THE POETRY OF D.H. LAWRENCE: EXTENDING ROMANTICISM

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PREFACE

I wish to thank the University of Adelaide for the grant of a George Murray Scholarship, which has enabled me to pursue my studies at the University of Leicester. To the staff of the Nottingham University Library and of the Nottingham Public Library, I am obliged for the courtesy and attention they have shown me, and for access to the valuable collections in their care.

To Mr Tony Slade, Professor R.P. Draper, Professor J.T. Boulton and Mr G.S. Fraser, all of whom have, at various times, undertaken to supervise my research, I am indebted for the general outlines followed in the thesis, and for innumerable details incorporated in the work. Dr G.K. Thurley, Bruce Letcher and Charles Thornbury have contributed in conversation to the ideas set down here; and I am grateful to Dr J.R. Watson and Stephen Reno for their advice on reading pertinent to my specialist research. My principal academic debts are to M.H. Abrams, whose work has frankly dominated my thinking on the Romantics; to Colin Clarke, whose book on Lawrence and Romanticism has been seminal to some of my arguments; and to Carole Ferrier, whose very thorough, as yet unpublished, variorum edition of all Lawrence's verse up to 1919 has been indispensable.

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INTRODUCTION

> The business of art is to reveal the relationship between man and his circumambient universe, at the living moment. [1]

> To carry on a tradition you must add something to the tradition. [2]

D.H.Lawrence was a Romantic poet, strongly influenced by the English Romantics, and adhering to patterns of thought commonly recognized as Romantic. The thesis aims to document these facts, and to demonstrate how Lawrence rejuvenated and extended his Romantic heritage. He left more than the imprint of his own temperament and preoccupations on this tradition. Guided, however, by his preoccupations and aided by his extensive reading in anthropology, he transformed in his poetry, technically and thematically, the relation between the artist or poet and Romantic Nature or the 'circumambient universe'. A new dimension of myth or religious feeling was encompassed in the poetry of Birds, Beasts and Flowers. His effort in extending this tradition and his means for doing so are in some ways comparable to the developments made by other modern authors. It is now easier to see his poetry as an integral part of the modern period. It is the assertion of this thesis only that Lawrence's poetry, quite apart from his writing in other genres, has a salient contribution to make to our very definition of 'modernity'.

The difficulty of defining 'Romanticism' has been avoided by defining instead Lawrence's affinities with four poets, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, and with these poets as represented in

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1. Phoenix, p.527. See Bibliography for full details of texts by Lawrence. Wherever possible, the Penguin paperback editions have been used, and are referred to by page-number.

2. Phoenix, p.543.

individual poems. Nevertheless, M.H.Abrams's description, in Natural Supernaturalism, of some modes of thought which he finds characteristically Romantic, has provided a critical key to Lawrence's poetry, and offered useful guidelines for a comparison between his own work and his predecessors':

> Much of what distinguishes writers I call "Romantic" derives from the fact that they undertook, whatever their religious creed or lack of creed, to save traditional concepts, schemes and values which had been based on the relation of the Creator to his creature and creation, but to re-formulate them within the prevailing two-term system of subject and object, ego and non-ego, the human mind or consciousness and its transactions with nature. Despite their displacement from a supernatural to a natural frame of reference, however, the ancient problems, terminology and ways of thinking about human nature and history survived, as the implicit distinctions and categories through which writers saw themselves and their world, and as the presuppositions and forms of their thinking about the condition, the milieu, the essential values and aspirations, and the history and destiny of the individual and of mankind. [1]

It is not proposed that his poetry can be subsumed under a single tradition, nor that Lawrence was more of a traditionalist and less of an iconoclast than has been supposed. But his changing attitude towards the Christianity of his upbringing is of importance to his poetry: in Look! We Have Come Through!, for instance, his adaptation of Christian terminology and symbolism bears a resemblance to Romanticism in general and to Shelley in particular. Moreover, his poetry can be understood as a long-lasting absorption and debate with the human implications of the subject/object dichotomy, such as Abrams describes. Lawrence was familiar with a dialectic of outer and inner worlds from his reading both of Romantic literature and of those anthropological works which penetrated the literary imagination in the second decade of this century. To the spark which leapt between these poles, Romantic and anthropological, Lawrence offered the medium of his intuition and the substance of his poetry. He produced, in Birds, Beasts and Flowers, and to an extent in the Last Poems, some of

1. M.H.Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature, (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p.13.

the most original and influential poetry written this century.

Despite the volume of evidence amassed in the thesis, it might be objected that the depth of Lawrence's knowledge of these poets and the extent of his engagement with fundamental Romantic precepts have been exaggerated. Some defense of the thesis may be made in general terms. Firstly, it was Lawrence's habit to refer, especially to poets, by a single poem or handful of poems, in which their work was epitomized. To read his comments on Keats, one might think him the author of no more than the "Ode to a Nightingale", and as an afterthought, the "Ode on a Grecian Urn". But if these poems are assumed to be the sum-total of Lawrence's knowledge of Keats, then his powers as a writer of practical criticism must have been truly prodigious. Secondly, Lawrence occasionally takes issue with major Romantic figures, not in their own persons, but as represented in the sensibilities of minor authors. His essay on Crèvecoeur in Studies in Classic American Literature is a kind of shadow-boxing with Coleridge and Wordsworth. Finally, his youthful enthusiasm for Carlyle should not be overlooked. From his reading of Sartor Resartus and On Heroes and Hero Worship [1] he derived his own positive term for communion with the phenomenal world, 'Wonder'. [2] Wonder, according to Carlyle's protagonist Teufelsdröckh, 'is the basis of Worship'; and religion is 'the thing a man does practically believe ... concerning his vital relations to this mysterious Universe'. But Carlyle also articulated the connection between the Romantic imagination and a transcendental idealism in which Nature was 'but the reflex of our inward Force ... the living visible Garment of God'. That the outer world was only an emblem for the inner, Lawrence would never accept, though he retains in his poetic

1. See E.T., (pseud. Jessie Chambers), D.H.Lawrence: A Personal Record, (London: Cass, 1965) (Second edition), p.101-102.

2. E.g., Phoenix, p.598.

lexicon such idealist and transcendentalist symbols as the reflected web and the wind of time. Carlyle was a kind of Coleridgian primer. From him Lawrence could glean the Romantic imagination's affiliations with 'high Platonic Mysticism' and German metaphysics. In him he could detect the Romantic substratum of Apocalypse, and the sense of a chthonic subconscious.[1] To dilate on all the points at which Lawrence's writing might reflect Carlyle's influence, on their attitudes to Science and Nescience, industrialism and the organic metaphor, would lead far beyond a consideration of Lawrence's poetry. Nevertheless, the degree to which Carlyle helped to mediate and formulate Romantic philosophy for Lawrence should be evident.

Other valuable clues to the extent of Lawrence's Romantic debt lay in the large bulk of manuscript evidence, which the student of Lawrence's poetry has at his disposal. Suggestions as to the provenance of a poem remain embedded in this material in the form of undisguised borrowings and verbal echoes. But the manuscripts suggested a second line of investigation. Might it not be possible, by correlating the data in these early versions with the wealth of biographical data, to construct an approximate chronology for the early verse? A start had already been made by Egon Tiedje. If this were expanded to encompass the whole of the early verse, it would then be possible, guided by the chronology, to examine on a systematic basis the development of the verse from its Romantic origins. This examination gave rise to a conviction that Lawrence had also turned to other, later nineteenth-century models, in attempting to shed what was merely Romantic accoutrement, and to find his own voice and concerns. To explicate his progress towards that voice, a short study was made of the influence on his verse of late Victorian, sub-Romantic poets, notably Swinburne, Meredith and Hardy.

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1. Thomas Carlyle, Sartor Resartus; On Heroes and Hero Worship, (London: Dent, 1908),pp.39-41, 49-50, 240, 247, 385.

The influence of such nineteenth-century figures as Carlyle and Meredith, advocates of sincerity, and the fact that the thesis was concerned not solely with finished art-works, but with drafts of poems, involved a further difficulty in critical procedure. It is a problem that assumes peculiar and large dimensions in Lawrence's case -- the question of the relation of the artist to his art, of the poet to the poem. In the early chapters the examination of manuscripts in order to construct a chronology has a frankly biographical bias. The note-books contain much corroborative and some first-hand information on the early life, and this is pointed out for its own interest. In addition, somewhere suspended between these closely packed note-books, the memoirs of friends and the richly autobiographical novels, there is to be had a moving literary experience, even if it is not the purely aesthetic experience of a finished art-work. It is an insight into what the year 1910 must have meant to Lawrence, a sentient and even prescient figure, moving at the centre of his own emotional turmoil and recording it continuously in these note-books. The thesis has attempted to evince something of this experience.

For the rest, a middle course has been steered between two extremes. The thesis has not, with Diana Trilling, rejected Lawrence's personal poetry as bad art, in the same breath accepting it as good information.[1] It was a similar limitation in taste that led F.R.Leavis to consign Look! We Have Come Through! to the psychoanalyst and sensational biographer, while reserving the novels as the rightful province of the literary critic.[2] By virtue of its very publication, the poem-sequence has to be considered primarily as poetry, as an art-work, even if the conclusion must be that its art is inferior to that of the novels. On the other hand, the thesis has not subscribed to

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1. The Portable D.H.Lawrence, ed. Diana Trilling, (New York: Viking Press, 1947), p.16.

2. F.R.Leavis, D.H.Lawrence, Novelist, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964) (First published, 1955), p.153.

the purist's repudiation of any poetry with a personal or autobiographical content. It cannot, with D.S.Savage, condemn poems simply because they 'point ... outward to an external centre in the history of their author', and are therefore 'disintegral'.[1] To appreciate Lawrence's poetry, we must appreciate one of his aims as a poet, to 'make up a biography of an emotional and inner life'.[2] Our critical ban should only fall on those poems where the personal details needed in order to understand a poem are not included in the poem itself, or are not supplied by the immediate,consolidating context of other poems. The second proviso is an important pre-requisite to the understanding and the assessment of these poems; for, as Graham Hough says, they constitute not so much an aggregate of self-sufficient items as an interdependent whole, not so much single poems as a poetry.[3]

Despite the range of subject-matter, form and tone in Lawrence's poetry, there is a remarkable continuity in certain of his themes, or in his basic poetic aptitude. His early verse is immediately concerned with the exact physical texture of the phenomenal world. It exhibits an abundance of sensuous feeling, resorting frequently to synaesthetic imagery after the Romantic fashion. Almost from the first there are stirrings of a powerful naturalism, given life by Lawrence's intimate knowledge of rural Nottinghamshire, discipline by what Mark Schorer calls his 'botanizing impulse',[4] and style by a painterly eye for colour. All these qualities are present in Lawrence's first compositions, "Campions" and "Guelder Roses".

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1. D.S.Savage, The Personal Principle: Studies in Modern Poetry, (London: Routledge, 1944), p.135.
2. "Preface to Collected Poems", The Complete Poems of D.H.Lawrence, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts, (London: Heinemann, 1972) (Third reprint), p.27: hereafter referred to as Poems, ed. Pinto.
3. Graham Hough, The Dark Sun: A Study of D.H.Lawrence, (London: Duckworth, 1956), p.191.
4. Mark Schorer, "Introduction", Poste Restante: A Lawrence Travel Calendar, ed. H.T.Moore, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), p.4-5.

The guelder rose is taken as an emblem of pre-Raphaelite beauty, deathly in its spiritual loveliness and its foregoing of a flower's sexual function. As a botanist Lawrence is concentrating on the florets of the flower-head: the florets of the corona are several times larger and much more attractive than those at the heart of the cluster; but lacking pistils or stamens, the florets of the corona, unlike those at the heart, are infertile:

> * Such pearled zones of fair sterility
> Girdling with jewels the meanness of common things
> Preaching in sad-moving silence a heart-hungry purity
> In a day they are lost in the nothingness purity brings.
> ....
> In the garnering autumn, a glow of immortal fruit
> -- Heavy hanging clusters of crimson red --
> Swings round the stems of the many, insignificant, mute
> Life lovers, who could hope for no rank among the pallid dead.* [1]

In preferring campions to guelder roses, Lawrence restates his predilection for a more commonplace playfulness, sexiness and downright fertility, associated with the proletariat, as against an aristocratic, sterile purity. The association of the working class with crude vitality, and with the potential for new life, persisted as a staple of Lawrence's imagination: it is present in "St Mark", for example. But after the War, he could never have entertained the idea of life-lovers being many, insignificant or mute. Again, in the adolescent "Campions", he likes the sexual feeling attached to the flowers, but finds it necessary to veil them in a fragile, rosy and Keatsian mist, at once demure and suggestive. The most successful of these early stanzas is perhaps the first, strikingly transposing its imagery for flowers, fields and sky:

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1. MS 1, 2. Deviations from the text in Poems, ed. Pinto, p.855-56, have been checked against the original manuscript. All quotations enclosed in asterisks are taken from manuscripts. In all manuscript quotations of Lawrence's poetry, lines, phrases, words and letters inserted in square brackets have been scored out or emended.

green clouded
* The unclouded seas of bluebells have ebbed and passed,
And the pale stars of forget-me-nots have climbed to the last
Rung of their life[/'s/]-ladder's fragile height.
Now the trees with interlocked hands and arms uplifted hold
back the light. *

The stanza is an exercise in pure Romanticism. Remembering Wordsworth's 'uncertain heaven, received/ Into the bosom of the steady lake', or the cliffs of the Wye valley that 'connect/ The landscape with the quiet of the sky', or Shelley's 'tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean', the stanza's mingling of the elements might be regarded as characteristically Romantic. Swinburne's "Laus Veneris" can be cited:

Where tides of grass break into foam of flowers.

The young Lawrence has picked up Shelley's habit, and Meredith's after him, of using stars as a metaphor for flowers. As in the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" the stars are seen rising and fading, or very nearly fading, 'into the light of common day'. Even the striking image of the forget-me-nots as ladders has a precedent in The Prelude (VIII,544-49). While showing some glimmerings of his own later concerns, Lawrence's earliest poetry is saturated with Romantic feeling and imagery.

How can one be certain these are his earliest poems? One answer is that Lawrence himself says so:

> The first poems I ever wrote, if poems they were, was when I was nineteen ... I remember perfectly the Sunday afternoon when I perpetrated those first two pieces: "To Guelder-Roses" and "To Campions"; in springtime, of course, and, as I say, in my twentieth year. Any young lady might have written them and been pleased with them ... [1]

Confirmation of the reminiscence can be found by turning to evidence remarkably preserved in the early manuscripts. Here, too, other answers may be found to questions concerning the chronology and development of Lawrence's early verse.

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.27.

