have talked, has picked out flowers, which, though they are 'pallid', are nevertheless 'open', demonstrating a yonic receptivity and 'pure relationship' with 'the living universe',<sup>17</sup> that the Clifford type will never attain. Clifford, and the world he epitomizes, is at once

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14. I am here borrowing the terms of S. Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1981.

15. *The First Lady Chatterley*, p. 88.

16. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 204. The following references are to this page.

17. "Morality and the Novel", edition cited, p. 172.

politically powerful but aesthetically impotent.

At a second narrative level paralysis provides a basis for Clifford's abhorrence of the body.<sup>18</sup> Connie, by contrast, 'had awakened, and come out of the chrysalis of her dream another creature, another beast altogether.'<sup>19</sup> 'I cannot see any hope of regeneration for a sexless England',<sup>20</sup> says Lawrence: Clifford is an icon of sexless England.

The revisions of the *Lady Chatterley* story reveal an increasing rejection of industrialized, utilitarian England. Clifford Chatterley is allowed fewer redeeming features in each revision, standing in increasing contrast to Connie and the gamekeeper. Appearing in *The First Lady Chatterley* as a victim of cruel circumstance, married to an ultimately unjust, sex-starved wife, by the final version Clifford has revealed himself as intellectually arrogant, a political bully,

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18. Lawrence, in his letter to John Middleton Murry of 04.01.26, parodies Christ's 'words of institution': 'This is my body, keep your hands off!'. (*Letters* V:367, # 3583). Murry appears in *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, unflatteringly, as Jack Strangeways, but may also have contributed to *The First Lady Chatterley* portrait of Clifford. See Derek Britton, *Lady Chatterley: the Making of a Novel*, pp.13-30.

19. *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, pp. 134f. cf *The First Lady Chatterley* p. 78. This is tempered to 'another self was alive in her, burning molten and soft in her womb and bowels' in the final edition: *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, pp. 140f.

20. *Apropos*, p. 75.

emotionally dependent on Mrs Bolton, and far short of Connie or Mellors in moral stature:

As [Lawrence] recognized the symbolic proportions of his story, his growing awareness that Connie/keeper/democracy and Clifford/aristocracy were opposites helped him to polarize, more and more, the characters ...<sup>21</sup>

Lawrence sends clear signals to the reader that it is Mrs Bolton who more nearly approaches 'that delicate, forever trembling and changing balance between me and my circumambient universe'; Clifford's eventual dependence on Mrs Bolton, though lacking psychological realism, demonstrates his own imbalance. Mrs Bolton begins the relationship with nervousness, 'shy, almost frightened, and silent', allowing the magnate to gain a measure of 'self-possession': 'She's a useful nonentity', Clifford observes.<sup>22</sup> But the narrative voice has already made other observations of Mrs Bolton: she was 'in her tiny way, one of the governing class in the village';<sup>23</sup> Connie, more aware than Clifford, 'opened her eyes in wonder, but ... did not contradict him.'<sup>24</sup> Mrs Bolton assumes nothing in her new environment, accepting what appears to Clifford to be a servant-

21. Michael Squires, *The Creation of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 94.

22. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 85.

23. *ibid.*, p. 83.

24. *ibid.*, p. 85.

master role, but which the narrative voice sees otherwise: 'she soon knew how to have him in her power.'<sup>25</sup> At the same time, Connie notes, Mrs Bolton and Mrs Betts (the housekeeper) together bring a 'strong ... vibration' to the household, contrasting with the tapping 'to infinity'<sup>26</sup> in his writing of what Lawrence has already described as 'endless spinning of webs of yarn, of the minutiae of consciousness'.<sup>27</sup>

Connie gradually but deliberately surrenders to Mrs Bolton the tasks she had primarily carried out for Clifford. Her typing of Clifford's manuscripts,<sup>28</sup> her playing of cards, her evening conversations gradually become the domain of the nurse, though not wholly without ambivalence on Connie's part.<sup>29</sup> With time even the responsibility of being 'in love' with Clifford is, willingly surrendered to Mrs Bolton, with the authorial qualification 'whatever force we give to the word love'.<sup>30</sup> Mrs Bolton begins to provide for Clifford as

25. *ibid.*, p. 86.

26. *ibid.*, p. 87.

27. *ibid.*, p. 20. In "Morality and the Novel" Lawrence defines as 'immoral' art which 'dishes up a *rechauffé* of old relationships. *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, p. 174:11f.

28. In a slip of authorial attention Lawrence forgets that Clifford was typing his own work: compare *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, pp. 86-7, with p. 103.

29. *ibid.*, p. 104.

30. *ibid.*

author an entirely new pool of character and plot resource, 'the stream of gossip about Tervershall village',<sup>31</sup> the raw material of Clifford's *rechauffé*.

Lawrence here echoes in the novel some of the thoughts he expressed in "Morality and the Novel": 'the novel, like gossip, can also excite spurious sympathies and recoils, mechanical and deadening to the psyche'.<sup>32</sup> This, in terms of the 1925 essay, is the novel in which 'the novelist puts his thumb in the scale, to pull down the balance to his own predeliction'.<sup>33</sup> Mrs Bolton, the gossip, and Clifford the author are alike guilty of Lawrence's charge; Mrs Bolton's talk of Terversham fluctuates between a 'flamey zest' and moral judgement in recounting the affairs of the townspeople, becoming no less than Clifford a master of *rechauffé*, interpreting and re-presenting Terversham as 'more like a Central African jungle than an English village.'<sup>34</sup>

The ambivalence of Mrs Bolton's impact on Clifford becomes apparent as the narrative voice observes 'It was Mrs Bolton's talk that really put a new fight into Clifford', so that he re-embraces 'the bitch-goddess of

31. *ibid.*, p. 105.

32. *ibid.*

33. "Morality and the Novel", p. 172:35f.

34. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 106.

Success'.<sup>35</sup> Mrs Bolton has restored to Clifford some sort of 'manhood', studying and visiting his industry, and replacing his novelist's art with that of the industrial theoretician and practitioner. But his industrialized resurrection is juxtaposed with a new, infantile dependency: 'Inwardly he began to go soft as pulp. But outwardly he began to be effective.'<sup>36</sup> Mrs Bolton, significantly, becomes 'half mistress, half foster-mother to him'.<sup>37</sup> An Achilles heel remains, not only in his relationship with Mrs Bolton, who gains a control over his sexless body 'as if he were a child', but with Connie also, of whom he felt 'a certain half-subservient dread'.<sup>38</sup>

Clifford eventually succumbs to a blatant mother-dependency focussed on Mrs Bolton, symbolized by his asexual kissing of her breasts. On receiving Connie's letter foreshadowing intended divorce, he becomes 'like a hysterical child', and assumes 'the face of an idiot'.<sup>39</sup> Mrs Bolton has from an early stage been aware of Connie's relationship with Mellors, and Lawrence has been careful to emphasize that her awareness was intuit-

35. *ibid.*, p. 111.

36. *ibid.*, p. 112.

37. *ibid.*, p. 117.

38. *ibid.*, pp. 113f.

39. *ibid.*, pp. 300f.

tive and deductive<sup>40</sup> before it was confirmed by the sight of the keeper in the pre-dawn light;<sup>41</sup> he is therefore able to contrast her awareness with Clifford's blindness, and to re-emphasize that contrast by Mrs Bolton's largely unsympathetic summary of Clifford's response as 'male hysteria', and telling assessment 'He's so wrapped up in his immortal self, that when he does get a shock he's like a mummy tangled in its own bandages.'<sup>42</sup>

Mrs Bolton, therefore, is not wholly sympathetic to Clifford as he adjusts to Connie's request for a divorce. She is close at this point to the authorial voice, which observes Clifford's 'contagion of grief'. But, recognizing his need for therapeutic tears, she is able to project onto Clifford's self-pity her own past experiences of pain, and therefore to weep as Clifford weeps. She deliberately adopts a maternal role, comforting the infantile Clifford, weeping tears that parallel those wept by Connie when she handled the pheasant chick immediately before her first intercourse with Mellors. Clifford's tears, now combined with Mrs Bolton's, provide, as Graham Hough notes of Mrs Bolton

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40. See *ibid.*, p. 142: 'Mrs Bolton was almost sure she [Connie] had a lover'.