CHAPTER I THE COLLEGE NOTE-BOOKS

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> All my poems are in little university notebooks and a brown Tagebuch of Frieda's ... 2 or 3 black, small note-books with red backs ... [and] the Nottingham University arms on them. [1]

This survey of Lawrence's early manuscripts is, for the most part, concerned with two University College note-books, which contain the bulk of Lawrence's poetry up to the end of 1911. The first note-book has been variously described as the King note-book, MS 1479 and MS E 317; the second as the Clarke note-book, C.N.B. and LaP 25. Here and elsewhere the King note-book is referred to as MS 1, and the Clarke note-book as MS 5, in accordance with Carole Ferrier's descriptive bibliography.[2] There have been articles devoted to the description of both MS 1,[3] and of MS 5,[4] but these have proved incomplete or inadequate. The transcriptions of drafts of poems and the notes in The Complete Poems of D.H.Lawrence are now recognized, even after the partial rescension and expansion in the third reprint, as standing in need of a serious, full-scale revision. There are in this area only two authoritative studies: an unpublished doctoral dissertation by Carole Ferrier, which collects all the drafts of Lawrence's poetry up to 1919 in a variorum text;[5] and an article by

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1. The Collected Letters of D.H.Lawrence, ed. Harry T.Moore, (London: Heinemann, 1962), p.398-99, 16 Dec. 1915.
2. Carole Ferrier, "D.H.Lawrence's Pre-1920 Poetry: A Descriptive Bibliography of Manuscripts, Typescripts and Proofs", D.H.Lawrence Review, VI (1973), 333-359.
3. Vivian de Sola Pinto, "D.H.Lawrence: Letter-Writer and Craftsman in Verse: Some Hitherto Unpublished Material", Renaissance and Modern Studies, I (1957), 5-34.
4. F.Warren Roberts, "D.H.Lawrence, the Second 'Poetic Me': Some New Material", RMS, XIV (1970), 4-15.
5. Carole Ferrier, "The Earlier Poetry of D.H.Lawrence: A Variorum Text, Comprising All Extant Incunabula and Published Poems Up to and Including the Year 1919", Unpublished Ph.D., Auckland, 1971.

Egon Tiedje, attempting to draw up a chronology for the drafts contained in MS 1.[1] Unfortunately, Ferrier and Tiedje have recently come out against the logic of each other's scholarly procedures;[2] and an account of their differences would seem to be a necessary preface to any further chronological survey of the note-books.

Tiedje's method was:

> .. to construct a grid of definite dates within the MS, based on poems referring to certain events or associated with publication dates ... The gaps in this basic structure could then be filled in by relating other poems to these chronological points of reference.[3]

Tiedje is wary of jumping to the conclusion that the sequence of the poems between these 'points of reference' will be the order in which they were composed. He is surely right in his assumption that some general correspondence will exist between the two, that the poems were not copied into the book at one time, or without regard to their order of composition. Neither does he presume that the poems were composed directly into the note-book (though this may be the case for some poems); he is aware that foul papers lie behind MS 1. But Tiedje does convincingly demonstrate that the experience described in "Baby Songs" must have preceded the writing of the poems by no more than a few days; and it is an interesting speculation that this practice may have been a common one with Lawrence. It is possible that "Dream" ("Dream-Confused") may have been written under similar circumstances, when the excitement and emotion of the incident were still tellingly present to the poet. Yet it seems that, in at least one instance, Tiedje's confident reliance on points of reference has led him to obscure the order in which drafts were copied into the note-book. Moreover, any attempt to transfer his method to MS 5 shows it to be even less applicable in this second instance. In MS 5 the order in

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1. Egon Tiedje, "D.H.Lawrence's Early Poetry: The Composition-Dates of the Drafts in MS E 317", DHLR, IV (1971), 227-252.
2. Carole Ferrier and Egon Tiedje, "D.H.Lawrence's Pre-1920 Poetry: The Textual Approach: An Exchange", V (1972), 149-55.
3. Tiedje, DHLR, IV, 234.

which the poems were copied out is virtually indisputable; but it is of little value in suggesting the dates of the original drafts that lie behind these copies. For one section of MS 1, between "Renaissance" and "Dream", the points of reference do indicate a satisfyingly close correspondence between the order of experience, the order of composition and the sequence of the note-books. But Tiedje has laid too much emphasis on the possible correspondence between this sequence and a progression in time.

Ferrier, on the other hand, is wholly sceptical of the biographical approach. Her method would be to assemble all the extant manuscripts (a task she already has well in hand), while making allowance for those manuscripts which have been lost. Then, from stylistic evidence and from publication dates, a history of all drafts of any one poem could be prepared. In her opinion:

> The order of composition of the poems (even if this could be established conclusively), is in any case of far less interest than the development of each individual poem through its many stages, for it is in this that the genius and skill of the poet and the development of his craft are apparent. [1]

Stylistic evidence, however, would seem to offer data less verifiable than the recollections of the most casual memoirist. Ferrier's individual chronologies would be sketchy indeed; for, given the wealth of Laurentian biography, the terminus a quo for a poem in a certain experience is likely to be more determinate than the terminus ad quem, which can hardly be identified with a publication date.

Implicit in these two approaches are two differing attitudes to Lawrence's poetry. The one sees Lawrence's genius in the development of his technical poetic skills; the other views his poetic development as being inextricably entwined with the events of his early life. It is true that Lawrence gained an increasing facility in writing a discursive style of semi-formal verse. This led, among

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1. Ferrier, DHLR, V, 151-52.

other things, to those war poems which are one of the principal embarrassments of the Rhyming Poems. Contrariwise, it might be argued that what drove Lawrence to vers libre, and hence to the final achievement of mature verse-form, was the very pressure produced by the crises of his life and by his need to explore these crises, expanding his awareness of them freely and wholly in expressionist verse. Lawrence himself apparently believed that each poem he wrote had something of his demon in it; that buried somewhere in each immature scrap of verse he had jotted down was an element of psychological truth; and that the purpose of all the unrelenting, hastily roughed out drafts of his poems was not to develop his skill as a poet, nor even to work a poem into acceptable form, but to refine that elemental demon or truth lurking in the original experience. This belief is stated, more or less, in his "Introduction to Collected Poems"; though it must be admitted that his revisions for the Collected Poems are not invariably consistent with it. Nevertheless, it is the contention of this thesis that the estimation of the early poems implied in the "Introduction" is valid; that their main and enduring value lies in the painful and difficult poems (those to Miriam, for example), whose revision was the probing of personal experience. On these grounds it has been thought worthwhile to prepare an approximate, biographical chronology of the early verse, which, if it will not put beyond dispute the dates on which Lawrence wrote his poems, will give a sense of their chronological development and of their relation to the events of his early life.

Tiedje's procedure may not be logically watertight, but it leads to profitable fields of enquiry: how Lawrence manipulated experience in his poetry, and how accurate or how fictional was the picture of his early life, implied by his re-ordering of the verse in Collected Poems to form a verse-autobiography. The remainder of this chapter will, therefore, be concerned, firstly with the amendment and

elaboration of Tiedje's chronology; and secondly, as the use of MS 1 dove-tails into the use of MS 5 for fair-copies, around September 1909, with the extension of this chronological analysis to include MS 5 and such other manuscripts as contribute to our knowledge of Lawrence's poetry and life, up to the end of 1911.

There seem to be two flaws in Tiedje's analysis. Firstly, he duplicates the error, first made by Vivian de Sola Pinto in his article, of reading the poem entitled "The [Solitary] Crow" and the two passages of verse, beginning 'Far-off the lily statues stand tall in the garden at home' and 'In another county the poplars shake shadows over the ponds' respectively, as three separate fragments. In fact, as the full text reproduced below will prove,[1] these constitute one poem, unifying the three poles of Lawrence's early life -- school, his dying mother and the affair with Miriam -- by a skein of feeling and imagery. The confusion seems to have arisen as a result of Lawrence's later utilization of the three parts of the poem for the openings of three separate poems, "In Church", "At the Front" and "The North Country". But, as will be seen, this disintegration of an integral poem was a common practice with Lawrence.

The second mistake occurs in the sequence in which the poems are supposed to have been copied into the note-book. The reader is advised to refer to the 'Chronological Chart' appended to Tiedje's article.[2] The front pages of MS 1 had been used by Lawrence for the course in Latin, which he attended during his first term at University College (September - December 1906), and for French exercises. He evidently turned the note-book upside-down and, leafing forward from the back, where there were already translations from Horace and the beginnings of a French exercise, began copying out poems on the first

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1. P.91-92.

2. Tiedje, RMS, IV, 250-52.

clean recto page.[1] There, true to his subsequent reminiscence in 1928, are "Campions" and "Guelder Roses". He continued writing, whether at one time or on many separate occasions it is impossible to determine, until the second draft of "Dream", by which point he had reached the French exercises at the front of the book.

Squeezed into the spaces left in the note-book, the remaining poems fall into three groups:

1) "Sorrow(I)", "Grief", "Brooding", "Loss", "Bereavement". These poems, or jottings for poems, concerning the mother's death, are written in pencil in a small hand among the French exercises at the front of the book. Lawrence seems to have leafed from the front of the book looking for spaces, for the poems are written the right way up. Therefore, the above should be the correct order, not, as Tiedje has it, reading from the back of the book forward, "Bereavement", "Brooding", "Loss", "Sorrow(I)", "Grief".

2) "The Crow", "Honeymoon(I)", "Sorrow(II)", "Last Words to Muriel". Lawrence turned the note-book upside-down again and inserted these poems among the translations of Horace at the back. The first three are written in pencil in a similar small hand. "Last Words to Muriel" is written in a distinctive black ink on the verse page facing "Campions". The last two stanzas of the former are written transversely over the top of the first stanzas of the latter. Both "Honeymoon(I)" and "Sorrow(II)" have been corrected at a few points with this same black ink. Therefore "Last Words to Muriel" was written into the note-book after those two poems, and probably after "The Crow".

3) "Honeymoon(II)". Since alterations in the pencil version of "Honeymoon(I)" turn up as original readings in the ink version of "Honeymoon(II)", this must be the later draft. A consultation of

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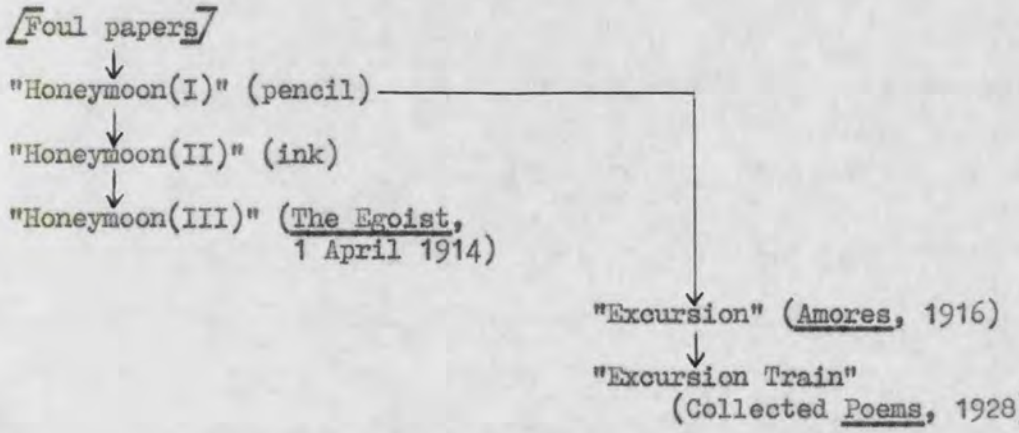
1. I.e., recto considered upside-down, not right way up.

The Complete Poems, however, is confusing: "Honeymoon(I)" is closer to the final version,[1] whereas "Honeymoon(II)" resembles the first published version.[2] A probable explanation is that, in preparing the volume Amores, Lawrence overlooked "Honeymoon(II)", enmeshed in the French exercises at the front of the book. The development of the poem can be represented by this stemma:



Group 1) could have been composed and written down at the one time; they seem to form a unit. Group 2) was probably written into MS 1 in the order shown, and the first three poems in the group, having been copied in pencil in a similar hand, may have been written in at one time. In that case, since the third poem in Group 2), "Sorrow(II)", is clearly a revision of "Sorrow(I)", Group 2) must have been copied after Group 1). "Last Words to Muriel" and "Honeymoon(II)" are written in the same distinctive black ink, tending to confirm that these were the last poems copied into the note-book. On biographical evidence, the original versions of "The Crow" and "Honeymoon" might have been expected to pre-date the poems concerned with the mother's death. That they do not precede them in the manuscript sequence is one indication that this sequence does not follow the probable order of composition. The sequence in which poems were copied into MS 1 is:

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.116.
2. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.930.

Sequence	Title in MS	Title in CP	MS No.
1	*Campions		1
2	*Guelder Roses		2
3	From a College Window		3
4	Study		4
5	The Last Hours of a Holiday	Last Hours	5
6	*The Fall of Day		6
7	Evening of a Week-Day	Twilight	7
8	Eastwood -- Evening	The Little Town at Evening	8
9	The Piano	Piano	9
10	Lightning		10
11	*Married in June		11
	/page missing from note-book/		
12	'Into a deep pond, an old sheep dip'	The Wild Common (concluding stanzas)	
13	*The Worm Turns		14
14	On the Road	On the March	15
15	*The Death of the Baron		16
16	Song	Flapper	17
17	*Love Comes Late		18
18	A Tarantella	Tarantella	19
19	*Song ('Up in the high')		20
	/page torn from note-book/		
20	Cherry Robbers		22
21	In a Boat		23
22	Dim Recollections	Narcissus	24
23	Renaissance	Renascence	
24	*A Failure		
25	A Winter's Tale		
26	*A Decision		
27	Dog-Tired		
28	*A Train at Night		
29	Violets for the Dead	Violets	
30	*BABY SONGS/ Ten Months Old		
31	*/Trailing Clouds		
32	Triolet	Birdcage Walk	
33	Coming Home from School /Rondeau Redoublé	Rondeau of a Conscientious Objector	
34	*Eve		
35	*After School		
36	School	A Snowy Day in School	
37	*A Snowy Day at School		
38	Letters from Town/ The Almond Tree	Letter from Town: The Almond Tree	
39	Letter from Town/The City	Letter from Town: On a Grey Morning in March	
	/page torn from note-book, fragment 'Letters f...'/		

40	Discipline	
41	A Still Afternoon in School(I)	Dreams Old and Nascent: Old, Dreams Old and Nascent: Nascent
42	A Still Afternoon in School/Dreams Old and Nascent(II)	Dreams Old and Nascent: Old, Dreams Old and Nascent: Nascent
43	Reading in the Evening	Reading a Letter
44	MOVEMENTS/ 1. A Baby Running Barefoot	Baby Running Barefoot
45	/2. A Baby Asleep After Pain	
46	/3. The Body Awake	Virgin Youth
47	*/4. A Man at Play on the River	
48	/5. The Review of the Scots Guards	Guards
49	*Restlessness	
50	A Passing Bell	
51	Lost	Turned Down
52	After the Theatre	Embankment at Night, Before the War: Outcasts
53	Brotherhood(I)	Embankment at Night, Before the War: Charity
54	The End of Another Home-Holiday(I)	End of Another Home Holiday
55	End of Another Home-Holiday (II)	End of Another Home Holiday
56	Brotherhood(II)	Embankment at Night, Before the War: Charity
57	THE SONGLESS/ 1. Today	Hyde Park at Night: Clerks
58	/2. Tomorrow	Picadilly Circus at Night: Street-Walkers
59	*'When on the autumn roses'	
60	Amour	Autumn Sunshine
61	At the Window	
62	Weeknight Service	
63	*Fooled	
64	Dream(I)	Dream-Confused
65	Dream(II)	Dream-Confused
66	Sorrow(I)	
67	*Grief	
68	*Brooding	
69	*Loss	
70	*Bereavement	
71	The Crow	In Church, At the Front, The North Country
72	Honeymoon(I)	Excursion Train
73	Sorrow(II)	
74	Last Words to Muriel	Last Words to Miriam
75	Honeymoon(II)	Excursion Train [1]

1. Asterisked poems do not appear in Collected Poems (CP) in any form. Poems whose titles are not repeated appear in CP with the same title, unless asterisked. 'MS No.' refers to numbering within the MS itself, in ink, probably in Lawrence's hand.