41. *ibid.*, p. 150.

42. *ibid.*, pp. 301f.

in general, 'counterpoise';<sup>43</sup> Connie's and Mellor's authentic sex experience is juxtaposed with the asexual relationship between Clifford and Mrs Bolton, while Mrs Bolton continues her grasp of maternal domination of Clifford, and Clifford succumbs to 'the perverse and literal rendering of "except ye become again as a little child"'.<sup>44</sup> Tennyson's 'infant' has long since been an image of human inauthenticity for Lawrence;<sup>45</sup> Christ's image too holds little resonance.

It is out of the perversity of this rebirth to infantility that Clifford, by refusing divorce in a fit of childish pique, thwarts the potential for completed, sanctioned renewal in the relationship of Connie and Mellors. The 'lion and the unicorn' of Nietzsche's polarities operate not only within each individual but between individuals and parts of society, and this novel does not offer a 'happily ever after' conclusion. By this avoidance Lawrence avoids falling into his self-defined trap of putting 'his

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43. *The Dark Sun*, p. 157: 'The part [Mrs Bolton] plays in the economy of the book ... is to be a counterpoise to Mellors'.

44. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 303.

45. *ibid.*, p. 27. See also p. 167, n. 141, above - reference there to Lawrence's letter of 28.01.15 to E.M. Forster (*Letters* II:266, # 850). In *Women in Love* the narrative voice exclaims of Gudrun 'Ooh, but how she hated the infant crying in the night.' (edition cited, p. 524). Michaelis is therefore what Clifford ultimately reveals himself to be: a study in inauthenticity as crying infant.

thumb in the scale', tipping the balance of the novel unambiguously in favour of the Connie-Mellors match.

By Lawrence's criteria, Clifford has never been anything but an infant, unable to establish the resurrection or regeneration maturity of passionate sexuality: 'The long, slow enduring thing ... that's what we live by ... not the occasional spasm of any sort.'<sup>46</sup> Lawrence has by use of the word 'spasm', established a second juxtaposition, between Clifford and the sisters, Connie and Hilda. In their liberating early adulthood they have experienced the 'roused intimacy of ... vivid and soul enlightened discussions' which made 'the sex thing' an acceptable inevitability.<sup>47</sup> It was a growth experience for them, (as their father recognized), though as yet only a shadow of the experience Connie was, in maturity, to attain with Mellors. A shadow, because both girls only 'nearly succumbed to the strange male power',<sup>48</sup> not *fully* encountering this resurrective, regenerative force.

For Clifford there was no such sexual awakening:

'He had been virgin when he married: and the sex part

46. *ibid.*, p. 47.

47. *ibid.*, p. 8.

48. *ibid.*, p. 9, emphasis mine; this is the totemic, phallic power that Cipriano becomes and Mellors wields to full effect.

did not mean much to him.'<sup>49</sup> In Lawrence's scheme, being maimed makes no difference either to an individual or to the society they represent, if they have so a-sexual an outlook: 'It is this crude stupidity, deadness, about sex which I find barbaric and savage.'<sup>50</sup> Clifford's paralysis is a creeping, all-permeating one: 'the paralysis, the bruise of the too-great shock, was gradually spreading in his affective self.'<sup>51</sup>

Lawrence's word 'connexion' provides vital contrast between Connie and Clifford. Both characters lack this vital sign of authenticity in the opening chapters. Clifford remains unconnected to the men who work for him: 'He was remotely interested; but like a man looking down a microscope, or up a telescope.'<sup>52</sup> Industrial policy and personal life realistically coincide in a relationship of mutual influence.

Lawrence contrasts authentic sexuality as a metaphor of ultimate and authentic connection, with remote-

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49. *ibid.*, pp 12-13. This passage did not appear in earlier versions.

50. *Apropos*, p. 37.

51. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 53.

52. *ibid.*, p. 17.

ness or disconnectedness.<sup>53</sup> The contrast is originally stated by Tommy Dukes, who recognizes the aridity of 'the mental life': 'once you start the mental life you pluck the apple. You've severed the connexion between apple and tree: the organic connexion.'<sup>54</sup> In contrast, Dukes sees an alternative:

Our old show will come flop; our civilization is going to fall. It's going down the bottomless pit, down the chasm. And believe me, the only bridge across the chasm will be the phallus.<sup>55</sup>

But Connie experiences a lack of connection in these early, pre-Mellors days. The affair with Michaelis is a direct but unsatisfactory result of her disconnection: 'she knew she was out of connexion: she had lost touch with the substantial and vital world.'<sup>56</sup> Clifford and his writings belonged to an inauthentic world Dukes

53. 'Cecil Gray may well have been not far from the mark when he described Lawrence's "sexual potentialities" as "exclusively cerebral". Lawrence ... was inclined towards a similar view of himself, which he expressed in his satirical self-portrait as Tommy Dukes'. Derek Britton, *Lady Chatterley: the Making of a Novel*, pp. 48-9. There is here a remarkable additional demonstration of Lawrence's self-deprecating humour: Norman Douglas in a bitter attack on Lawrence described the latter's literary style as one producing 'cerebral hermaphrodites'. See Britton, *op. cit.*, p. 211, and reference there to M. Holloway, *Norman Douglas*, Secker and Warburg, London, 1976, p. 333.

54. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 40.

55. *ibid.*, p. 78. This alternative leads Kate Millett to exclaim caustically - and with some justification - 'The metaphor is an unhappy one; in respect of penile length the future hardly seems promising.' *Sexual Politics*, p. 242.

56. *ibid.*, p. 22. There is no comparable passage in the earlier editions.

sees as the mental life, but Michaelis offers only the non-alternative of invalid, inauthentic sex-experience: 'As for sex ... it was just a cocktail term for an excitement that bucked you up for a while, then left you more raggy than ever.'<sup>57</sup> 'Sex and a cocktail: they both lasted about as long, had the same effect, and amounted to about the same thing.'<sup>58</sup> That the affair will prove inadequate has been signposted before their first intercourse: Michaelis becomes, as Clifford later will, an 'infant crying in the night' to Connie.

The narrative voice asserts 'Out of her disconnexion, a restlessness was taking possession of her like madness.'<sup>59</sup> It is to be a demonic urge<sup>60</sup> that drives her towards the discoveries made with Mellors; without this 'disconnexion' Connie would make no steps towards the woods, which become both literally and symbolically a place of refuge and self-discovery. Squires notes Connie's early tendency to flight, and sees the wood as

57. *ibid.*, p. 65.

58. *ibid.*, p. 67. If Millett were to be fair in her treatment of Lawrence she would need to refer to that musing of Connie's, and to place the following sense of authentication-in-motherhood into the context of Lawrence's own childless marriage. The conception of a child in this novel is a symbolic union, not necessarily expression of a belief that motherhood alone is authentication of feminine existence.

59. *ibid.*, p. 22.

60. The same sense in which I note Lawrence used the word demon in *Kangaroo*, (p. 183). The 'demon' is one of Lawrence's 'dark gods'.