The numbering within MS 1 itself, probably done by Lawrence, adds some confirmation to this sequence. Possibly, as Tiedje suggests, the numbered poems (1-22) form some kind of unit, such as the poems written by Lawrence in Eastwood, before taking up his teaching appointment in Croydon. Certainly no poems that can be definitely traced to the Croydon period occur before MS 1, 30.

Lawrence cannot have copied poems into the note-book before 1907, when he had given up his Latin course at Nottingham University College.[1] By his own account, he had been writing poems since spring 1905, although he did not begin collecting the poems into a note-book until he 'was twenty-one, and went to Nottingham University as a day student'. His varying testimony concerning the poems prior to this date is that he gave them to Jessie Chambers and never saw them again, or that he burned them;[2] or there is W.E.Hopkin's portrait of the poet as a young man, trailing clouds of poetry, 'odds and ends of verses and whole poems on odd bits of paper which he usually left lying about'.[3] The truth, however, seems to be that the poems were carefully preserved in his College note-books. Moreover, although Jessie Chambers avers that Lawrence was writing poems into his note-books during his years at College,[4] MS 1 seems at first to have been not only reserved for fair copies, but to have been arranged, with some care, into thematic groups. "From a College Window" and "Study"; "The Fall of Day", "Evening of a Week-Day" and "Eastwood -- Evening"; "Song" and "Loves Comes Late"; and "Song" ('Up in the high') and "Cherry Robbers" are grouped thematically; as are "In a Boat", "Dim Recollections" and "Renaissance", with their air of sentimental valediction to the Vale of Erewash. These last poems would seem to

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1. E.T., p.75.
2. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.849-50.
3. D.H.Lawrence: A Composite Biography, ed. Edward Nehls, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), Vol.I, p.70.
4. E.T., p.81.

indicate a period of transition to the new life at Croydon (though the same ink appears to be used up to MS 1, 43). Moreover, the grouping of these poems suggests that they may have been copied into the note-book at the one time, or on a very few occasions. It is plausible that Lawrence copied all his poems into one note-book for convenience sake, before leaving for Croydon. In that case the sequence of the poems (1-22) should have no chronological significance, except where chronological order was intentionally reproduced (as in "Campions" and "Guelder Roses").

Tiedje's speculations about the Eastwood poems can be supplemented. "The Wild Common", Lawrence himself suggested, was written very early, around 1905; but parts of the poem, describing the young man's love of his own body, recall some remarks in a letter written during summer 1908, and look forward to "The Body Awake".[1] In addition, the poem reflects some knowledge of philosophical theories of cognition, especially those of Locke; and these theories were a part of Lawrence's College course, during September 1906-June 1907, on 'The Principles of Teaching'. 'Elementary Psychology' included 'the phenomena of mind, viz., sensation, memory, imagination, perception, inference, generalization and the assimilation of knowledge'.[2] "The Wild Common" is one of the most mature of the Eastwood poems, and a date in 1907 or 1908 would be appropriate. If the exact date cannot be fixed, the place can. It is Beauvale Brook, where it runs behind a hawthorn hedge just north of the Breach, Eastwood:

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.850; Letters, ed. Moore, p.22, 30 July 1908; and cf. The Trespasser, p.41.
2. Émile Delavenay, D.H.Lawrence, L'Homme et la Genese de Son Oeuvre: Les Années de Formation, 1885-1919, (Paris: Klincksieck, 1969), Vol. II, p.661.

> .. the brook, with the old sheep-bridge going over into the meadows ... we used to bathe from there in the dipping-hole, where the sheep were dipped, just near the fall from the old mill-dam, where the water rushed.
>
> The old sheep-bridge where I used to swing as a boy is now an iron affair. The brook where we caught minnows now runs on a concrete bed. [1]

As the second quotation establishes, it is also the scene for "Dim Recollections". Claude Sinzelle points out that the scene recurs in The White Peacock;[2] as indeed it does in Sons and Lovers.[3] In another letter written to Blanche Jennings in the summer of 1908, Lawrence gives a mise en scène for hay-gathering in the fields hired by the Chambers family at Greasley:

> There are two great fields at Greasley, running to the top of a sharp irregular hillside, with the Baron's -- the Vicar's garden on one side, and low, wild rushy fields on the other; with the immense grey church tower sleeping quietly, with no sound of bells, behind silver poplar trees; with big lime trees, murmuring and full of the scent of nectar, stretching along; with the hillside, scattered with trees, and a thick wood at the top, rising in front, and the white road climbing up it, with little carts creeping along to Nottingham ... You might have found me crawling from side to side on the horse-rake, bending, with a jingle as the tines fell behind the winrow; you might have heard the whirr of the file as I sharpen the bristling machine knife under the hornbeam... [4]

The description has many points of similarity to "The Death of the Baron", and may, therefore, have been connected with its composition. Having completed his Teacher's Certificate, Lawrence spent from July to October 1908 waiting for a favourable appointment, unemployed but not, Jessie assures us, idle.[5] Her immediate implication is that he was occupied with the writing of The White Peacock; but presumably the summer of 1908 was an equally golden opportunity for setting down many of his early poems.

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1. Phoenix, pp.135, 822.
2. Claude M. Sinzelle, The Geographical Background of the Early Work of D.H.Lawrence, (Paris: Didier, 1964), pp.49, 64.
3. Sons and Lovers, p.31.
4. Letters, ed. Moore, p.23-24, 30 July 1908.
5. E.T., p.89.

During this summer, Jessie recollects, he was also active in questioning Christian dogmas; but he himself, and this in 1908, recalls losing his faith during his first year at College.[1] "Eastwood -- Evening", in which the poet repines at the thought of the 'watchful head' of the mothering church and 'the wings of home ... closed against me who beneath them was born', could have been written with reference to the summer of 1907, or of 1908. In the same vein, the simile in "Lightning", describing the girl's face, 'Pale as a dead god with love and fear', is unlikely to have been penned by a staunch believer. Its line of thought leads rather to the 'pale Galilean' of Swinburne's "Hymn to Proserpine".

To Jessie Chambers the most important date in A Personal Record was Easter 1906, when the intervention of Lawrence's mother was instrumental in what Jessie called 'the slaughter of the foetus in the womb', the destruction of the developing relationship between Lawrence and herself. The simple happiness of "Song", 'Up in the high/ Swinging cherry-tree', would seem to belong to before this date, whereas the more complex and troubled "Cherry Robbers" would come after. Jessie herself remarked bitterly of this intrusion, 'you can see it follows his first poetic efforts'.[2] It was not until later that Lawrence began to accuse her of sexual coldness, writing to her on her twenty-first birthday, in January 1907, 'Look, you are a nun ...'[3] Hence, the dramatization of this conflict in "Lightning" is unlikely to have been written before 1908. The early version of "In a Boat" is largely a complaint about the girl's nervousness, though the boat should be read as symbolic of some kind of love-making, as in George Eliot's The Mill on the Floss. This version also refers to Jessie's

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1. E.T., p.83; Letters, ed. Moore, p.27-28, 1 Sept. 1908.
2. E.T., pp.65-69, 71.
3. E.T., p.138-40.

unpopularity, which had annoyed Lawrence quite early in the history of their friendship:[1]

* Star-shadows shine, Love
How many stars in your bowl?
How many shinings in your soul --?
Only mine, Love, mine?

. . . .

Sit still, Love, sit still!
Is your light tossed over a wave?
Is a little trouble its grave?
Not yet. -- But soon.

Hush, I'll draw home, Love
On the shore thou shalt clutch me
And let no fear-cloud smutch me
My quaint little gnome. *

Jessie remembered the poem as belonging to the Eastwood period, writing of it to Helen Corke, after a version had appeared in the English Review (October 1910): 'You are another star in my bowl, one that neither David nor I saw when he wrote the poem'.[2] The version in MS 1 has been revised, at some later date, to conclude on a more blatantly sexual note:

* What then, love, if soon
Your light is tossed over a wave?
Will you count the darkness a grave
Love, and swoon, swoon?

Say no, you'll be strong, love!
Say you'll not mourn lying prone
In this our boat, alone,
Enduring my wrong love?
Say you'll be strong, love
To bid me begone. *

Two of the poems, "Tarantella" and "Love Comes Late", have sea-side settings, and it might be tempting to refer them to the Lawrences' holidays at Mablethorpe, Robin Hood's Bay and Flamborough in August 1906, 1907 and 1908. "Tarantella", which has no obvious place among the Eastwood poems, seems to have originated in a meditation on the

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1. E.T., p.131; after a holiday in Mablethorpe, August 1906.
2. Nottingham University Library, LaM1, 5 Oct. 1910.

legendary Neckars, and in an attempt to find some psychological basis for the legend. Rupert Birkin in the "Prologue to Women in Love" had 'pondered the stories of the wistful, limpid creatures who watch ceaselessly, hoping to gain a soul';[1] and in "Tarantella" the respective merits of a body as against a soul are debated, the desired conclusion being sexual, as in "The Wild Common". Thematically, the poem can be seen to belong to its period. Spurning her soulful human lover, the woman dances a wild, mocking tarantella, half designed to infuriate the man, and half to draw 'a white naked sea-god' to her. 'Whoever fell in love with the soul of a man?' she asks, longing instead for 'the answering sting of hot blood in the veins of a man'. The poor specimen of manhood whom she thus harangues is, in one version, seen sitting in a 'shadow-tent of towering stone', a shadow bringing to mind the church.[2] Suggesting so many points of similarity to "The Forsaken Merman", "Tarantella" might be considered a prologue to the action of Matthew Arnold's poem, which Lawrence certainly knew.[3]

"Love Comes Late" is a happy love poem, though there is no reason to suppose that it is addressed to Jessie. Considering the feminine imagery of a bridal veil, it is conceivable that the poem was written for Lawrence's younger sister Ada, speaking in her voice, just as in "Tarantella" he had adopted a female persona. Certainly in "The Piano" Lawrence pictures --

* .. my sister at home in the old front room
Singing love's first surprised gladness alone in the gloom. *

-- and "Song" ("Flapper") might be yet another portrayal of his sister's awakening to love. Nevertheless, when he first noticed his sister's apparent freedom to keep company with the opposite sex, his

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1. Phoenix II, p.103.
2. Ferrier, MS 19.
3. Studies in Classic American Literature, p.140.

reaction was, according to Jessie, one of irritation: his mother's jealousy seemed reserved for him alone. His annoyance appears to date from early 1906;[1] thus "Love Comes Late", "The Piano" and "Song" ("Flapper") must have been composed after this date. Probably the third of these was written in 1906, as Lawrence recollects, 'I once thought Flapper was a little masterpiece: when I was twenty'.[2]

Tiedje proposes that "A Failure" recounts making friends with Hilda Mary, the baby of the Jones family, with whom Lawrence boarded in Croydon: it would thus be his first poem written in, or about, Croydon. So fragmentary is it, however, that it is equally likely to narrate a sexual encounter:

> * Alas! Tossed back in my heart's swirl
> Is she. *

Poems depicting a woman's sexual coldness and resistance cluster around this period of transition -- "Lightning", "A Decision" and "Eve" -- a fact laconically remarked on by Lawrence in some autobiographical notes for a publisher:

> At the age of twenty-three, left Nottingham College and went for the first time to London, to be a teacher in a boy's school in Croydon, £90. Already the intense physical dissatisfaction with Miriam. [3]

Related to these poems is "A Winter's Tale", on the face of it 'fictional' and imitative of Hardy;[4] but the poem may have some factual basis. Back at home in Eastwood for the Christmas holidays, Lawrence was enjoying weather --

> I love the snow, and ice, and the dull orange skies! ... even the chaffinches and the bull-chaffinch which have darted in and out of the mist all day seem dulled by the weather ... [5]

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1. E.T., p.63.
2. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.850.
3. Phoenix II, p.301.
4. For Lawrence's distinction between 'personal' and 'fictional' poems, see Poems, ed. Pinto, p.27; the Hardy poem which "A Winter's Tale" most closely resembles is "'I need not go'".
5. Letters, ed. Moore, p.45, 31 Dec. 1908.

-- which was very similar to the poem's atmospherics:

> I cannot see her since the mist's white scarf
> Obscures the [purple black] wood, & dull orange sky.

Jessie mentions no new quarrel between herself and Lawrence; but neither does she recall the holiday with much enthusiasm:

> We had no uproarious charades that Christmas, the spirit was lacking. [1]

It was probably this Christmas that Jessie, Lawrence and Louie Burrows together made an excursion through the snow to Beauvale Abbey.[2] It seems that they did something together during this break, for Lawrence afterwards wrote to Louie:

> Do you think J., you and I make a happy triangle? ... somebody has a bad time when we three meet. Do you not feel it? It gets between my teeth. [3]

Reading "A Winter's Tale" as a poem to Jessie, one would have to interpret the message of the last line -- 'Why does she come -- she knows what I have to tell?' -- as not the poignant farewell one might have expected, but a reversion to the old theme of why he could not love his childhood sweet-heart;

> .. this miserable story. I am sick and tired of the whole thing. [4]

Lawrence returned to Croydon with a new determination:

> Since coming back I have settled down to write in earnest -- now verses -- now Laetitia. [5]

The fruits of this good resolution were the "Baby Songs", the school poems, the "Letters from Town" and "Movements". Also, since Lawrence was working on the last draft of The White Peacock during 1909, it

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1. E.T., p.152.
2. E.T., p.114-15.
3. Lawrence in Love: Letters to Louie Burrows, ed. James T. Boulton, (Nottingham: University of Nottingham Press, 1968), p.26, 9 Feb. 1909.
4. E.T., p.146.
5. Letters, ed. Moore, p.47, 20 Jan. 1909. About this time Lawrence also read a considerable amount of contemporary verse.

is likely that, at some time in the year the first draft of "Love on the Farm"[1] -- a poem based on chapters 2 and 5 in Book I of that novel[2] -- was taking shape in his mind.

Helen Corke has recorded that, by the end of his second term at Davidson Road Boys' School, Lawrence had overcome his teaching problems there.[3] It seems he did encounter difficulties during his first term,[4] which were duly vanquished in the second: 'I have tamed my wild beasts'.[5] This new feeling of ascendancy over the task of teaching liberated him to write about it. His sense of camaraderie with his fellow-teacher, Louie Burrows, comes through in his letters of the time. Odd points in the letters --

> Louisa, do any of your youngsters limp to school;
> through snow or the fine weather, limp to school
> because they are crippled ... from the great mens
> boots they wear which are split across? 6

-- are echoed in his poems:

> * Down the glad streets, pinched waifs in ill-assorted clothes.
> -- Shuffling his ragged boots, there comes one boy late
> -- When he lifts his foot, I see the pad of his soaked
> stocking under his toes. * 7

Then there is the school itself --

> .. I have to cross a piece of wild waste land on my way to
> School -- land where the grass is wild and trodden into mud --
> where the brick-layer's hammer chinks, chinks the funeral bell
> of my piece of waste land -- and there the mud is inexpressible. 8

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1. MS 5, 7, "A Beloved".
2. See The White Peacock, p.107, for a description of the barn in "Love on the Farm".
3. Helen Corke, "D.H.Lawrence As I Saw Him", RMS, IV (1960), 5-6.
4. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.22, 16 Nov. 1908.
5. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.30, 28 Feb. 1909.
6. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.34, 28 March 1909.
7. MS 1, 37, "A Snowy Day at School".
8. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.31, 11 March 1909.

-- described again in "Coming Home from School/ Rondeau Redoublé":

* I carry my anger sullenly across the waste lands:
. . . .
I pick my way [where/over] the thread-bare grass which is pressed
Into mud: the space shrinks in the builder's hands.
. . . .
All day the clink of the hammer has distressed ...

Conceivably, the 'fictional' poem, "A Passing Bell", may have been prompted by some incident with which Lawrence, as a teacher, had contact.

Lawrence could be friends with Jessie, too, at a distance. The "Letters from Town", for instance, are quite extravagantly tender in their mode of address (though the subsequent alteration is characteristically ambivalent):

* You, little love, the foremost, in a flowered gown
You with patient tenderness amid the glitter of laughter
You with loose hands of abandonment hanging down,
the poignant touch
With a wakened expectant smile, and deep drinking eyes
of a frown.
of brown. *

And the "Letters" really are letters, chatting in a newsy way that was lost in revision:

* I am glad Fanny moves so grand now you're breaking her in
But you should see the swing of a hundred men working
in the road
You should see the rhythm of the [mens/] splendid blows
as the hammers spin
Round the passionate torses where some fountain has
leaped and overflowed ... *

Lawrence sent his poems, as he wrote them, to Jessie (his best critic), so that in June 1909, when she wrote to the English Review on his behalf, she was able to include copies of "Discipline", "Baby Movements", "Dreams Old and Nascent" and 'several other poems whose titles I don't remember'. Before June he may have sent, as well, some others of the "Movements" sequence, as Jessie recollects:

> Whitman's Leaves of Grass was one of his great books. He would sometimes write, 'I'm sending you a Whitmanesque poem', when he was enclosing one of his own. [1]

'Whitmanesque' would be an apt description of "A Man at Play on the

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1. E.T., pp.157-58, 122.

River", "The Review of the Scots Guards" or "Dreams Old and Nascent".

Despite confidences to Blanche Jennings, 'I am having one or two delightful little flirtations',[1] and outings with Agnes Mason and Helen Corke to Wimbledon Common in April 1909,[2] Lawrence was more confessional to Jessie of the very ordinary sexual quandary in which he found himself.[3] His dilemma was dramatized in the poem "Restlessness", possibly composed somewhat later in the year, as Tiedje observes, with an eye to its autumnal motifs. Although the settings of the poem are the Jones's house and the streets of London, one metaphor, of men netting by the sea-shore, may hearken back to a cycling expedition to Brighton:

> .. three shrimpers waded along the wonderful outspreading ruffling water, pushing their great nets before them, stopping, picking out little objects, and moving on again ... 4

In the same letter as he described this scene, Lawrence also looked forward hopefully to 'the Annunciation of Love for me', and gave an enthusiastic encomium for H.G.Wells's Tono-Bungay. The protagonist of Wells's novel, a Midlands student coming to London in his twenties, and immersing himself in the crowds, libraries, galleries and concerts of the great city, shared some of Lawrence's problems:

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.52, 6 March 1909.
2. Corke, RMS, IV (1960), 8.
3. See E.T., pp.125, 154, 167-68.
4. Letters, ed. Moore, p.55, 8 May 1909.

> The ferment of sex had been creeping into my being like a slowly advancing tide ... I began to fall in love faintly with girls I passed in the street, with women who sat before me in trains ... On my rare visits to the theatre I always became exalted, and found the actresses and even the spectators about me mysterious, attractive, creatures of deep interest and desire. I had a stronger and stronger sense that among these glancing, passing multitudes there was somewhere one who was for me. And in spite of every antagonistic force in the world, there was something in my very marrow that insisted: 'Stop! Look at this one! Think of her! Won't she do? This signifies -- this before all things signifies! Stop! Why are you hurrying by? This may be the predestined person -- before all others.' [1]

This compares with "Restlessness":

> I will catch in my eyes quick net
> as they
> The faces of all the women [that] flow past,
> Bend [af] over them with my soul
> Pushing aside with my patience, the wet
> [*] Hair hanging over their ears,
> Looking under the dark umbrellas, held [so] fast
> Against the wind ...
> Perhaps I shall see
> Her lips and her eyes who shall set me free
> From the stunting bonds of my chastity.

A similar passage in Tono-Bungay --

> A constant stream of people passed by me, eyes met and challenged mine and passed -- more and more I wanted them to stay -- if I went eastward towards Picadilly, women who seemed to my boyish inexperience softly splendid and alluring, murmured to me as I passed. [2]

-- recalls Lawrence's vague, gentle poem "The Songless/2. Tomorrow". In his final revision of this poem, "Picadilly Circus at Night/ Street-Walkers", Lawrence attempted to dispel the mist of sentimentality which suffuses the original; in its stead shines a disillusioning, gaudy brightness, in which 'hard-faced creatures' are seen doing their rounds. Émile Delavenay siezes on this final version in his biography of Lawrence, in order to portray the young man pruriently walking a gamut of temptation and prostitution in pre-War London.[3] It is a distortion. Lawrence's first impression of Picadilly was one of naïve

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1. H.G.Wells, Tono-Bungay, Bk.II, ch.1; in English Review, I (Jan. 1909), 276.
2. Wells, op.cit., p.268.
3. Émile Delavenay, D.H.Lawrence, The Man and His Works: The Formative Years, 1885-1919, (London: Heinemann, 1972), p.62.

wonder, of --

> .. beautiful flowing women, with a pride and grace you never meet with in the provinces. The proud, ruling air of these women of the stately West is astounding; I stand still and stare at them. [1]

-- and this accords with the tone of "The Songless/ 2. Tomorrow". In later years, in "Frost Flowers", he looked back with sardonic amusement on these early days in London, and his uncritical wonder hardened to satire:

> It is not long since, here among all these folk
> in London, I should have held myself
> of no account whatever,
> but should have stood aside and made them way
> . . . .
> Especially the young women. I look at them
> as they dart and flash
> before the shops, like wagtails on the edge of a pool.

His family's holiday on the Isle of Wight in August 1909 brought home to Lawrence his mother's age and frailty. A consciousness of this new burden and a return to Eastwood create the scenario for "End of Another Home Holiday". The position in MS 1 of "At the Window" is at first slightly problematic, because of its apparent connection with the poems of anxiety and bereavement, written in 1910 and 1911. Lawrence himself forged this connection by the position which he allocated the poem in Collected Poems.[2] But, whereas its graveyard prospect and brooding tone may have reference to the mother's incipient illness, these give no grounds for dating it any later than "End of Another Home Holiday". In the MS 1 version a second pale figure joins the first in their vigil, and the two sit waiting 'in anguish half to see, to half hear'. Presumably, it is Ada. None of the Lawrences' houses in Eastwood overlooked the grave-

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1. Ed. Nehls, III, p.614, 16 Feb. 1909. A further clue to the dating of "Tomorrow" lies in the 'pool in the midst of the downs'. In summer 1909 Lawrence made various cycling trips southward from Croydon, e.g., Letters, ed. Moore, p.54-55, 8 May 1909, and Letters, ed. Boulton, p.36, 22 May 1909.

2. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.102.

yard. "At the Window" represents a darkening of the mood of "Restlessness".

According to Jessie, even before his summer holidays Lawrence had entered upon a new intimacy with a fellow-teacher, Agnes Holt.[1] Most biographers tend to follow Helen Corke in diminishing the importance of this short-lived romance.[2] Lawrence described her to Blanche Jennings as 'a new girl ... to whom I gas', and immediately burst into a denunciation of women's lack of interest in the male animal.[3] Nevertheless, he informed Jessie that he had decided to marry Agnes.[4] If only by virtue of her auburn hair,[5] it is highly likely that "'When on the autumn roses'"("Song-Day in Autumn"), with its faint flavour of pre-Raphaelite languor, was written to her. Secondly, "Lost", which has a London background, and a position in MS 1 which to Tiedje suggests a composition-date around November 1909,[6] may have been provoked by Anges. It fits what is known of her life and personality, or what can be gathered from Lawrence's musing to Blanche Jennings, 'She is very popular with men and goes out a good bit'.[7] After Jessie's visit to London in November 1909, however, and a heart-to-heart discussion with her about the possibility of getting 'it' from anyone, Lawrence broke with Agnes. "The Complaint of the Soul of a Worker", with its not unself-pitying story of drudgery and sexual loneliness, may commemorate this break in the fourth stanza. To Jessie Lawrence sent the poem "Aware":[8]

..I in amaze
See in the sky before me, a woman I did not know
I loved, but there she goes, and her beauty hurts my heart.

1. E.T., p.167f.
2. Ed. Nehls, I, p.549-50.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.57, 1 Nov. 1909.
4. E.T., p.164.
5. E.T., p.168; and cf. Helen Corke, "D.H.Lawrence: The Early Stage", DHLR, IV (1971), 115: 'a woman of the Rossetti type, with masses of bronze hair'.
6. Tiedje, DHLR, IV, p.241.
7. Letters, ed. Moore, p.59, 28 Jan. 1910.
8. E.T., p.180.

And of his poetry he said, 'All my poetry belongs to you'. [1]

In December 1909, thanks to his friendship with Ford Madox Hueffer, Lawrence was expanding his acquaintance with the London literary world. During the third week in December Hueffer took him to a literary evening at the home of Ernest and Grace Rhys. In March 1910 Lawrence visited them again (it was on this occasion he met Rachel Annand Taylor). [2] Ernest Rhys has left a memoir of one of these evenings, giving a greater impression of colour than accuracy, in which he writes:

> He rose nervously but very deliberately, walked across to a writing desk whose lid was closed, opened it, produced a mysterious book out of his pocket, and sat down, his back to the company, and began to read in an expressive, not very audible voice. One could not hear every word or every line clearly, but what was heard left an impression of a set of love-poems, written with sincerity and not a little passion, interspersed with others written in a dialect not easy to follow:
>
> Whativer brings thee out so far
> In a' this depth o' snow?
> --I'm takin' 'ome a weddin'-dress
> If yer mun know.
>
> . . . .
>
> 'Er doesna want no weddin'-dress --
> Why --? What dost mean?
> --Doesn't ter know what I mean, Timmy?
> Why, tha must ha' bin 'ard ter wean. [3]

If the memoir is to be taken seriously, it means that Lawrence had written some version of "Whether or Not", probably before the reading in December 1909.[4] If, on the other hand, the memoirist's accurate

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1. E.T., p.116.
2. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.47, 11 Dec. 1909; and p.50, 9 March 1910.
3. Ed. Nehls, I, p.129-32. The lines are from "Whether or Not", VI, and differ marginally from the text in Love Poems or CP.
4. Cf. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.47, 11 Dec. 1909:
   Next week I am going to Grace Rhys to meet various poetry people. I am to take some of my unpublished verses to read. I do not look forward to these things very much. I shall feel such a fool.
   With regard to "Whether or Not", it is of interest that Lawrence's friend, George Neville, had got a girl into trouble earlier in 1909, much to Lawrence's dismay. See E.T., p.125; and "Mr Noon", Phoenix II, p.109-94.

transcription of two stanzas, which he claims to have heard read in a 'not very audible voice', is thought of as impugning his veracity on points of detail, then Lawrence's own account of the circumstances of the poem's composition might reasonably be preferred:

> How well I remember the evenings at Garnett's house in Kent, by the log fire. And there I wrote the best of the dialect poems. I remember Garnett disliked the old ending to Whether or Not. [1]

By his account 'the best of the dialect poems', in which "Whether or Not", "The Collier's Wife" and "The Drained Cup" must be bracketed together, were written probably in the autumn of 1911, or possibly in winter 1912. "Violets" would not be included in this grouping, its position in MS 1 suggesting that it must date from the Eastwood period. Its Burns-like pathos sets it apart from the Hardyesque documentaries of the later dialect poems.

But Rhys's memoir does raise the possibility of a third notebook having existed. Certainly, the pages missing from MS 1 cannot account for many missing poems. It is a possibility explored by Carole Ferrier in her dissertation:

> On leaving Italy in June 1917, Lawrence had left behind some notebooks at Fiascherino. In a letter of 16 December 1915, he asks Tony Dunlop to find these for him, and describes them as follows:
>
> > 2 or 3 black, small note-books with red backs, and a brown Tagebuch, rather bigger -- the note-books have the Nottingham University arms on them.
>
> Two of these notebooks must have been MS 1 and MS 5. If a third College notebook with drafts of poems did exist, one could expect it to be roughly contemporary with MS 5, and to contain drafts of those early poems of which no manuscript version is known to exist. [2]

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.852.
2. Ferrier, Unpublished thesis, p.7-8.

Dr Ferrier lists these poems as:

> From Love Poems and Others: "Wedding Morn", "Kisses in the Train", "Lilies in the Fire", "Bei Hennef", "Aware", "A Pang of Reminiscence", "A White Blossom", "Red Moon-Rise", "The Collier's Wife", "Whether or Not", "The Drained Cup" and "The Best of School".
> From Amores: "Listening", "The Enkindled Spring",[1] "These Clever Women", "In Trouble and Shame", "Call into Death", "Grey Evening", "Firelight and Nightfall".
> From the Saturday Westminster Gazette: "To One of my Boys".
> From New Poems: "Thief in the Night".

Longer poems, particularly, are conspicuous by their absence in MS 1 and MS 5, and it might be presumed that they were collected in a third note-book. Its existence can hardly be disputed. When first writing to Tony Dunlop, Lawrence could not remember if there were '2 or 3' note-books. On receipt of the manuscripts, however, he wrote to confirm that 'the 3 little note-books ... arrived safely'.[2] If the note-book had not been destroyed, or if it were recovered, it is probable that a complete picture of the development of Lawrence's early poetry could be constructed.