'a hospital in nature'.<sup>61</sup> This is the place wherein the healing of both Connie's and Mellors' scars can begin. As the oppressive sterility of her marriage becomes too much, and Connie reaches the point at which she 'really sometimes felt she would die',<sup>62</sup> it is to the wood that 'She fled as much as possible',<sup>63</sup> for therapy. Her pain is the urge that leads her on a path potentially ruinous or resurrective, a path that necessarily reaches into the one place in her geographical milieu that is older than the traditions and sterilities of Clifford's lineage,<sup>64</sup> which is the fullest extent of his horizon.<sup>65</sup> Clifford has sowed in Connie's mind the possibility of an affair, legitimized in his mind if it produces a male heir, 'a link in a chain',<sup>66</sup> but the psychological brutality of Michaelis as he verbally attacks Connie for her sexual performance<sup>67</sup> makes clear to Connie that purely male-pragmatic reasons for sex

61. Michael Squires, *The Creation of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 171.

62. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 117.

63. *ibid.*

64. *ibid.*, p. 46.

65. *ibid.*, p. 302: 'Like the lady in Tennyson, he must weep or he must die' - the allusion to Tennyson's *The Princess* emphasizes that for Clifford the ultimate tragedy in Connie's decision to divorce him is in the loss of an heir, his hope for continuation and preservation of the 'old England' (p. 46) and the values of his class.

66. *ibid.*, p. 46.

67. *ibid.*, p. 57.

are wholly inadequate. Bewildered by Michaelis' brutality, and frustrated by Cliffords sexlessness, she is left contemplating no more than 'nothingness',<sup>68</sup> and is ripe for a resurrective encounter with the game-keeper. Leaving Clifford's and Michaelis' influence behind her, Connie acts out the text on which she is musing as she enters the woods, Christ's dictum that a seed must die before it may generate new life. In *The First Lady Chatterley* Connie enters the woods 'to escape the level monotony of doom', or, as Michael Squires puts it, to enter the place of 'protection from further psychological pain'.<sup>69</sup>

Connie's first experience of regeneration in the final version is primarily sensual, not sexual, a heightened consciousness of the natural regenerative processes going on around her. By making the locus of this new sensual awareness the same as that of the immanent sexual regeneration, the woods, Lawrence embodies his thesis that sexuality is a natural part of life, and that its potential for personal regeneration is no less real than the regeneration derived from natural surroundings. The Celandines, anemones, primroses, violets and jasmine, all kissed by the life-giving breath of Persephone risen from hell, foreshadow

68. *ibid.*, p. 58.

69. *The Creation of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 170.

Connie's encounter with the keeper, and place sexual encounter on a plane with all forms of sensual openness; openness to regeneration in life.<sup>70</sup>

Although the timelessness of the forest encounter 'touches Connie's womb',<sup>71</sup> she has to return to Clifford. In the final version the return to Clifford gives Connie an opportunity to learn more of Mellors, and of his duality of class - what Clifford calls 'the Lieutenant Mellors touch'.<sup>72</sup> But more significant is the juxtaposition of Clifford's now highly symbolic mechanized chair with the 'unravished' woods, a juxtaposition introduced by discussion of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn". The chair now destroys the natural plant growths that have previously led Connie to an encounter with pre-Christian spirituality, though, in the later scene in which the chair becomes 'last of all ships ... sailing in the last voyage of our civilization',<sup>73</sup> nature is to defeat the machine, and it is the machine that is ravished, or emasculated.

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70. Lawrence's allusion to Swinburne makes clear that his intention is establishment of an 'in-life' regenerative experience for Connie, for "The Garden of Proserpine" is a renunciation of pious post-death resurrection hopes.

71. 'It was the stillness, and the timeless sort of patience, in a man impatient and passionate, that touched Connie's womb'. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 92.

72. *ibid.*, p. 95.

73. *ibid.*, p. 192.

The first sexual encounter between Connie and Mellors represents the beginning of her sex-resurrection experience. Connie's flights to the wood<sup>74</sup> become a retreat from Clifford's 'business efficiency', his sexless idolatry of her, and his 'passionless passion' directed towards Mrs Bolton. Connie's recognition that her enforced sexlessness has made her 'not a female at all, just a mere thing of terrors',<sup>75</sup> provides the basis on which Lawrence contrasts the inauthenticity of her own meaningless existence with that of the pheasants, the vitality of the pheasant hen contrasting boldly with the lifelessness of her own state. This contrast eventually underlies the tears which initiate her first sexual intercourse with Mellors. She has, like the seed of the parable on which she was earlier musing, touched the depths of her own inauthenticity, and has emotionally died.

Although the keeper originally 'resented the intrusion',<sup>76</sup> of Connie, the sexual encounter is resurrective for Mellors too. He too has retreated to the wood, a retreat from the failed sexual and social

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74. *ibid.*, p. 117.

75. *ibid.*, p. 118.

76. *ibid.*, p. 91; cf. p. 93: 'His recoil away from the outer world was complete; his last refuge was this wood; to hide himself there!'

experience of his own marriage to Bertha Coutts, and from the changes afoot in the society to which he has returned in the post-war period. For Mellors, in the final version, to enter into Connie's body is 'to enter the peace on earth of her soft, quiescent body .... the moment of pure peace for him.'<sup>77</sup> Connie herself has become the Eden<sup>78</sup> to which Mellors has sought to return, or the Bethlehem stable in which 'peace on earth' is the sign of the beginning of the incarnation and ultimately the resurrection and salvation for humanity.

After this first sex Parkin, in *The First Lady Chatterley*, was 'gloomy and did not speak a word',<sup>79</sup> a first indication of the self doubt that remains in all versions as a legacy of his marriage to Bertha.<sup>80</sup> In both later versions Lawrence has the couple return to the gamekeeper's house for the initial lovemaking to take place; in *John Thomas and Lady Jane* intercourse takes place twice, but the universality of peace poten-

77. *ibid.*, p. 122.

78. See *Apropos*, pp. 67f:

this is the meaning of the sexual act: this communion, this touching on one another of two rivers, Euphrates and Tigris - to use old jargon - and the enclosing of the land of Mesopotamia, where Paradise was, or the Park of Eden ...

79. *The First Lady Chatterley*, p. 51.

80. Connie's return to the hut the following evening initiates intercourse again, but only after the gamekeeper has been reassured 'You're lovely to touch'. *ibid.*, p. 52.

tial in the sex-event is lost by the narrator's assertion 'she was not aware of the infinite peace of the entry of his body into hers. That was for the man'.<sup>81</sup> In the final version the Johannine Christ's teaching on rebirth are ironically reintroduced by the keeper's spoken thought 'Now I've begun again'.<sup>82</sup> As Mellors himself recognizes, it is an ambivalent rebirth, with potential for the destructiveness of the Bertha Coutts relationship or for the regeneration he has futilely sought in the woods.

Futile because, as Mellors recognises in his post-coital reverie, 'The world allows no hermits'.<sup>83</sup> His return to the woods after taking Connie home is a brutal reminder of the existence of the outside world:

he was aware of the noises of the night, the engines at Stacks Gate, the traffic on the main road. Slowly he climbed the denuded knoll. And from the top he could see the country, bright rows of lights at Stacks Gates, smaller lights at Tevershall pit, the yellow lights of Tevershall and lights everywhere, here and there, on the dark country, with the distant blush of furnaces, faint and rosy, since the night was clear, the rosiness of the outpouring of white-hot metal. Sharp, wicked electric lights at Stacks gate! An undefinable quick of evil in them!<sup>84</sup>

81. *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, p. 121.

82. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 123.

83. *ibid.*, p. 124.

84. *ibid.*

Mellors 'loved the darkness and folded himself into it',<sup>85</sup> but it cannot now provide refuge from the 'Thing',<sup>86</sup> the machine that has made England the lifeless and sexless society that Lawrence sees it to be: 'I cannot see any hope of regeneration for a sexless England. An England that has lost its sex seems to me nothing to feel very hopeful about.'<sup>87</sup> The solitude, the sex-experience, and the intrusion of the sounds of industrialization and the inauthenticities of Connie's and Mellor's prior sexual experience all serve to highlight the degree of difficulty in choosing authentic life experience.

The experience of release and wholly authentic, resurrective sex experience continues to be elusive for

85. *ibid.*, p. 125.

86. *ibid.*, p. 126.

87. *Apropos*, p. 75. This contrasts with an earlier Laurentian attitude from the period of *The Rainbow*: there Lawrence seems to allow in Ursula's vision of the rainbow a hint that transformation may take place for society as a whole, that

the fundamental vitality and capacity for creative growth which most people possess has not been damaged in any fundamental way by the tyranny of the machine and the ugliness of contemporary life: the hard, distorted shell is just a shell and what lies underneath is essentially healthy.

(Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, p. 109). The more pessimistic later attitude is an inevitable result of Lawrence's own disillusionment through the search for Rananim, the failure of the leadership of society to imitate that intended in his 'leadership novels', and the failure of his own health.

Connie. In their next intercourse Lawrence portrays a sexual rôle reversal, with Clifford 'encompassing her somehow.'<sup>88</sup> She is experiencing deep within herself the emergence of 'a new nakedness',<sup>89</sup> but observing too the ridiculousness of the male sexual response. Colin Milton notes that 'for Lawrence it is in extraordinary and extreme states rather than normal ones that awareness and insight are at their greatest'.<sup>90</sup> Connie is experiencing simultaneously the regenerative potential of this clandestine relationship and its potential to provide nothing but the seeming ridiculousness of the sex act. Later, when the couple are more secure in their sexuality, they are able to overcome the potential for destructive ridicule in sex.<sup>91</sup>

Between these occasions Mellors has raped Connie in the woods.<sup>92</sup> It is a troubling scene, involving the

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88. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 131.

89. *ibid.*

90. Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, p. 65.

91. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, pp. 236-239.

92. Simone de Beauvoir rightly sees that Lawrence, for all her criticisms of him, seeks to expose 'the falsity of love ... which comes in the form of a gift, when it is really a tyranny.' (*The Second Sex*, translated by H.M. Parshley, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1983, p. 666). Here, however, a tyrannical act, rape, serves as a means to female orgasm, a resurrective motif. Kate Millett understands Mellors' domination of Connie as a programme of forcing her 'to relinquish ... self, ego, will, individuality - things woman had but recently developed - to Lawrence's profoundly shocked distaste.' *Sexual Politics*, p. 243.

violation of a woman. Lawrence unsuccessfully attempts to minimize the violence in the final version by having Mellors lead rather than 'half-carry' Connie;<sup>93</sup> he introduces to the later versions reference to Mellors/Parkins' attempts to 'make a bed' amongst the firs, and he removes in the final version reference to Connie's awaiting his 'bedmaking' 'like an animal'.<sup>94</sup> Lawrence was aware of the sexual aggression of this scene, but remained unwilling or unable to make too great an alteration to it. The scene must be read for the symbolic significance and description of Connie's first orgasm, rather than for psychological realism.<sup>95</sup>

This said, we must seek in this scene the elements Lawrence was seeking to convey, and which he clearly felt were not adequately conveyed in the first version. Both the later versions remark on Mellors/Parkins'

93. *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, p. 133. In *Lady Chatterley's Lover* he must have released her and let her follow him voluntarily to the place of coitus - see p. 138, where he looks back at her, and leads her through the prickly trees.

94. Lawrence wrote 'Ooray! Eureka' when Frieda wrote to her son that Lawrence was writing a 'long short story' of 'the curious class-feeling or rather the soul against the body, no I don't explain it well, the *animal* part'. See Derek Britton, *The Making of the Novel*, p. 176.

95. Of the three versions of this scene, the first is perhaps the more accurate psychologically: there, after the intercourse, which is not described, she simply asserts her desire to go. The 'surge after surge' of waves are her response to being held, not to the sex act, and her 'short, almost whimpering cries of passion' only sound to Parkin, not to the narrator, to be 'a sort of ecstasy of triumph'. *The First Lady Chatterley*, p. 75.

urgency in the sex act, and to Connie's broken underclothes. But following that the two diverge slightly. In Version Two Parkin's premature orgasm triggers a sexual response in Connie that is deliberately elucidated by allusion to Tennyson's resurrective stanzas from "In Memoriam", "Ring Out Wild Bells":<sup>96</sup>

something awoke in her. Strange, thrilling sensation, that she had never known before woke up where he was within her, in wild thrills like wild, wild bells. It was wonderful, wonderful, and she clung to him uttering in complete unconsciousness strange, wild, inarticulate little cries<sup>97</sup>

The sex experience has been a death experience, but sexually it still remains unsatisfactory for both parties. They have yet to reach the simultaeneous orgasm so important to Lawrence.

This shared and simultaeneous experience is no new Laurentian motif: 'Love is a direction which excludes all other directions. It's a freedom *together*, if you like',<sup>98</sup> says Birkin in *Women in Love*. By attaining that 'freedom together' in the sex act Connie and Mellors begin to attain the pinnacle of inter-human communion,

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96. "In Memoriam" CVI. These orgasmic bells form, therefore, a powerful contrast to the inauthentic bells-rite of "Weeknight Service", which received final alterations at around this time.

97. *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, p. 133.

98. *Women in Love*, p. 169. Emphasis in original.

the opposite of the existentially alone 'infant crying in the night' that Michaelis and Clifford alike come to imitate:

he came into her again, and the thrills woke up once more, wilder and wilder, like bells ringing pealing faster and faster, to a climax, to an ecstasy, an orgasm, when everything within her turned fluid, and her life seemed to sway like liquid in a bowl, swaying to quiescence.<sup>99</sup>

The fluidity of the metaphors and simile are Nietzschean; the Laurentian use of wave or tide metaphors are an indicator of unfathomably deep impulses within the psyche. Within, but influenced by objective external forces, which 'move us, by a process of alternate advance and retreat, toward new experience'.<sup>100</sup>

For Connie the first of Mellors' orgasms is stimulative but not wholly satisfactory. The imagery remains similar to that of the second version:

Rippling, rippling, rippling, like a flapping overlapping of soft flames, soft as feathers, running to points of brilliance, exquisite, exquisite and melting her all molten inside. It was like bells rippling up and up to a culmination.<sup>101</sup>

The explicit orgasm-as-bells metaphor is replaced by

99. *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, p. 133.

100. Colin Milton, *Lawrence and Nietzsche*, p. 157.

101. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 139.

more varied images, and the direct allusion to Tennyson is gone. Her 'whimpering cries'<sup>102</sup> have remained in all three versions, though they are now 'wild little cries', and were in *John Thomas and Lady Jane* 'unconscious strange, wild inarticulate little cries.'<sup>103</sup> These are the animal voice of a woman experiencing Laurentian liberation. But liberation is incomplete, and, as in the second version, yet to be furthered<sup>104</sup> by simultaeneous orgasm, the satisfaction of her expectant womb, 'open and soft'. The womb is for Lawrence a feminine seat of consciousness, the 'primal affective centre' that 'lies within the solar plexus of the nervous system'.<sup>105</sup> It is at that feminine locus of consciousness that Connie, in the act of simultaeneous orgasm, experiences the Nietzschean waves and whirlpools and other liquid images of consciousness, and becomes in her sexual cries not an 'infant crying in the night' but 'the voice out of the uttermost night, the life!'.<sup>106</sup> They attain, explicitly now, a mutual

102. *The First Lady Chatterley*, p. 75.