In September 1909 Lawrence was revising for Hueffer's English Review his first poems to be published:

> The editor of the English Review has accepted some of my verses, and wants to put them into the English Review, the November issue. But you see they are all in the rough and want revising, so this week & so on I am very hard at work, slogging verse into form. [3]

This marks not only Lawrence's entry into the world of letters, but also, in all likelihood, his first use of MS 5 as a second repository for the verse. The first five entries in the note-book are those poems which were published in the English Review (November 1909), "Discipline", "A Still Afternoon/ Dreams Old and Nascent", "Baby Movements/ 1. Running Barefoot" and "2. 'Trailing Clouds'". Minor

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1. In fact, MS 5, 73, "Silence", does contain stanzas which were detached and revised to form "Listening"; and MS 5, 80, "Troth with the Dead", likewise contains "The Enkindled Spring".
2. The Letters of D.H.Lawrence, ed. Aldous Huxley, (London: Heinemann, 1932), p.294, 16 Dec. 1915; and p.308, postmark 15 Jan. 1916; and cf. p.313, 1 Feb. 1916.
3. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.43, 11 Sept. 1909.

discrepancies between the text in MS 5 and that in the English Review indicate that the drafts were not copied from a number of the periodical, but probably from the manuscript despatched to Hueffer.[1] These first five entries, and three stanzas of the sixth, "Restlessness", are not in Lawrence's autograph. Considering his ability to induce his female acquaintance to copy chunks of The White Peacock for him, the amanuensis is probably one of the women from the Croydon period.[2] Another group of poems, "To My Mother -- Dead", "The Dead Mother" and "My Love, My Mother", are written in an unusual hand for Lawrence. After "My Love, My Mother" there is interjected, in Frieda Lawrence's handwriting, a commentary printed by Warren Roberts in his article on MS 5.[3] The last poem, reading the note-book sequentially from the back, upside-down, towards the botany notes at the front, is an untitled draft of "A Love-Passage". It seems to be in pencil,[4] in a small scribbling hand, and is likely to have been composed directly into the note-book at some time previous to those poems preceding it in MS 5, probably in spring 1910. The contents of MS 5 are:

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1. E.g., in "Dreams Old and Nascent/ Old", if MS 5, 2 / English Review (see Poems, ed. Pinto, p.922-23) are compared: line 9, 'wonder and'/'wonder, and'; 12, 'from past lives'/'from the past lives'; 25, comma ending line/ no comma; 26, '[y]tears'/'tears'

2. Possibly Agnes Mason or Agnes Holt. See Helen Corke, D.H.Lawrence: The Croydon Years, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), p.49n.

3. F.Warren Roberts, "D.H.Lawrence, the Second 'Poetic Me'", RMS, XIV (1970), 5-25.

4. The note-book has been studied only in the form of the photostat held by the Nottingham University Library, LaP 25. The original note-book is part of Mr L.D.Clarke's private collection.

Sequence	Title, Page No. in Poems	Other versions in Poems
1	Discipline (fourth stanza was detached and revised as Prophet)	Discipline (943, 92), Prophet (943, 91)
2	A Still Afternoon/ Dreams Old and Nascent/ I Old	Dreams Old and Nascent/ Old (922, 52)
3	/ II Nascent	Dreams Old and Nascent/ Nascent (925, 173)
4	BABY MOVEMENTS/ 1. Running Barefoot	Baby Running Barefoot (930, 931, 64)
5	/2. "Trailing Clouds"	A Baby Asleep After Pain (930, 73)
6	+Restlessness	(179)
7	A Beloved (910)	Love on the Farm (42)
8	The Punisher	(914, 94)
9/	+An Epistle from Thelma (864)	
10/	+An Epistle from Arthur (865)	Disagreeable Advice (179)
11	Epilogue from Thelma (865)	Forecast (91)
12X	Sickness	(147)
13X	A Day in November	Next Morning (141)
14*	+A LIFE HISTORY/ IN HARMONIES AND DISCORDS/ First Harmony	
15*	+/Discord	
16*	+/Second Harmony	
17*	+/Discord	
18*	/Third Harmony	Twenty Years Ago (152)
19	/Discord	Discord in Childhood (36)
20*	+/Fourth Harmony (see MS 5, 23)	
21*	+/Discord	
22*	+/Last Harmony	
23	+Kiss (revision of last stanza of MS 5, 20)	A Kiss (902)
24X	The Street-Lamps	People (252), Street Lamps (253)
25X	+The Complaint of the Soul of a Worker (874)	
26	Monologue of a Mother	(47)
27X	SCHOOL/ I Morning/ The Waste Lands (869)	Ruination (164)
28	+/The Street (869)	
29X	+/Scripture (869)	The Schoolmaster/ I Morning/ Scripture (911)
30X	/Afternoon	Last Lesson in the Afternoon (912, 921, 74)
31	Malade	(112)
32	+A Love-Passage/ A Rift in the Lute(II) (see MS 5, 86)	A Love-Passage (885)

33X	Spring in the City	Bombardment (166)
34X	+Infidelity	Ah, Muriel! (735)
35	Scent of Irises	(90)
36X	Sigh No More	(65)
37X	+Late at Night Along the Home Road (875)	
38X	New Wine	Late at Night (140)
39	Liaison(I)	The Yew-Tree on the Downs (947, 113)
40	Ophelia(I) (see MS 5, 58)	Ballad of Another Ophelia (950, 119)
41	Liaison(II)	The Yew-Tree on the Downs (947, 113)
42	Dolor of Autumn	Dolour of Autumn (107)
43X	Unwitting (876)	Reality of Peace, 1916 (160)
44/	Nocturne(I)	Repulsed (876, 97)
45/	Nocturne(II) (876)	Repulsed (97)
46	The Appeal	The Appeal (86), Under the Oak (130)
47	Reproach (877)	Release (117)
48X	Nils Lykke Dead	A Man Who Died (55)
49	Submergence	(115)
50	Reminder	(103)
51	A Wise Man	Tease (95)
52	A Plaintive Confession	Coldness in Love (98), Aloof in Gaiety (887)
53	To Lettice, My Sister (955; copy of a transcription of MS 5, 53, from Ada Lawrence and G.Stuart Gelder's Young Lorenzo, which has major inaccuracies)	Brother and Sister (131)
54	Anxiety	Endless Anxiety (100)
55	Patience	Suspense (99)
56	Winter [fragment]	Winter in the Boulevard (141)
57	Winter	Winter in the Boulevard (141)
58	Another Ophelia(II)	Ballad of Another Ophelia (950, 119)
59	To My Mother -- Dead	The End (100)
60	The Dead Mother	The Bride (101)
61	My Love, My Mother (944)	The Virgin Mother (101)
62	TRANSFORMATIONS/ 1. Evening	Parliament Hill in the Evening (142)
63	/2. Morning (879)	Flat Suburbs, S.W., in the Morning (50)
64	/3. Men in the Morning	Morning Work (72)
65	/4. The Inanimate That Changes Not in Shape	Suburbs on a Hazy Day (53)
66	[/4a.] The Town (lines 9-20 have been detached as a new poem by the title's insertion)	Transformations/ I The Town (72)

67	[/4b.] The Earth (lines 21-26 have been detached as a new poem by the title's insertion)	Transformations/ II The Earth (73)
68	/5. The Changeful Animate/ Men, Whose Shape Is Multiform	Transformations/ III Men (73)
69	/6. Corot (931; copy of a transcription of MS 5, 69, from Ada Lawrence and G.Stuart Gelder's Young Lorenzo, which has inaccuracies)	(68)
70	/7. Raphael	Michael Angelo (932, 69), 'Ah, with his blessing bright on thy mouth and thy brow' (886)
71	Blue(I)	The Shadow of Death (132), Blueness (136)
72	+II Red/ Passion and Death	Red (898)
73	Silence	Silence (109), Listening (110)
74	Blue(II)	The Shadow of Death (132), Blueness (136)
75	The Inheritance (above the first two of the last three stanzas a draft of stanzas one and three of Noise of Battle is interlined)	The Inheritance (108), Noise of Battle (159)
76	+A Drama	(889)
77	Mating	Come Spring, Come Sorrow (126)
78	Meeting	After Many Days (122)
79	Return	(85)
80	+Separated	(895)
81	Troth with the Dead	Troth with the Dead (114), The Enkindled Spring (122), At a Loose End (948, 115)
82	A Love-Song	A Love Song (129)
83	Her Birthday	On That Day (958, 176)
84	Hands	The Hands of the Betrothed (176)
85	Drunk	(104)
86	+'Do not hold me Siegmund' (first draft of MS 5, 32)	A Love-Passage (885) [1]

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1. The sequence does not, as in MS 1, attempt to reproduce in full the order in which poems were copied into MS 5; anomalies occur possibly at MS 5, 23, 66, 67 and 86. Numbers in brackets give page-numbers in Poems, ed. Pinto; earlier versions of a poem are referred to first by page-number. Only the CP titles of poems have been given, where this differs from the title in MS 5, unless the poem was not published in CP, in which case the title of the most mature version of the poem is given. Poems unpublished in CP are marked by '+'. Other symbols are: '/' -- line stroked through poem; 'X' -- poem crossed; '*' -- poem cross-hatched or heavily overscored.

MS 5 is arranged frequently in pairs -- "Anxiety" and "Patience", "Blue" and "Red", "Mating" and "Meeting", "Return" and "Separated" -- and in sequences -- "A Life History", "School" and "Transformations" -- in the same manner as has been observed in MS 1. This grouping indicates that the drafts had been written for some time on loose sheets before being collected in MS 5, and the note-book's sequence will thus bear no necessary relationship to the order of composition or to chronological experience. Roberts proposes that MS 5 was originally used for fair copies,[1] but the good intentions could not have lasted long. "A Day in November", for instance, is incomplete. The first of the long sequences in MS 5, "A Life History", is likely to have been finished before November 1909, since by that date, when Jessie came to visit Lawrence in London, he had completed his first play, A Collier's Friday Night. The sequence is mentioned in the play:

> [He hands her a little volume and goes out to the scullery. She sits and reads with absorption ...]
> ERNEST ... Which do you like best?
> MAGGIE ... I don't know. I think this is so lovely, this about the almond tree.
> ERNEST ... And you under it ... But that's not the best.
> MAGGIE ... No?
> ERNEST ... That one, 'A Life History', is the best. Look how full of significance it is, when you think of it. The profs. would make a great long essay out of the idea. Then the rhythm is finer: it's more complicated. [2]

Parts of the sequence may be of the same vintage as "Letters from Town/ The Almond Tree", early in 1909. On stylistic grounds, taking into account the sentimental and perfervidly sexual symbolism, one would like to assign "A Life History" as early a date as possible.

Other poems co-ordinate with features of the biography already discussed. The first three sections of "Transformations" prolong the penchant for description found in the "Letters from Town", although the very different moods with which these descriptions are imbued lead to

1. Roberts, RMS, XIV, 6.
2. The Complete Plays of D.H.Lawrence, (London: Heinemann, 1965), p.497.

the suspicion that they were composed over a wide time-span. On 23 October 1908[1] Lawrence described how the school looked out 'in front over great stacks of timber, over two railways to Norwood'. Assumably these are the stacks of timber on which the men in "Transformations/ 3. Men in the Morning" are working. School life continued to fall under Lawrence's attention, although there are no certain clues as to when "The Punisher" or the "School" sequence might have been composed. "The Punisher" calls to mind Lawrence's exclamation of summer 1910: 'When anger comes with bright eyes he may do his will ... He is one of the archangels'.[2] But the situation in the class-room is more akin to that described in a much earlier letter:

> So the lads and I have a fight, and I have a fight with my nature, and I am always vanquished ... [N]othing in the world is so hard for me as to be firm, hard and stern. I can be cruel, but not stern. So I struggle with my nature and with my class till I feel all frayed into rags. [3]

Another school poem, "School/ Scripture", surveys the same scene, men working under a blue sky on the timber for the railway, as "Transformations/ 3. Men in the Morning", though there is one salient difference. In "School/Scripture" the bored teacher now looks out on 'the <u>new</u> and the old/ Woodstacks by the side of the railway'. Some new timber may have been stacked since "Transformations/ 3. Men in the Morning". Although this last poem may go back to late 1908 or early 1909 for its inspiration — it has definite affinities with "Dreams Old and Nascent" — other sections of "Transformations" almost certainly pertain to early 1911. In this way the note-book and the sequences yoke together poems widely separated in time.

The mood of restlessness and depression, which apparently overtook Lawrence in the second half of 1909, pervades "A Day in November", which, if the year is superadded, dates itself. The

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1. <u>Letters</u>, ed. Boulton, p.20, 23 Oct. 1908.
2. <u>Letters</u>, ed. Moore, p.62-63, 21 June 1910.
3. <u>Letters</u>, ed. Moore, p.31, 26 Oct. 1908.

sequence of poems about Thelma and Arthur dwell on the same depressing subject, sex. The poems are sentimental and precious in a way that recalls "Letter from Town: The Almond Tree", and makes it difficult to extract any biographical core from their web of fancy and fantasy. "An Epistle from Thelma" reproaches a 'little Heart' that has, after some advances, retired 'so soon, so cruelly'; the heart seems to have forgotten her. "An Epistle from Arthur" reminds his 'little dear' that the flower of her beauty seems to be set apart from 'the secret bubbling source of your life at the foot of the mound'; her place is rather among 'Small-bosomed girls of the spring of love' than with 'the one that is plaiting/ Her hair for womanhood'. In the end Thelma bids the 'little Heart' to be patient, warning him that one day he may be trapped by 'a heavy-bosomed June-day woman'. Remembering Lawrence's letter, 'Look, you are a nun', Thelma can be equated with Jessie and Arthur with Lawrence. As confirmation, Amores grouped these poems spoken by Jessie with others spoken to her in the order "Disagreeable Advice"("An Epistle from Arthur"), "Dreams Old", "Dreams Nascent", "A Winter's Tale" and "Epilogue"("Epilogue from Thelma"). In its final form in the Rhyming Poems "Epilogue" became "Forecast"; and following immediately upon the sexual revulsion of "Scent of Irises", it allowed Jessie to recount her own side of the story, showing her the most consideration of any of Lawrence's poems:

> .. then you will remember, for the first
> Time with true longing, what I was to you.
> Like a wild daffodil down-dreaming,
> And waiting through the blue
> Chill dusk for you, and gladly gleaming
> Like a little light at your feet.
>
> Patience, little Heart! I shall be sweet
> In after years, in memory, to you.

"Monologue of a Mother" joins with "End of Another Home Holiday" and A Collier's Friday Night in being an early attempt by Lawrence to understand how his relationship with his mother might be affecting his love for other women. Jessie records:

> It was at Christmas [1909] that he made the great effort to resolve the conflict in himself ... Now he came to me and told me that he had been mistaken all these years, that he must have loved me all along without knowing it. The idea of marrying the Croydon teacher was a mistake. He had told her so. [1]

In a letter referring to the same Christmas holidays, Lawrence sorted out the intricacies of his love affairs for Blanche Jennings.[2] Agnes is 'off', and Helen Corke is 'a new girl -- a girl who "interests" me -- nothing else '. Less rapturous than Jessie on the subject, he also records the renewal of their relationship:

> At Christmas an old fire burned up afresh, like an alcohol flame, faint and invisible, that sets fire to a tar barrel. It is the old girl, who has been attached to me so long. It is most rummy. She knows me through and through, and I know her -- and -- the devil of it is, she's a hundred and fifty miles away. We have fine, mad little scenes now and again ... She has black hair, and wonderful eyes, big and very dark, and very vulnerable ... She is coming to me for a week-end soon; we shall not stay here in Croydon, but in London. The world is for us and we are for each other -- even if only for one spring -- so what does it matter! What would my people and hers say? -- but what do I care ... [3]

This rendezvous is confirmed in a précis which Émile Delavenay made from an early draft, since destroyed, of A Personal Record.[4] The draft, in one direction at least, was franker in its disclosures than the final version. It is not, perhaps, the most reliable of documents on which to rest an argument; but it does successfully elucidate the otherwise baffling tangle of Lawrence's personal life in the first half of 1910. Once light has been let in, the biography

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1. E.T., p.180.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.60-61, 28 Jan. 1910.
3. Ibid.
4. Delavenay, II, p.702f.

and the poetry illuminate each other. Further scholarship may show such illumination to have been an ignis fatuus, but for the present it improves our perception of the early drafts of the poetry and, ultimately, of the Collected Poems.