103. *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, p. 133. They appear twice in the third version, in the second orgasm as 'unconscious articulate cries': articulate because they are the vocalization of a pre-linguistic consciousness, common to religious and sexual ecstasy and used in psychotherapy.

104. Even after achieving simultaeneous orgasm the search remains incomplete until her later acceptance of the 'shameful' acts of anal intercourse.

105. *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, p. 219.

106. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 139.

and shared loss of consciousness, the knowledge of non-being that Birkin has long before known to be the resurrective gateway to being.<sup>107</sup>

This sexual experience has been for each partner a transitional passage. Connie, having 'opened her womb' in the sex act, has become like the 'pallid flowers' she observed earlier by the light of Mellors' torch, and is now for the first time opened to the possibility of procreation as liberation, the procreative role she had ruefully observed in the pheasant hens, which had earlier led her to feel 'so acutely the agony of her own female forlornness'.<sup>108</sup> The earlier discovery of a longing for motherhood she now recognizes to be a possibility:

to have a child to a man whom one adored in one's bowels and one's womb, it made her feel she was very different from her old self, and as if she were sinking deep, deep to the centre of all womanhood and the sleep of creation.<sup>109</sup>

This must be understood to be as powerful a move towards resurrection as Connie can yet undergo in Lawrence's scheme. It is expressed clearly in the first version: 'She had burst out as if from a chrysalis

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107. See *Women in Love*, p. 48.

108. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 119.

109. *ibid.*, p. 141.

shell, and she had emerged a new creature.'<sup>110</sup>

Re-birth, in this novel, is a repeated and ongoing process, rather than a single event,<sup>111</sup> and in her next intercourse with Mellors this cycle is to be repeated: 'She was gone, she was not, and she was born: a woman.'<sup>112</sup> Mellors, having 'come through' in this sexual union, perceives life in a new way:

he could live alone, in the wan satisfaction of being alone, and raise pheasants to be shot ultimately by fat men after breakfast. It was futility, futility to the nth power.<sup>113</sup>

Likewise Connie now recognizes the extent to which England has come to represent nothing but 'dismalness':

The utter negation of natural beauty, the utter negation of the gladness of life, the utter absence of the instinct for shapely beauty which every bird and beast

110. *The First Lady Chatterley*, p. 78. In *John Thomas and Lady Jane* this becomes 'She had awakened, and come out of the crysalis of her dream another creature, another beast altogether.' (pp. 134f).

111. By conversion we mean the reorientation of the soul from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right.

A.D. Nock, *Conversion*, second edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1963. In the final chapter of a later study, A.J. Krailsheimer argues for an understanding of conversion as an event followed by a process; see A.J. Krailsheimer, *Conversion*, SCM, London, 1980, pp. 158-161.

112. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 181.

113. *ibid.*, p. 148.

has, the utter death of the human intuitive faculty ...<sup>114</sup>

It is a vision of the same 'Wasteland' that Lawrence portrayed in *The White Peacock* and *The Plumed Serpent*. The final version of Connie's drive through Tevershall is a howl of anger directed at industrialized England, exacerbated by Lawrence's frustration at his own progressing disease.<sup>115</sup> The destruction of the England of which Clifford becomes a microcosm is a process on which the neophyte Connie, together with Mellors, must turn their back. 'Mellors had come out of all of this! - Yes but he was as apart from it all as she was.'<sup>116</sup> Connie's journey through a Tevershall that she sees to be irreperably destroyed, but which industrial magnates such as a Clifford or a Gerald Crich presumably see to be as approaching the apotheosis of productivity, is intentionally juxtaposed with Clifford's magnificent (if Dickensian) journey 'through the hyacinthian shai-

114. *ibid.*, p. 158.

115. See Derek Britton, *The Making of the Novel*, p. 126. The writing is better in the second version, where the narrative voice is less strident and angry: there the icons of an earlier England are contrasted with some humour with those of the mid to late twenties: 'the pathetic corkscrew spire of the church, that is always going to tumble down, still pricking among the fumes'. *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, p. 158.

116. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 160. cf. 'there was a certain mystery to Parkin, even if it went with a certain gruesomeness. He was passionate, too, with the underground passion.' *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, pp. 156f. In *The First Lady Chatterley* Connie thinks more abstractly of Parkin as an embodiment of 'some quick of loveliness' (p. 63) absent in industrialized England.

lows:<sup>117</sup> to shipwreck on the shoals of his own helplessness and impotence.

That there has been some progress in Connie's coming to terms with her rebirth is apparent when next she makes love with Mellors.<sup>118</sup> In the first of two successive sex-acts Connie observes only the ridiculousness of the sex act, 'the butting of his haunches', the 'sort of anxiety of his penis', the 'ridiculous bouncing of the buttocks', and the 'wilting of the poor, insignificant, moist little penis'.<sup>119</sup> She wishes, momentarily to reject the male from this violation of her body, to return to the sexlessness of her relationship with Clifford. But the temptation to apostasy is only momentary; as Mellors exits from her body, 'ebbing away, leaving her there like a stone on a

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117. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 192. cf. *The First Lady Chatterley*, p. 108; *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, p. 210. The re-writings of this scene accentuate the ironic caricature, the final version introducing the parody of Whitman and Bridges.

118. Connie returns to her lover as if to reconvince herself of the tangibility of touch that she has momentarily doubted in her conversation with Mrs Bolton:

'But can a touch last so long?' Connie asked suddenly. 'That you could feel him so long?'

'Oh my Lady, what else is there to last?'

*Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 171.

119. *ibid.*, pp. 178-9. In their earlier, second sex encounter, which was similarly unfulfilling for Connie, she makes similar, detached and unflattering observations of the male sexual response, see p. 131. Lawrence therefore demonstrates that a new believer can 'backslide' from resurrective faith.

shore', she returns to the grief that precipitated their first love making at the pheasant coop. She no longer, as in the last intercourse, experiences everything within her as fluid, but now becomes the sea, 'nothing but dark waves rising and heaving'.<sup>120</sup> As was the case with Ursula Brangwen in her visionary encounters with an idealized Jesus, and an idealized Skrebensky, the sex act now becomes one of 'the sons of god with the daughters of men.'<sup>121</sup> But Lawrence is now more explicit, and Mellors' testicles become 'the primeval root of all full beauty.'

On this occasion Mellors is unable to gain shared communion<sup>122</sup> or higher consciousness, despite his repeat performance. Eventually forced to verbal communication, he seeks to differentiate between the verb 'fuck', to him an animal action,<sup>123</sup> and the total identification of self with genitals, in which a female becomes 'cunt'. In *The Plumed Serpent*, it is for Don

120. *ibid.*, p. 181.

121. *ibid.*, p. 182, cf. *Rainbow*, p. 360.

122. cf. Mark Spilka, *The Love Ethic of D.H. Lawrence*, p. 187: 'the act of love itself is the communion rite in this novel'.

123. It is probably important, given Lawrence's affirmation of the 'animal' in his genital-resurrective scheme, to lessen the degree of contrast between 'fuck' and 'cunt' in Mellors' thought than might otherwise be the case. It is no less an authentic sex-experience when Mellors takes Connie 'short and sharp and finished, like an animal.' *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 231. Lawrence confused his terms, when Mellors contradicts these values, asking 'What is cunt but machine-fucking?' (*ibid.*, p. 226).

Ramòn an essential element of resurrective experience so to identify with the phallus that he becomes one, and undergoes in the whole of his bodily action the movements of (male) orgasm.<sup>124</sup> In the same way Lawrence is enabling Connie (her name is a pun on the French *con*, 'cunt'<sup>125</sup>), to identify wholly with her sex organ, to be the embodiment of yonic sexuality. Thus re-identified and therefore renewed, she no longer evaluates the male as ludicrous, but as a thing of beauty: 'The unspeakable beauty to the touch of the warm, living buttocks.'<sup>126</sup> Connie has now progressed to what in Lawrence's scheme is a more healthy, less English view of the body:

once Connie wakes to passion, once she begins to live from other centres than the mind, then she is at last able to see the full beauty of Mellors' body.<sup>127</sup>

In this new ability to see the body and its functions as creative and positive Connie can be a symbol of hope

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124. The title "The Escaped Cock", is a deliberate *double entendre* on the word 'cock', so that the resurrected Christ figure in that story is identified as a phallus. The identification in this novel of Mellors' penis as 'the king of glory', (Psalm 24.7, see *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 218) is therefore paralleled in the novella. Hence Mellors, like Ramòn, becomes his penis, and his penis becomes a resurrective Messiah-symbol.

125. She has become therefore, what she has been named: one whose 'stance' is her *con*. The pun is more clear in *The First Lady Chatterley*, where Clifford addresses Connie by the diminutive 'Con': (see eg. p. 64).

126. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 182.

127. Mark Spilka, *Love Ethic*, p. 187.

for her society:

If England is to be regenerated ... then it will be by the arising of a new blood-contact, a new touch, and a new marriage. It will be a phallic rather than a sexual regeneration. For the phallus is the only great old symbol of godly vitality in a man, and of immediate contact.<sup>128</sup>

Lawrence makes clear that such blood contact entails not only avoidance of 'modern sex',<sup>129</sup> but also avoidance of prudery;<sup>130</sup> Connie explores with aesthetic pleasure the contours and possibilities of the game-keeper's body, and ultimately allows him the deepest knowledge of sexuality's most private possibility, (in Lawrence's scheme), that of heterosexual buggery. In this Connie becomes an embodiment of hope for her society.

If anal sex is an androgynous act, devoid of all procreative possibility, can it really be a vehicle for the lofty sociological and anthropological hope Lawrence invests in it? Derek Britton finds in the act 'sado-masochistic implications', and notes that Millett and others have found in the scene 'expression of

128. *Apropos*, p. 77. By 'sexual' here Lawrence means 'pro-creational', and therefore 'phallic' is inclusive of 'yonic'.

129. Which to some extent he parodies in Mellors' remembrances of Bertha Coutts.

130. The sort of prudery that Lawrence lampoons when it leads Swift to horror at the thought '"But Celia, Celia, Celia s\*\*\*s," (the word rhymes with spits)': see *Apropos*, p. 19.

[Lawrence's] latent homosexuality.<sup>131</sup> Britton understands anal intercourse to be an act that is an

expression of contempt, not solely because it involves contact with a distasteful bodily organ, but because it unsexes a woman by making her femaleness redundant: she is used as one male might use another.<sup>132</sup>

Shere Hite's findings, however, suggest that at least 11% of heterosexual men<sup>133</sup> engage in heterosexual anal intercourse, and of those whose responses she records, only a minority suggest the event is attractive for any sense of subjugation of the female partner.<sup>134</sup> Assuming that Hite's findings in the 1970s differ little to the intimate experiences of the 1920s, then Britton may have misjudged Lawrence's aims.

Michael Squires sees a different purpose:

Together, they have fully explored sensual experience: daytime, nighttime, normal, abnormal. They have found the courage to express their sexual selves wholly, making

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131. Derek Britton, *The Making of the Novel*, p. 51. See Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, p. 141, and n. 18.

132. *The Making of the Novel*, p. 51.

133. Shere Hite, *The Hite Report on Male Sexuality*, MacDonald Futura Publications, London, 1981, p. 590

134. See *ibid.*, p. 591; since this was a confidential report, in which male egos could run free in expression of dominatory fantasies, this small proportion appears to have some credibility.

the regenerative sequence complete.<sup>135</sup>

In this he is closer to the earlier insight of Frank Kermode, who recognizes in the anal intercourse scene of *Lady Chatterley* an echo of the much earlier scene in *Woman in Love*. In the earlier work, Kermode notes, Lawrence has sought

to distinguish between buggery which was wholly dissolute and buggery that was initiatory, the symbolic death before rebirth, the cracking of the insect carapace.<sup>136</sup>

By portraying once more these acts of 'shame', Lawrence is repeating his pattern of the *Brangwensaga* novels, expressing in the loss of all inhibitions the final personal resurrective experience:

The forbidden acts of Gerald and Gudrun, or Birkin and Hermione, or Mellors and Bertha, are merely corruption within the rind; the same acts committed by Birkin and Ursula, Connie and Mellors,<sup>137</sup> are the acts of healthy human beings.<sup>138</sup>

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135. *The Creation of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 37. This suggestion of Squires is consistent with some of Hite's findings that speak of the greater erotic intimacy of the anal act: *Male Sexuality*, p. 592.

136. Frank Kermode, *Lawrence*, p. 130.

137. To whom I would add Anna and Will Brangwen.

138. Frank Kermode, *Lawrence*, p. 130. For a critique of Kermode and others' treatment of this anal intercourse scene see Donald Gutierrez, *The Maze in the Mind and the World: Labyrinths in Modern Literature*, The Whiston Publishing Company, New York, 1985, pp. 55-74. Gutierrez recognizes 'the flaw in the disparity between character motivation and esoteric allegory'. (p. 68).

It is not the act, but the psycho-spiritual state of the participants that is the decisive factor in evaluating its moral value. Nevertheless, in the very androgoneity of the act itself, there is a reconciliation of polarities:

The highest kind of married fulfilment is dependent on both the man and the woman extending their being to the utmost, on their reconciling ... their male and female components (as these are defined in the Hardy essay), and as a result of the tension between these components, on their transcending the limitations of either.<sup>139</sup>

Lawrence attempts to adumbrate the same value system in *Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, outlining a contrast between a woman whose 'sex is in itself dynamic and alive ... a power in itself, beyond her reason',<sup>140</sup> and 'the girls of today [who] could muffle themselves up to the eyes, wear crinolines and chignons and all the rest' yet remain unable 'to exert any ... real sexual attraction'.<sup>141</sup> The implication is that in life, no less than in the novel, the greater immorality is in phoney self-presentation rather than the particularities of sexual action. Once more he has returned to his thesis that a

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139. H.M. Daleski, in Mark Kinkead-Weekes (ed), *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Rainbow*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1971, p. 35. This passage also appears in Daleski's *The Forked Flame*, Faber and Faber, London, 1965, p. 81.

140. *Apropos*, p. 39.

141. *ibid.*, p. 42.

novelist must not put 'his thumb in the scale', opting instead to leave his symbols to speak for themselves.

Any progress in the relationship between Connie and Mellors cannot take place until Bertha Coutts' influence is destroyed. The destruction of the photograph, and Mellors' long monologue on his earlier marriage is an exorcism<sup>142</sup> of the Bertha Coutts influence. Bertha Coutts is an androgynous being who represents a form of 'corruption of sexual knowledge'; she represents a role reversal in sexuality that Lawrence abhorred, a woman become the dominant, aggressive partner: '"I tell you the old rampers have beaks between their legs"'.<sup>143</sup> Bertha has become the opposite of the yonnic ideal captured in the poem "Figs", representing no longer 'the wonderful moist conductivity towards the centre'<sup>144</sup> that Connie and her name epitomize, but a 'woman's blind beakishness ... like an old trull'.<sup>145</sup> This is to Lawrence a revelation of an inherent male-destroying Lesbianism in 'nearly

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142. Not wholly successful, as later events demonstrate. For the relationship of exorcism and baptism/rebirth see Henry Angskar Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology and Drama*.