The MS 5 version of "The Street-Lamps", for instance, looks forward to the rendezvous with Jessie:

* The ripeness of these apples of night
Distilling over me,
Sets me longing for the white
Apples aglisten on your breast
And my thoughts, like leaves, stretch out to arrest
You where you wander, and enthicket you for me.

These round day-seeds, in their flight
Repeat each one the pull
Of the gold-strung tail of a kite
Pursuing a steady desire:
My kite, with the wind at its breast, rising higher
Away from its past's old prudence-logged hull.

They have found you, the night's gold flies;
They are hovering with luminous notes
Down the purple-grey haze.-- I arise
And haste along the street ...
I shall know you by the hovering of your eyes when we meet
By your lips where the luminous thistledown floats
By your pale cheek-apples, for me to eat. *

In MS 1 "Amour" seems also to celebrate an idyl with Jessie. Egon Tiedje has expended some ingenuity in trying to establish that the poem has an autumnal setting, pointing out that the 'yellow crocusses' of "Amour" become 'autumn crocusses' in the New Poems version, "Autumn Sunshine".[1] One impediment to his argument is that an earlier version of this same poem, published in The Egoist (1 April 1914), is called "Early Spring".[2] What may have been appropriate to the sense of war-time dissolution in New Poems was inappropriate to the awakening of love in "Amour", where the atmosphere breathes spring:

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1. Tiedje, DHLR, IV, 242.
2. See Poems, ed. Pinto, p.959.

* The sun sets wide the yellow crocusses
To fill them up a brimful measure,
down the glowing wine of their
And deep in the glowing wine-filled chalices
Sways the golden pearl of pleasure.

The breeze wakes up [the a] music in the sallow
Around its golden stopped notes:
Like grains of music crossing the fertile fallow
Go winging glad the yellow motes. *

In September or October, when the autumn crocus flowers, the pollen count is simply not that high. Nor does the sallow display at that time 'golden stopped notes', or catkins. The crocusses are spring crocusses and the sallow is probably the pussy willow (Salix caprea), flowering in March and April, its conspicuous male catkins out even before its leaves. The spring previous Lawrence had asked Jessie to post him some sallow catkins for botany lessons.[1]

Mention of deep, golden-brown, reticent eyes in the poem corroborates these other suggestions that the girl in "Amour" is Jessie.[2] According to Delavenay's notes, however, their first meeting, 'au début de mars', took place in London,[3] which seems to give the lie to the countryside setting of the poem. Although the lovers met again at Easter in Eastwood, the poem is less likely to refer to this time, if the notes can be believed: 'ils n'ont que des promenades et des conversations'. Another poem from this season, "Spring in the City", does illustrate the unlikelihood of Lawrence's resorting to the city for images of sexual fulfilment:

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1. E.T., p.89.
2. See Poems, ed. Pinto, p.872, for full text, but read 'sunken gloom' for 'sunkist gloom'. Cf. Delavenay, I, p.24, on the significance of brown eyes.
3. Delavenay, II, p.703.

* [an invisible] a subtle
[The aroma] aroma has begun
To stir in the gloom of the sinister flower
Where the [dark city's] small insects run

[Mad]
[Distracted for the nectar keen and sour]
The [city's] Flower's small denizens run
Delirious in the shadowy heart of the flower
Seeking where the magic is spun ... *

"Amour" is a pastoral, and it is impossible to ascertain what elements of fiction and truth are compounded in its idyllic description of first love.[1] It celebrates the desire expressed in Lawrence's letter -- 'even if only for one spring'.[2]

The London rendezvous does appear to have been a success, Lawrence writing to Jessie afterwards, 'You have done me a great good, my dear'. Briefly, but not intimately, they were together at Easter, after which he wrote, 'I think God intended you to make a good wife and not much more ... You have a wonderful sympathy.'[3] Between Easter and Whitsun, however, Lawrence was visited in London by Alice Dax:

> Elle refuse d'aller chez les Jones à Croydon, mais va à l'hôtel. Ils voient ensemble Electre à Covent Garden: L. affolé par la musique.
>
> I had a letter from him a few days later, and even the handwriting showed how terribly upset he was. He told me about Mrs Dax's visit and the theatre, then he said 'I was very nearly unfaithful to you. I can never promise you to be faithful. In the morning she came into my room, you know my morning sadness. I told her I was engaged to you. But it is all finished now with her -- there is no sitting on the doorstep.' Later on Mrs Dax gave me her account of what happened, which tallied with Lawrence's.[4]

The basic situation is that of "Dream"("Dream-Confused"); but a version of this, later than the drafts in MS 1, 64-65, appeared in April 1910 in the English Review. Hence, it can hardly have been composed after Easter, 27 March 1910. Various suppositions may accommodate the poem to the incident, despite the early terminus ad quem.

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1. Cf. Sons and Lovers, p.353-54.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.61, 28 Jan. 1910.
3. Delavenay, II, p.703; and E.T., p.181.
4. Delavenay, II, p.703.

The versions of "Dream" in MS 1 do appear to have been written in haste: in particular, the first draft is so fragmentary and so heavily corrected that, in all probability, it was composed directly into the note-book. Further, at the time of recounting the event to Delavenay, Jessie did not have before her the letter from Lawrence which she reconstructs. After her break with Lawrence over Sons and Lovers, she had destroyed all mementos of their friendship. Therefore, the possibility of her misremembering the date of the incident can be entertained, and it might be surmised to have taken place before Easter, instead of between Easter and Whitsun. A second possibility is that an earlier, unrecorded visit to London by Alice Dax, or by another female admirer, may have given rise to a similar incident. Otherwise, it must be accepted that no biographical basis for the poem has yet been discovered. Nonetheless, both "Dream"("Dream-Confused") and "Fooled"("Rebuked"), from their general position in MS1 (63-65), can be presumed to have composition-dates early in 1910, and to offer presumptive evidence of composition and publication following closely on the experiences of their author.

Considerable speculation has been aroused concerning Lawrence's relationship with Alice Dax. The evidence is scantily suggestive. During 1908, while he was corresponding with Blanche Jennings, Mrs Dax enters frequently into his letters as a mutual friend, someone who is 'fond' of him, who fosters his intellectual interests and encourages his writing, with a somewhat maternal protectiveness. He later reports that she 'looks young and winsome and pretty with the little one'.[1] Jessie Chambers was aware of the London incident, of course, yet she remained friendly with Mrs Dax into 1911 and 1912, responding guardedly when Helen Corke compared Mrs Dax to Madame Bovary that the resemblance

1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.12, 13 May 1908; and p.28, 1 Sept. 1908.

lay 'only in circumstances ... not intrinsically'.[1] With regard to the resemblance between Alice Dax and Clara Dawes of Sons and Lovers, Jessie recorded:

> [Mrs Dax] regarded herself as the original [of Clara] because I received a letter from her some years after the publication ... 'I have read Sons and Lovers and I swear it is not true.' There was no need for her oaths. I knew quite well it was not true. She had given Lawrence plenty of provocation, of which he had taken no advantage. 2

Jessie herself could see aspects of Louie Burrows and Helen Corke in Clara Dawes. After his engagement to Louie in 1911, Lawrence wrote to her a confession, enumerating the women in his past: 'One', he wrote, 'is a little bitch, & I hate her: and she plucked me, like Potiphar's wife'.[3] Whatever else befell him, Joseph did escape Potiphar's wife. Mrs Dax, however, made her own highly wrought confession to Frieda Lawrence, after Lawrence's death:

> We were never, except for one short memorable hour, whole ...[N]ow I think you will understand why I was so glad you loved him too -- you who could give him so much, but my cup was bitter when he wrote from Garda [probably in September 1912] in the richness of fulfilment. How bitterly I envied you that day! How I resented his snobbery and his happiness whilst I was suffering in body and sick in soul, carrying an unwanted child which would never have been conceived but for an unendurable passion which only he had roused and my husband had slaked. So -- life! 4

In connection with this letter, it can be noted that Lawrence spent a week-end in Shirebrook with the Daxes in March 1912.[5] The strongest confirmation to the suggested liaison is given, however, by a stray remark from Lawrence himself. Confiding to Sally Hopkin the news of his elopement with Frieda, he adds that Alice Dax has been told as well: 'I told her I was with another woman'. Later in life, Lawrence avoided re-opening a correspondence with her, but speculated

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1. Nottingham University Library, LaM 8.
2. Delavenay, II, p.671.
3. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.67, 20 Dec. 1910.
4. Frieda Lawrence, Memoirs and Correspondence, ed. E.W.Tedlock, (London: Heinemann, 1961), p.245-47.
5. Poste Restante, ed. Moore.

to Willie Hopkin, 'Wonder what Alice Dax thought of Lady C!'[1] Finally, the story, retailed by George Neville and Willie Hopkin to Harry Moore, perhaps should not be forgotten -- a funny, but surely apocryphal account of Lawrence's initiation into sex.[2]

From this evidence Delavenay infers a protracted affair, continuing up till Lawrence's departure to the continent with Frieda.[3] Alice Dax's own reminiscence -- 'never, except for one short memorable hour' -- strikes a salutary balance. Moreover, it can be added that, with the possible exception of "Dream-Confused", she is a hypothesis unnecessary to the poetry. There is no Dark Lady in Lawrence's verse autobiography.

Continuing her story, Jessie relates:

> Whitsuntide saw the zenith of our new relationship. It is to that week that the poems Lilies in the Fire and Scent of Irises belong. [4]

"The Test on Miriam" in Sons and Lovers repeats details from "Scent of Irises". It is noteworthy that the framework of recollection over a considerable period of time, introduced in the fourth stanza of later versions, is not present in MS 5. In this early draft the poem is a flashback to a recent, still painful trauma. A third poem, "Late at Night Along the Home Road", with its combination of guilt and lacerated tenderness, and with its blossoming hawthorn, lime and lilac, may refer to this holiday, falling on May 15 in 1910. Alternatively, it might record the horror of the Midsummer holiday, spent partly with Jessie in Nottingham, and partly with his mother in Eastwood.

It was after Whitsun, or more probably after Easter,[5] that Lawrence chanced upon the story of Siegmund of The Trespasser. He

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.138, 19 August 1912; p.308, 14 Sept. 1915; p.1089, 12 Sept. 1928.
2. H.T.Moore, The Intelligent Heart: The Story of D.H.Lawrence, (London: Heinemann, 1955), p.93. Frieda herself deemed this a 'strange and unlikely episode' (Frieda Lawrence, Memoirs, p.140-41).
3. Delavenay, I, p.52f.
4. Delavenay, II, p.703-04.
5. Cf. Delavenay, II, p.706; and E.T., p.181.

discovered the notes which Helen Corke had been secretly writing about her holiday on the Isle of Wight in August 1909. Lawrence had first heard of the story in autumn 1909, and it had aroused his interest in Helen. They had begun to read and study German poetry together. In February 1910 Helen learnt that Lawrence was suffering with influenza, and visited him at the Jones's. The sickness may have occasioned "Malade", which appears in MS 5 as a prose-poem after the manner of Baudelaire. Subsequently, they read together Greek drama in Gilbert Murray's translations, revised The White Peacock and went on excursions to the Surrey downs.[1] They discussed Lawrence's own poems, 'written in the college note-book he always kept in his pocket'. What first took shape in Lawrence's mind, as he read the notes on the tragic Isle of Wight holiday, may not have been a novel at all, but a poem-sequence. Helen remembers The Trespasser as having been 'in its original form ... rather poem than novel'.[2] Two poems related to the early stages of the novel survive, "A Love Passage/ Rift in the Lute" and "Red/ Passion and Death". "A Love Passage" is a dramatic monologue addressed to Siegmund, who is suffering in the throes of sexual frustration. "Red" echoes in at least one detail Songs of Autumn, the final poetic form in which Helen Corke came to publish her notes, fifty years after the initial experience: in Lawrence's poem the couple walk through evening fields, where --

> * ... all the sorrel spears in the long lush grass
> As if withdrawn from living wounds ran red ... *

-- just as in Helen's poem she walks with Siegmund 'through strange wild valleys where red sorrel grew'.[3] Helen herself dates the earliest versions of these poems as originating in spring 1910,

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1. Corke, Croydon Years, pp.3, 6-10.
2. Corke, RMS, IV, 5-13.
3. Helen Corke, Songs of Autumn, and Other Poems, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1960), p.3, "Prologue, I".

although the versions printed in The Complete Poems[1] she believes must have been revised at a later date.[2] Presumably, the conclusion of "Red" in MS 5, where the children awaken with 'A shadow ... deep in their eyes', must owe its image of a shadow to the poems which Lawrence wrote in 1911, after his mother's death. Both poems can be seen as exploratory efforts by Lawrence to project himself into Siegmund and Helena's drama.

The first version of The Trespasser was written 'in feverish haste' between Whitsun and the end of July.[3] Jessie recalls Lawrence's having explained to her:

> For this I need Helen, but I must always return to you ... [O]nly you must always leave me free.

As Lawrence felt himself into the character of Siegmund, Helen became aware of his increasing attraction towards herself.[4] The assessment of Paul Morel's character in Sons and Lovers is relevant:

> He thought he was being quite faithful to her [i.e., Miriam]. It is not easy to estimate the strength and warmth of one's feelings for a woman till they have run away with one. 5

On 21 June 1910 he wrote to Helen:

> Once again, Hélène, I must answer your word: "you had better not see me again." Once more, I say 'Bien', and proceed to disobey ... It is not sexual: that is another mistake you make: it is very rarely sexual. With your spiritual eyes you fix me for a 'stony Britisher' ... I shall come and see you after a day or two. Gradually we shall exterminate the sexual part. Then there will be nothing, & we can part. 6

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1. From the Berg Collection, New York Public Library.
2. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.1052-53.
3. E.T., p.181; and Letters, ed. Boulton, p.52, 24 July 1910.
4. Corke, Croydon Years, p.13; and cf. Helen Corke, Neutral Ground: A Chronicle, (London: Barker, 1933), p.264.
5. Sons and Lovers, p.357.
6. Nottingham University Library, LaC 5.

When Jessie visited London in July 1910 Lawrence was hostile towards her, and confidential towards Helen, who summarized her feelings:

> I feel that his desire at the moment is towards me, and I am glad he loves me. Yet there is no rest, no assurance in this love of David's, because there comes with it an impossible demand. [1]

Finally there was a temporary break with Jessie:

> L. écrit The Trespasser rapidement, sans être l'amant d'H.C., et leur association n'a jamais eu un caractère permanent. Une fois le livre fini, en juillet 1910, J.C. suggère la rupture; L. avait dit, peu de temps avant: 'Between you and Hélène I am torn like a garment'. J.C. doit avoir employe l'expression 'tout ou rien': L. lui reproche de 'force an issue just now ...' et dit que, dans ces conditions, ce sera 'rien'. [2]

This period lies behind "Infidelity"("Ah, Muriel!") and "Sigh No More", the latter title being a correction from "Faithless" in MS 5. "Ah, Muriel!" and "Sigh No More" were published, along with "In a Boat" in the English Review (October 1910). The MS 5 version clearly expresses his qualms about his conduct:

> * Up
> [On] the common, a spider has been weaving
> Weaving
> Purple webs across a rabbit-hole, believing
> She could keep at home the rabbit from his dark-[hour night]
> [truantry revelry].
>
> Must I tell her, and set her heart grieving?
> Grieving [?]!
> Does the coo-dove and the flower know I'm deceiving
> Her who never yet in speech or in silence lied to me.
>
> I will tell her ... *

Over the Midsummer holiday Lawrence visited Jessie in her digs in Nottingham, where she had been living during 1910, since the Chambers family's shift from the Haggs to Mapperley Farm. His intentions were, evidently, to break with Jessie, for he wrote to Helen:

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1. Corke, Croydon Years, p.11-12.
2. Delavenay, II, p.704.