143. Both Michael Squires, (*The Creation of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p.63) and Derek Britton (*The Making of the Novel*, p.19) see something of Lawrence's antagonistic feelings towards Frieda in this portrayal of Bertha Coutts.

144. *Collected Poems*, p. 282.

145. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 210.

all' women.<sup>146</sup> Bertha Coutts is a vampire who will draw from men the blood of their sexuality, while Mellors despite his credal affirmation of 'fucking with a warm heart',<sup>147</sup> and 'the peace of fucking',<sup>148</sup> is afraid of 'aggressive' female sexuality. Mellors' Connie is 'a ruddy, country-looking girl with soft brown hair and sturdy body' who had 'big, wondering eyes, and a soft mild voice' and who looks as though she had just 'come from her native village',<sup>149</sup> an embodiment of what the author visualizes as innocence. In the first draft of *Lady Chatterley* Lawrence adds that 'she seemed a real quiet maiden'.<sup>150</sup>

In fact the influence of Bertha Coutts on the relationship of Connie and Mellors is not yet wholly exorcised, but the rite of destroying the photograph persuades the lovers that it is. In the second version, where neither photo nor rite are part of the plot, the baptismal imagery is stronger than in the later version. Here, having made love in two brief paragraphs

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146. *ibid.*, p. 211.

147. *ibid.*, p. 215.

148. *ibid.*, p. 313.

149. *ibid.*, p. 6. (cf *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, p. 10).

150. *The First Lady Chatterley*, p. 17. This addition is surrendered as Lawrence responds to the need, for reasons discussed above, to give Connie a sexual past.

without Laurentian detail,<sup>151</sup> Connie embarks on a meditation on sex experience, on the relationship between Bertha Coutts and Oliver Parkin, and the contrast between the 'nasty penis' of most men,<sup>152</sup> and the 'strange gallant phallus' of her lover.<sup>153</sup> As part of that reverie, according to the authorial voice, she is able to see herself as 'enclosed and encircled in the phallic body, like an egg in a cup.'<sup>154</sup> It is a return to the womb, though now the womb has been provided by the male, and the world in which Connie and Parkin exist has contracted so that even the Eden-like woods are too big and exposed for their survival, and only 'the perfect sleeping circle of the male and female, phallic body',<sup>155</sup> will suffice. As in baptism, a womb has been entered, and Connie has become 'the yolk of the egg',<sup>156</sup> prior to her emergence from the Styx- or Lethe-like 'pure bath of forgetting and of birth.'<sup>157</sup> In the final version, where the photo-destruction rite has taken over from Connie's reflection, the post-

151. See *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, p. 236.

152. *ibid.*, p. 238.

153. *ibid.*, p. 239.

154. *ibid.*

155. *ibid.* Note the psychological implications of the *Ying-Yang* symbolism of *I-Ching*.

156. *ibid.*

157. *ibid.*, p. 240.

coital womb imagery remains, though the womb is now the 'nest' implicit in Lawrence's choice of verb: 'she nestled up to him, feeling small and enfolded'.<sup>158</sup>

In Christian liturgy baptism is not only associated with the womb, but with the primeval flood, and with the Exodus through 'the Waters of the Red Sea'. Rites of burial are likewise associated with these two mythopoetic events. As Connie reflects on Clifford's 'going deader',<sup>159</sup> and Mellors contrasts his own army and post-army experience with the 'common people' and 'the working people' whose 'spunk is gone dead',<sup>160</sup> the couple find themselves 'alone in the flood',<sup>161</sup> singing a *Te Deus Laudamus*.<sup>162</sup> The words of this ancient hymn first echo the same words of Psalm 24 that Mellors asks 'Lady Jane' to address to 'John Thomas', 'Thou art the King of Glory: O Christ', and then address Christ in thanksgiving:

when thou tookest upon thee to deliver man:  
                   thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.  
 When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death:  
                   thou didst open the kingdom of heaven

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158. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 216.

159. *ibid.*, p. 224.

160. *ibid.*, p. 226.

161. *ibid.*

162. *ibid.*, p. 227.

to all believers.<sup>163</sup>

The rite is now not only one of their own baptism, but a funeral rite as well, conducted by the lovers on behalf of the 'Tin people' beyond their sex experience. And, effectively to seal this liturgical covenant, Connie dances 'what the reader recognizes to be a mime of King David's naked gyrations before the Lord',<sup>164</sup> 'a kind of homage', 'a wild obeisance',<sup>165</sup> before Mellors chases, trips, and takes her in a sexual embrace. This liturgical dance is Connie's version of Anna Brangwen's dancing the non-existence of her husband, but by allowing Mellors to 'take' her in sexual embrace she is allowing him to participate in her frenzied dancing of the world of the 'tin people' or the 'ball-less' to non-existence.

The nuptial floral rites of John Thomas and Lady Jane can now take place,<sup>166</sup> so that in their next - and final - coming together the most intimate expression of at-oneness, that of anal intercourse, in all its assumptions of the putting off of the concerns of scru-

163. The translation of the 1928 version of *The Book of Common Prayer*: Baptisms and funerals both tended until the last three decades to take place in the context of the rite of Mattins, at which the *Te Deum* was, in Anglican practice, always said.

164. Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, p. 241.

165. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 230.

166. See *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 237.

pulous 'Englishness', can finally occur, and the resurrective, phallic 'King of Glory' and yonnic gates of Jerusalem<sup>167</sup> can become one resurrective whole.

How does the intimate act of anal intercourse relate to Connie's search, as a Laurentian woman, for sexual fulfilment? I have suggested that its implicit androgyny should not mean that it is an 'expression of contempt', but is it consistent with her search for something that 'touched her womb', the 'centre of all womanhood'?<sup>168</sup> Does anal sexuality deny psychologically as it does physiologically any possibility of touching the womb?

The question however ceases to arise if 'womb' is seen to be a Laurentian image, a centre of consciousness rather than a biological locus.

*Lady Chatterley's Lover* is in the end a novel that fluctuates in success as a vehicle for its ideals. The resurrection dream of Connie and Mellors becomes an

167. The Psalmist uses metonymy, so that the gates of the eternal city, Jerusalem, (the Psalms originated in Jerusalem temple liturgies), become representative of the entire city. See Michell Dahood, *Psalms I: 1-50*, Doubleday, Garden City, 1965, pp. 152f and Artur Weiser, *The Psalms*, translated by Herbert Hartwell, SCM, London, 1962, pp 243ff. Lawrence has instinctively grasped the Psalmist's metonymy well, as the yonni becomes a microcosm of womanhood, and the phallus of manhood.

168. See eg, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, pp. 92, 141, and comments on womb-imagery above.

exclusive duprass, unattractive and unconvincing to those around them. The lesser characters serve to highlight the effect to which the Connie/Mellors relationship succeeds or fails; Bertha Coult's attempted return to Mellors demonstrates how far spiritually and psychologically Mellors has moved from the realms of his wife, while Clifford's anger at his wife's plans further distances the reader from any sense of sympathy for him. He, who has given permission to Connie to conceive a child, is wholly unable to accept the implications of class disparity. So, as it happens, is the more genial Sir Malcolm;<sup>169</sup> Lawrence remains ambivalent in his attitude to Sir Malcolm, eventually leaving him tolerant but disapproving of his daughter's decision. Hilda Reid demonstrates her inability to grasp the ethos of the world of Connie's resurrection hope. Tommy Dukes is also unable to share the vision. The new world of Connie and Mellors will be sparsely populated.<sup>170</sup>

This is partly because Lawrence's own hopes were fading fast. His health was now clearly deserting him, and he knew this desertion was terminal. His marriage was at times torturous, though, like Clifford with Mrs

169. Sir Malcolm demonstrates Lawrence's disinclination to be impressed at the gesture of his namesake, T.E. Lawrence, in re-enlisting in the military in 1922 as a private after service as an officer in the First World War.