> Muriel met me. She is very pretty and very wistful. She came to see me yesterday. She kisses me. It makes my heart feel like ashes. But then she kisses me more and moves my sex fire. Mein Gott! It is hideous. I have promised to go there tomorrow, to stay till Thursday. If I have the courage I shall not stay. It is my present intention not to stay. I must tell her -- I must tell her also we ought finally and definitely to part -- if I have the heart to tell her ... I am rather a despicable object. I wish I had not come home ... [1]

Sources suggest that Lawrence was torn not only between Helen and Jessie, but between both and his mother.[2] In "New Wine" ("Late at Night") his nervousness at the proposed break with Jessie rises to an almost manic intensity:

> * The tree-tops' large, black fingers on the blanchèd night
> Are pointing terribly northward, beckoning
> All my unwilling travel toward the northward place
> Whither she calls to the reckoning. *

The dark figures sweeping over the bed are named in later versions as Bacchae, not inappropriately, since at this time Lawrence felt himself torn like a garment between the women in his life. In MS 5, however, they are also Furies, female spirits come to wreak vengeance on the faithless male. As he tosses, listening to the wind, the poet becomes convinced that he can 'hear her [Jessie] sobbing by the bed'; yet at the same time, he feels his 'face is alive with [Helen's] kisses'. In the event, Lawrence did break with Jessie, but the estrangement was not final. Later in August, while holidaying with George Neville, he received the news that his mother, staying in Leicester with his aunt Ada Krenkow, had fallen ill.[3]

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1. Corke, Croydon Years, p.12-13.
2. Delavenay, II, p.704; and E.T., p.182.
3. E.T., p.182; and Letters, ed. Moore, p.63, 24 August 1910.

I iii

The crisis of Volume I is the death of the mother,
with the long haunting of death in life ... [1]

During the autumn of 1910 Lawrence travelled northward on alternate week-ends to visit his mother. The tension of this time and his mood of 'sheer hopelessness'[2] are reflected in "Dolor of Autumn" and "Unwitting":

* I have known since the soured nights of autumn
Have cast me forth like a fruit to travel,
Bushed in an uncouth ardour; coiled
At the core with a knot of travail --

Emotions [in] internecine [contest / conflict / are] locked
By their strength's vivid struggle in quiescence.
Would they might burst as an arc-lamp [bursts / leaps]
With stress of self-conflict into lovely incandescence. *

Despite this anxiety, his feelings towards Helen continued to develop. Early in October 1910 they spent an apparently innocent week-end together in Sussex that was the genesis of "A Plaintive Confession" ("Coldness in Love").[3] Lawrence's poem was an attempt to recreate the atmosphere of some original, inadequate verses by Helen, "Fantasy";[4] and as these verses make clear, the speaker in Lawrence's poem, who hesitates, hand on the latch, must be Helen herself. Helen recognized the character of Lawrence's growing attachment, commenting, 'If it were merely a sex debt I have incurred, it might be repaid'. Later in October or November she responded to an invitation to visit

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.28.
2. E.T., p.182-83.
3. Corke, Croydon Years, p.15-16.
4. "Fantasy" is in the collections of the University of Texas Library; a copy is in Ferrier, Unpublished thesis, Explanatory notes, p.100-01.

Jessie at the Chambers's new farm at Mapperley, and afterwards accompanied Lawrence, who had been seeing his mother, on the night-train returning to London.[1] By her own account this was the occasion of "Honeymoon"("Excursion Train").[2] Tiedje has doubted the attribution, thinking that the summer rambles with Helen in Sussex would be a more appropriate time:

> Lawrence ... would presumably be far too pre-occupied with that problem [of his dying mother] to worry so intensely about something else immediately afterwards ...[3]

It is a remarkable oversight not to see that the poem's powerful, unspoken tension, holding the man apart from the woman and focussing his attention inwards on his own despair, is grief for the dying mother. "Honeymoon" presents us with 'the familiar spectacle: Lawrence in the grip of forces that pulled him with equal power in opposite directions'.[4] As in "Dolor of Autumn" and "Unwitting", the poem traces a curve from locked inner conflict through a thawing dissolution towards dark disintegration. Sexuality seems little more than the release from an otherwise insoluble tension:

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1. Cf. Grace Lovat Fraser, In the Days of My Youth, (London: Cassell, 1970), p.174, 12 Oct. 1970: 'Things at Nottingham are all upset. I went home last week. It makes me sick to think of, & recall.'

2. Corke, Croydon Years, pp.14-15, 28; and cf. Corke, RMS, IV, 10; and Moore, Intelligent Heart, p.23.

3. Tiedje, DHLR, IV, 243-44.

4. E.T., p.196.

* How I have longed for this night in the train
Yet now every fibre of me cries in pain
To
[That] God [should] to remove you.
. . . .
So dear love, when another night
Floods on us, lift your fingers white
And strip me naked, [and] touch me light
Light, light all over
For I ache most earnestly for your touch
As a magnet aches for a steel to clutch
As a man for a lover.

Night after night with a blemish of day
Unblown and unblossomed has rotted away;
fair
Come another night, a new full night, say
Will you pluck it apart?
valved
Will you open the clogged, velvet bud
Of rich love-nights ... *

Jessie confirms Helen's dating of the incident, while adding some observations, or perhaps only opinions, of her own:

> Le dimanche, H.C. veut absolument aller à Nottingham avec J. pour 'tenir compagnie à David' au retour ... Peu aprés H.C. devient sa maîtresse. Cependant, les incidents auxquels fait allusion le poème Reminder sont de cette époque. [1]

While accepting Jessie's testimony that the events of "Reminder" (MS 5, 50) must have taken place in 'that November' of 1910 -- sexuality is once again a release from anxiety for the mother -- nonetheless, the poem's insistently reminiscent structure, 'Do you remember' and 'Those were the days', points to a later composition-date. In early 1911, unstably engaged to Louie Burrows, Lawrence might well wonder:

* If only you'd taken me then
[The chance might come.]
I wonder, [if it] would it have been different
Would you not have mourned your loneliness
I not abroad have wasted and spent
profitless over and again.
on many a barren
My seed [for each wasteful bane.] *

It is highly likely that Helen and Lawrence did become lovers, possibly after this train journey. Malcolm Muggeridge's blunt

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1. Delavenay, II, p.705.

questioning in a BBC television interview leads towards this conclusion:

> MUGGERIDGE: I have a strong suspicion that the Helen of Lawrence's poems and Helen Corke are one and the same person. No comment, you should say.
> CORKE: I'm afraid I can't dispel your suspicion and we'll leave it at that. [1]

The poems referring to the affair are "Liaison", "Nocturne", "The Appeal" and "Reproach". If the authenticity of the scenic details in "Liaison" is to be insisted upon, including the 'sulphur primroses' which are also termed 'evening primroses' (Oenothera biennis),[2] then the events must have taken place earlier than the train journey, between June and September. "Liaison" is a poem to Helen: its final title, "The Yew-Tree on the Downs", points in the direction of her summer rambles with Lawrence in Sussex, and a similar scene concludes The Trespasser.[3] Notably, the grammatical form of the poem is an appeal. The original draft of "Nocturne", by contrast with the other poems, has few of the sexual connotations grafted on to the later version, "Repulsed". Like "Dolor of Autumn" the poem tells of morbid participation in the disintegration of autumn, in oblique allusion to the mother's illness. In "Dolor of Autumn" the poet is 'reeling with disseminated consciousness'; in "Nocturne", terror-stricken, he feels himself absorbed into 'the night's multiple consciousness', no more than 'a palpitant speck in the fur of the night'. It is in order to return from this spectral sense of disconnection that he asks the woman of "The Appeal" for physical love. "Reproach" is the consummation of this series of appeals, with the woman drinking the aerial male lightning into the earth of her body, and loosing the inner tension from which the man has suffered:

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1. Malcolm Muggeridge, "The Dreaming Woman: Helen Corke in Conversation with Malcolm Muggeridge", The Listener, LXXX (25 July 1968), 104-07.
2. Ferrier, MS 19.
3. The Trespasser, p.214f.

* -- I was locked [up] like a cloud with thunder
Till you broke me
Till you loosed the white-fire wonder
Till you, sweet earth-substance, drank you
All the hurt that wroke me. *

Like the last meetings of Paul and Clara in Sons and Lovers, the sexuality of these poems is laced with pain and the awareness of death.[1]

No doubt prompted by "Reminder", Jessie remembers seeing Lawrence 'several times' during autumn 1910. Evidently, for a short time, she was able to forget their earlier schism out of pity for his vicarious suffering: 'terribly alone he was in his grief. Love was unavailing, no matter how sincere or selfless.'[2] Possibly, it was the very offer of selfless love that led to a second rupture. In November Lawrence disclosed to Rachel Annand Taylor that he had just broken 'his betrothal of six years' standing ... rather disgracefully'.[3] As a slightly later letter reveals, the most cogent reason for the final dismissal of Jessie may have been his mother's continuing adamantly and jealously to reject her.[4] "Reminder" has several points of affinity with "Last Words to Muriel", and the latter like the former was probably not written until early 1911, when the mother had finally died, and Lawrence had the temporary security of his engagement to Louie Burrows.[5] Despite the probability of "Honeymoon(II)" having been copied after it, "Last Words to Muriel" may have been entered in MS 1 as a kind of epilogue, a valediction to the poetic period that Jessie had ushered in. Other poems associated with Jessie and autumn 1910 may be dated slightly earlier. In "Ophelia" the heroine's distracted consciousness of loss can be interpreted in the light of Helen's

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1. Sons and Lovers, pp.466, 470, 472.
2. E.T., p.183; and cf. Sons and Lovers, p.475; and Phoenix II, p.97
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.68, 15 Nov. 1910.
4. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.58, 6 Dec. 1910.
5. "Last Words to Muriel" also resembles "Transformations/ 1. Evening", which seems to have been composed later in 1911.

intervention. The original version is less impersonal than the final "Ballad of Another Ophelia":

my heart should
* What have I lost that [I] cluck vainly?
Do not my kisses still warm and dim
The mirror: does not the mirror show me plainly
Fair as I was once fair for him?

is this
What [is] this grey rat of change, that has stolen
All my thirteen ecstasies of love ... *

Like "Reminder", "The Crow" looks back over a space of time to 'many a yesterday': the affair with 'my old love' is botched, the speaker is teaching in school and the mother is still dying. November 1910 suits all these conditions. The trains in "Suspense" and "Anxiety" set the scene at Davidson Road Boys' School; the poems depict the last months of waiting. Lawrence seemed to ward off grief by the very intensity and industry with which he wrote about it. The fact that he was composing many of these poems during his mother's last illness is certified by his sister Emily, who remembered him passing much of the time by his mother's bedside writing or copying verse.[1]

Mrs Lawrence died on Friday, 9 December 1910. The poems in MS 1 concerning her death -- "Sorrow", "Grief", "Brooding", "Loss" and "Breavement" -- may have been written either before or after her death; their grief is appropriate to either. Fragmentary and highly subjective, they were probably jotted directly into MS 1.[2] According to Jessie, when she approached Lawrence on the Sunday, the day preceding the funeral, to extend once again her sympathy, Lawrence handed her "To My Mother -- Dead", "The Virgin Mother" and "The Dead Mother".[3] The story

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1. Pinto, RMS, I, 12.

2. Cf. W.E.Hopkin's memoir (ed. Nehls, I, p.72):
   > During the latter part of her illness he wrote some of his most poignant verse. His sister Ada had it and refused to allow it to be published, for she said it was too personal and full of agony.

   Incidents parallel to those in the poems are arranged before and after the mother's death in Sons and Lovers, pp.453, 457, 499.

3. E.T., p.183; in Delavenay, II, p.669, she added, 'As they stand in the Collected Poems they are very little altered from my recollection of the Ms'.

can be credited, and has a psychological interest beyond its further documentation of Lawrence's Oedipal syndrome: it offers an insight into the artistic hyper-activity by which Lawrence fought off the trauma of his mother's death. Having to finalize all the funeral arrangements himself, he also immersed himself in the writing of poetry. He cannot have copied these three poems directly into MS 5, however. In terms of the order of experience, the admixture of poems in MS 5, 48-61, is jumbled, indicating that, while Lawrence may have been composing directly into MS 1 by his mother's bedside, he could not have been writing the poems concerned with her illness and death into MS 5 at that time. Although the evidence suggests that many of these poems were composed at the time, they must have been written on separate sheets, and only later collected into MS 5. This reconciles Helen Corke's testimony with Jessie's: Helen claimed that Lawrence brought her 'the "Mother" poems as they were written'.[1] Each could be referring to different sets of poems, but it is more likely they have the same poems in mind, and simply saw different drafts of them, as they were revised. Another poem relating to Lawrence's mood immediately after the death, when he needed company and activity to keep him from his own thoughts,[2] is "Submergence". Back in Croydon at school or at Brighton over Christmas, the reaction set in. Lawrence seems to have written little poetry, except for the ephemeral translations written to amuse Louie Burrows.

A week before his mother's death, on December 3, he had become engaged to Louie. Apologizing to Jessie, he explained hastily, 'I never meant to'.[3] "Kisses in the Train", a poem to Louie,[4] may be

1. Corke, DHLR, IV, 120.
2. See Letters, ed. Boulton, p.71, 25 Dec. 1910; p.73, 27 Dec. 1910; p.78, 29 Dec. 1910.
3. E.T., p.183; and cf. Letters, ed. Moore, p.70, 3 Dec. 1910.
4. See Poems, ed. Pinto, p.27.

the poetic record of these circumstances, despite the 'fields of autumn' seen flitting past the train windows. The fields are 'Stretching bare' as if for winter, and it is the sight of their desolation through the girl's hair that evokes a background of chaos and death, underlying the new sexual security. "Kisses in the Train" has found a more satisfactory answer than "Honeymoon". The first fruits of the engagement were probably, however, some 'Fellah songs', translated from the German by Lawrence and from the original Arabic by Lawrence's uncle, Dr Fritz Krenkow. These translations are among the Louie Burrows Papers, MS 2.[1] As is evident from certain letters, in which Lawrence included translations or else referred to them, they were composed mostly during 1910, and had ceased to occupy him by the end of January 1911.[2] The remainder of the poetry is contained on loose sheets or scraps of paper; and since, after this time, Lawrence grew increasingly wary of sending or showing his poetry to Louie, it is probable that all these fragments were composed during the first two months of their engagement.