170. As will the afterworld of Lawrence's "Ship of Death", and Lawrence's earlier world of Rananim.

Bolton, he was in many ways utterly dependent psychologically on Frieda. The sex act proves to be a barely adequate metaphor to act as a vehicle for Lawrence's lofty dreams of creating a new brand of sexual relationship between human beings, and to make that relationship the basis of an entirely new society that transcends class and gender disharmonies. His own apparent sexual impotence in his failing years must have made any sustained effort to maintain the metaphor a painful process. There is a hint of this as, in the second version of the novel, Lawrence cites Byron once again: 'they went slowly back to the path where long ago Byron must have limped in his unhappy inability to feel sure in his love'.<sup>171</sup> Helene Moglen notes that the Byronic hero must 'prove his masculinity by sexual conquest';

He fears impotence and he loathes the aggression he must summon in himself as a defense against the sexual threat he imagines. In short he fears with unusual acuteness both powerlessness and power.<sup>172</sup>

For Lawrence, even in the penultimate version of the novel, this must be a poignant reality, and because of this to some extent the novel fails to convey Lawrence's dream.

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171. *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, p. 375.

172. Helene Moglen, *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1984. p. 128.

Yet Lawrence does, by his own criteria, largely succeed in resisting the temptation to 'put his thumb in the pan', and in that respect maintains authorial integrity;<sup>173</sup> the reader may assess the success or otherwise of the central resurrective couple by contrasting them with the varied failures of their 'counterpoised' co-characters. In particular Clifford and Mrs Bolton's failures are the greater for their establishment of an oedipal dependancy - despite Mrs Bolton's attempts to remain only a compassionate observer of Clifford's crisis.

For Connie and Meilors, from the point where Connie leaves with Hilda for the continent, some form of new life, some Hesperides, has been achieved, which can be evaluated by the standards of Lawrence's last sustained piece of writing:

What we want is to destroy our false, inorganic connections, especially those related to money, and re-establish the living organic connections, with the cosmos, the sun, and earth, with mankind and nation and family. Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly happen.<sup>174</sup>

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173. There are notable but not highly significant exceptions to this: occasionally the authorial voice makes clear and unnecessary moral judgement: 'He [Clifford] was, in some paralysing way, conscious of his own defencelessness, though he had the defence of privilege. Which is curious, but a phenomenon of our day'. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, p. 10.

174. *Apocalypse*, p. 126.

In this Connie and Mellors have potentially succeeded, and the determination of Clifford to thwart their new found resurrective hope highlights for the reader the truth of Mellors' antagonism towards 'the ball-less'. Connie and Mellors are left with as yet unfulfilled potential for a resurrective 'freedom together', built on the 'already' of their sexual intimacies. The reader is left to assess the pivoting Laurencian counterbalance.

## CONCLUSION

Lawrence grew up in a home dominated by a mother who was strict in her religious observance, but whose religion was the typically and highly moralistic, social-working liberal Protestantism of the late eighteen and early nineteen hundreds. Lawrence saw the failure of that religion ultimately and satisfactorily to address the question of theodicy, the meaning and origins of suffering. He also became aware of his mother's religion's inability to provide powerful symbolism, 'dark gods' able to relate to the deep seated urges particularly of human sexuality, but also of other deep human emotions, best encapsulated by the Nietzschean polarities of love and hate, or Lawrence's own lion and unicorn.

Lawrence therefore began a search for his own gods, and searched for them constantly in the deepest of human emotions. Love and hate, the urges to create and to destroy, the attractions towards and repulsions away from one another experienced by men and women, men

and men, women and women. And he found that these fascinations soon supplanted the place of his mother's Eastwood, Congregationalist protestantism, or, indeed, any form of early twentieth century established religion with which he came into contact. The bells of church liturgies faded into insignificance, to be replaced eventually by the inner bells of human sexuality, and particularly of human orgasm.

Lawrence lost the overt exercise of Christian faith and practice, but the most central image of Christian doctrine, the resurrection celebrated in the Christian Easter, continued to fascinate him. He saw the need for a resurrection motif, resurrection experience within human life. Originally, after his early rejection of Christian orthodoxy, he sought this resurrective experience as a transient experience affecting each individual life, believing, for a while that he had found and expressed it in his 'coming through' to new experience of life in elopement and eventual marriage to Frieda Weekley. But at the very time Lawrence was entering into this life experience he was also witnessing the destruction of Europe as he had known it, the devastating destruction waged by World War One.

Lawrence saw clearly that propagandist attitudes that saw either side in the global contest as right,

and the other wrong, was simply false. His own treatment by and observance of English society during the war made him realize, if marriage to a German hadn't already done so, that the malaise of Europe was widespread. For a long time he sought to escape it, both with apocalyptic dreams of a new world born out of his own escapist Kananian community, and with a growing interest in images of political or religious or politico-religious renewal movements.

Yet even as he was writing *The Plumed Serpent* Lawrence saw that collective, societal regeneration, even if it were possible under the influence of de-Europeanized ancient religions, still provided no satisfactory comfort in the light of personal vulnerability. Failing health, failing sexuality, and a failing marriage led Lawrence finally to identify sexuality as the basis for satisfactory resurrection imagery. A sexless society, no less than a sexless marriage, was for Lawrence a recipe for obiteration, inauthenticity of life and of death. He recognized that the western world's failure to provide resurrective hope was in its fearful yet tenacious embrace of a creed of *nolle me tangere*, life and sex denying religion at the heart of life and sex denying western, European existence. And so he proposed once more, finally and definitively, that in a liberation of sexuality from prudery and squeamishness, society, or individuals

choosing thus liberated a path within society, could experience the resurrection that the moralistic Christ of his Congregationalist childhood had categorically failed to provide.

## APPENDIX :

### THE MANUSCRIPTS OF THE EARLY POETRY.

These manuscript designations are from the doctoral thesis of Carole Ferrier, "The Earlier Poems of D.H. Lawrence" and from Appendix A of Gail Porter Mandell's *The Phoenix Paradox*. For full details see bibliography.

1. Ferrier: MS 1. Formerly MS 1479, now MS LaL<sub>2</sub> in the University of Nottingham Library.

A Nottingham University College Notebook, size 17.5 x 11.25, ruled, with hard covers and also containing "Latin Notes". The first drafts ... run from the back of the book, and are all upside-down. These drafts are all in black ink with the exception of the first four; the conclusion of "A still Afternoon in School", "A Passing Bell", and "Weeknight Service", and the final three drafts which are all in pencil.<sup>1</sup>

2. Ferrier: MS 19.

Described by Ferrier as a manuscript (in Lawrence's hand) of 44 drafts of poems sent to Edward Garnett by Lawrence, some in late 1911. It is currently held in the New York Public Library.

3. MS 22.

A collection of nine manuscript and nine typescript poems sent to Amy Lowell, and now held in the Harvard University Library.

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1. Ferrier, "The Earlier Poems", p. 26.

## 4. DATING OF MS 1.

The first twenty-three poems in what appears to be the earliest group in the notebook, beginning with "Champions" and "Guelder-Roses", and ending with "Renaissance" are fair copies of poems which must have existed in one or more earlier manuscripts. These twenty-three poems are in an almost identical hand, and the next six are in bolder and larger writing, before we find smaller writing again for the next twenty poems.

"Weeknight Service" is in the middle group of six referred to by Ferrier.<sup>2</sup>

2. See "The Earlier Poems", p. 6.

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