One of the translations, "Sympathy", appears to be a poem on the mother's death as much as a rendition of an Egyptian folksong: it contains the germ of the idea of "The Enkindled Spring". Two scraps of paper contain seemingly unrelated fragments about trains, a mode of transport which understandably preoccupied Lawrence during these months. The most important paper is a foolscap sheet (MS 2, f), folded in halves three times, and containing drafts of stanzas for "Nils Lykke Dead", "A Love-Song" and "Martyr à la Mode". Lawrence must have been working on "Nils Lykke Dead" at some time between December and February, since a version of it had been sent to Austin Harrison, the new editor

1. Nottingham University Library, La B6-13. For further details, see Ferrier, DHLR, VI, 343-44; and Poems, ed. Pinto, pp.879-885, 1039-40, 1051-52.

2. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.57-58, 6 Dec. 1910; p.62, 15 Dec. 1910; p.82, 30 Jan. 1911; p.89, 1 April 1911.

of the English Review, and had been accepted by 6 April 1911.[1] The same incident was adapted by Lawrence in "The Odour of Chrysanthemums", the first version of which was completed by December 1909,[2] "Nils Lykke Dead"("A Man Who Died") and The Widowing of Mrs Holroyd, which had been written and despatched to Hueffer by July 1911.[3] The poem mediates between the short story and the play; and it may have been his own bereavement, or the revision of the story for the English Review, that prompted him to re-explore his understanding of death in the poem.

A single stanza on MS 2, f --

* To toss the troubled night long through for you
To dream the bliss of your great mouth on mine
To feel the bliss of your strong life lift through
The weight of this my body, fallen on thine. *

-- becomes the last stanza of "A Love-Song". Similarities of phrasing between the poem and his letters confirm that "A Love-Song" is addressed to Louie.[4] The apple-blossom in the second stanza shows that the poem is set in May, and Louie did visit Lawrence on the 13 May 1911.[5] Another lyric, setting the lovers against a natural background, is "Mating"("Come Spring, Come Sorrow"), where the wealth of flora -- budding hazels, wood anemones and hazel catkins -- denotes a setting in April rather than in May. The argument against conventional restraint and in favour of natural sex recapitulates the irritations and fears which plague Lawrence's letters to Louie -- the financial obstacles to marriage, the fear of being trapped in marriage and the pain of sexual frustration:[6]

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1. Nottingham University Library, La B188; or Letters, ed. Boulton, p.95n. "Sorrow" had been likewise accepted, and therefore MS 1, 73, "Sorrow(II)" had probably been copied out by this time.
2. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.47, 11 Dec. 1909; and cf. Moore, Intelligent Heart, p.11, for original circumstances of the tale.
3. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.130, 29 August 1911; p.139, 10 Oct. 1911.
4. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.71, 25 Dec. 1910.
5. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.105, 11 May 1911; p.106, 14 May 1911.
6. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.73, 27 Dec. 1910; p.79, 27 Jan. 1911; p.120, 13 July 1911.

* Ah, the commonest little bird
afford
Can [find] enough for a home, but you and I
Who may not mate where the leaves are stirred
Gently in sympathy
in an
We are held apart, [and our] anguish that is not heard.

And wait, Ah what do we wait, my love,
house, a [box, a cage] little house
A [nest,] or is it a cage? -- why even then
Even a cage for you, my dove,
I can buy I know not when,
Not till this spring is drabbed, this sky soiled above.

. . . . .
[And w] We wait, though I see you shudder for me
Though my blood is heaving and hurts in all my veins.
We wait, till the fire vindictively
Revenges itself on our pains
Until our love's fulfilling need not be. *

With regard to this April setting, it may be noted in passing that Lawrence spent Easter (April 16) in the countryside with Louie; and that, according to Helen, he was regretting his engagement as early as April 1911.[1]

The composition-date for "A Wise Man("Tease") can be established, earlier again, since Lawrence wrote to Louie on March 29 and quoted from a new 'bit of verse for you'.[2] Again, it can be observed that Louie spent a week-end with Lawrence earlier in the month (March 10-11);[3] and that he wisely avoids quoting all but the first two stanzas to her. Louie must have been persistent in her enquiries about the poetry, for in April he replied, 'I haven't got any verses; those lately are sad ones'; and a second time, 'The poetry you are curious over is not love poetry -- saddish'.[4] His remarks imply that he had been working up till April on poems about the mother's death or her autumnal illness (MS 5, 48-50, 53-57, 59-61). These 'saddish' poems would presumably not include the long reveries on death (MS 5, 62-75,

1. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.86, 27 March 1911; p.97, 10 April 1911; and Corke, Croydon Years, p.28.
2. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.87, 29 March 1911.
3. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.82, 3 March 1911; p.83, 13 March 1911.
4. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.89, 1 April 1911; p.98, 12 April 1911.

59-61), or not in the form preserved in MS 5. By the end of May, however, in having to reject for a third time Louie's petitions to see the poems, Lawrence suggested that many had been copied into MS 5:

> Again, I have not answered the question concerning the verses. If you will allow me, I will not give them to you. They are all very well dancing up and down on the pages of my little note-book -- but wandering, even as speech from me to you, as yet, 'no', permit me to say. [1]

The source of his embarrassment may have lain less in the elegies for his mother than in the number and character of the poems to Helen. By May 26, the 'saddish' poems transcribed into MS 5 may have extended as far as "Transformations". To understand the temporal context to which this sequence belongs, we must first return to the Louie Burrows Papers.

The last poem on the foolscap sheet (MS 2,f), a lengthy, untitled draft in pencil for "Martyr à la Mode", has interest as one of the few surviving specimens of Lawrence's foul papers. The writing is minuscule, the pencil blurred in places because of the folding of the sheet into eight 'pages', and at one point some four lines have been inserted as an afterthought by a thin pointer-line. The place of composition, as designated in Look! We Have Come Through!, was Eastwood, which points to a possible composition-date in December 1910. In the lame blank verse can be recognized Lawrence's first effort to come to philosophical terms with his mother's death:

> * And if the Vast, the God, the Sleep that yet grows richer
> Shall say that I, this mote of the Body of sleep, this
> vanishing Dream
> Must in my transiency pass all through pain,
> Must be a dream of grief, must like a crude
> Dull meteorite burst light only when torn
> through space
> In burning anguish of [a fate], extinct [, still]
> Still in full flight, shall I then turn poltroon
> have aught but wonder.
> Shall I for my little hour [make complaint]
> Of what is there to complain, since pain and all
> and grief too all of them, are but wonder
> struck out of the flint [of] sleep by my white blade
> of a body ... *

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1. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.109, 26 May 1910.

The poem's philosophy is that used by Lawrence to console Ada during April 1911:

> There is nothing to do with life but to let it run,
> and it's a very bitter thing, but it's also wonderful ...
> Life is full of wonder and surprise, and mostly pain. 1

The same concern for Ada, lest she should be emotionally maimed by the mother's death, animates "To Lettice, My Sister":

> * My heart, disturbed in its dream[y] slow-stepping, alarms
> Me lest you, my sister, should go heaped with such shadow
> of woe. *

From early in 1911 Helen detected a new mood in Lawrence:

> The Lawrence of 1911 was a changed man, whose prevailing mood was ironic and bitter ... His life was particularly disjointed at this stage, spiritually impoverished by the break with Jessie Chambers ... His talk was of literature for art's sake, of the essential of form in writing ... His home, Eastwood, was "that insipid Sodom" ...
>
> We continued our Saturday rambles, but our talks were generally arguments on points of morals, concerning which we differed fundamentally. It was bracing -- for me at least -- but, carried on through a whole day, rather exhausting.
>
> Sometimes we visited art galleries in London; one such visit was marked by his composition of the two poems "Michael-Angelo" and "Corot". 2

Two descriptions of wintry London illustrate the new mood. "Winter in the Boulevard" represents the stoic aspect of the new philosophy, derived from his reading of Greek tragedies:

> But who can alter fate, and useless it is to rail against it. When I get sore, I always fly to the Greek tragedies; they make one feel sufficiently fatalistic. 3

The cold harsh city-scape of the poem is a correlative for:

> * .. the wisdom of the ever increasing Law
> Which, cold and implacable, establishes harmony
> [To] Shall
> [That shall long] outlive the heat of discord, of misery
> and revelry. *

"Transformations/ 1. Evening" spells out the conditions of the 'Law', a vitalistic Demiurge forcing man and his works to pass through its natural crises:

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.77, 26 April 1911.
2. Ed. Nehls, I, p.142-43.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.77, 26 April 1911.

* The houses fade in a melt of mist
  Darkening the thick soiled air,
As an unclean Sodom that shall resist
  God's cleansing, fiery [care / flare].

The wintry twilight fades,
  The city corrodes in despair
As the soul corrodes when death invades
  Like verdigris' slow impair. *

The finest flowers of this new philosophical bent are "Corot" and "Raphael", the former especially giving expression to a transcendental vitalism. During the first half of 1911, Lawrence took a fresh interest in painting as a recreation, and was copying, or eager to copy, works by Corot.[1] But within these six months it is not possible to pinpoint a composition-date. The earlier title for "Raphael", later "Michael Angelo", invalidates the suggestion that Lawrence took his inspiration from reproductions of the Sistine Chapel.[2] The act of creation in those frescoes bears no likeness to that described in the poem. Raphael's painting of the creation is closer to the substance of Lawrence's lines: God is at least touching the human figures, if his hands are not 'sunk ... in a firmness down' Eve's sides.[3] Surely, however, the poem's act of creation does not refer to a specific work, but rather to the ethos which Lawrence felt was expressed in the whole of the artist's oeuvre. "Corot" does not describe one painting; it extracts a metaphysical essence.[4] The last five stanzas of "Raphael" -- which were detached in Love Poems, when the poem was retitled "Michael-Angelo" -- capture the light, harmony and form which are the distinguishing marks of Raphael's figures, and reflect Lawrence's

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1. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.104, 7 May 1911; p.105, 11 May 1911; p.111, 1 June 1911; p.112, 14 June 1911; p.117, 4 July 1911.
2. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.995.
3. Among a series of frescoes in the gallery of the building designed by Bramante for Julius II as a facade for the palace of Julius III; cf. The Complete Paintings of Raphael, introd. Richard Cocke, catalogue by Pierluigi de Vecchi, (London: Phaidon, 1969).
4. Cf. Phoenix, p.474-75.

interest in formal values at the time. The poems are as much about the creation of poetry and the artist's vocation as about the visual arts. Lawrence's later revulsion against the geometrical composition of Raphael's painting may account for the poem's division and change of title.[1]

"Transformations" makes up a part of the extended, Hamlet-like meditations on death and life -- "Blue", "Silence", "The Inheritance", "Troth with the Dead", "Her Birthday" and "Drunk" -- which in their way are the most considerable achievement of MS 5. Two skeins of Lawrence's mood in 1911, his grief at his mother's death and the philosophy he evolved to cope with it, are combined in this strong series of poems. The slightest of them is "The Inheritance", which turns the tables on "Submergence" by finding in the crowds of people, not a distraction from grief but 'a great kinsfolk', who give comfort by sharing or by exemplifying the poet's awareness of death in all things. The MS 5 version of this poem mentions the coltsfoot, which flowers in March. Early in March Lawrence was bothered with details of the inheritance from his mother's estate.[2] "Silence" takes a darker view of the death in all things: it has grown into the all-encompassing void, which Paul Morel sensed in his bereavement:

> The people hurrying along the streets offered no obstruction to the void in which he found himself. They were small shadows whose footsteps and voices could be heard, but in each of them the same night, the same silence. [3]

In "Blue" darkness possesses the poet himself, who is shocked by 'the crowd of things in the sunlight jostling and plying'. Similarly, in "Troth with the Dead" he finds himself 'lost amid the things I knew so well', and at odds with the regenerating life of the countryside:

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1. See Phoenix, p.457.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.74, 3 March 1911.
3. Sons and Lovers, p.510.

* This spring [as it that has] comes bursts up in bonfires green
O[n]f wild, of puffing emerald trees [and bushes like fires];
Pear-blossom lifts in [clouds wreaths] of smoke between,
Where fire of musical birds out quivers and gushes.
[And pointed flames lick out from the] *

Pear-blossom identifies the month in the poem as April or May. In a spring-time letter to Louie, Lawrence had complained of feeling out of step with the season: 'the seasons, the weather, the opening leaves ... go round so unnoticed ... this year'. Days later, after a ramble, he reported that the beeches were 'very beautiful, as if afire with the vividest green'.[1]

"A Drama" is a phantasmagoric poem, understandably left unpublished, and difficult to fit into Lawrence's opus or biography. A dramatic duologue tells how a blue-eyed woman, possibly to be associated with the mother, through too intense and possessive love comes to murder the man she loves. The man had intended to go to 'another lesser, sorrier love', possibly to be associated with Louie. The woman poisons him in a scene analogous to Paul Morel's killing of his mother with an overdose, in Sons and Lovers. Lawrence had been working sporadically on the first version of the novel, Paul Morel, during 1911.

Presumably, the composition of "Her Birthday" was centred round Lawrence's mother's birthday in 1911, July 19. The day was remembered in a letter to Louie: 'C'est aujourd'hui le jour de naissance de ma mère, et je veux l'oublier'.[2] A theme in "Her Birthday", the lack of the mother's sober guidance, is the opening thought of "Drunk", and the image of a bloody flag is common to both. In the former it pictures the roses; in the latter the hawthorn-blossom. The flowering trees in "Drunk", hawthorn, lilac, laburnum and horse-chestnut, set the scene in May. The blood on the arboreal

1. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.102, 4 May 1911; p.104, 7 May 1911.
2. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.123, 19 July 1911.

flag has been shed in the pursuit of life, love and a wife, whom the poet claims to have found in the concluding eight stanzas:

> * Dear God, [hast thou / thou hast] sent my love to me?
> She has glanced at me under the lamp;
> Full strange she looks, but her face I see
> Is stamped with the womanly stamp. *

In the final stanza the poet's determination to make his financial way in the world is no doubt the outcome of wrangles with Louie about money. Later versions of "Drunk" truncated this conclusion. The poem became more open-ended, less certain of having discovered the loved one:

> Come then, my love, come as you will
> Along this haunted road
> Be whom you will, my darling, I shall
> Keep with you the troth I trowed. [1]

The four poems remaining to be discussed are to Louie, Helen and Jessie. That "Hands"("The Hands of the Betrothed") is to Louie the equivalent of what "Last Words to Muriel" was to Jessie can be seen from the last stanza:

> * Her bearing is English, modest and reserved,
> False as hell; God, what have I deserved
> Thus to be tortured,thus to be consumed
> Like a covered fire, choked, and fitter fumed. *

It is probable that Lawrence would not have written this poem until after the August holidays in 1911, which seem to have frustrated him badly,[2] and from which time he became more openly critical of Louie's inhibitions:

> I've now got a great lot of dissatisfied love in my veins. It is very damnable to have to drink back again into oneself the lava & fire of a passionate eruption ... The most of the t hings, that just heave red hot to be said, I shove back. And that leaves nothing to be said. All this, you see, is very indelicate & immodest & all that ... and I always want to subscribe to your code of manners, towards you ... [3]

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1. Amores version.
2. Delavenay, II, p.706.
3. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.145-46, 30 Oct. 1911; and cf. p.131, 1 Sept. 1911.

Thus, the poems which were written to Louie are "Kisses in the Train", "Hands", "Mating", "A Love-Song", "A Wise Man", and possibly "Snapdragon", "Gipsy", "Wedding Morn" and "'Other women have reared in me'".[1] The equivalent poem of valediction to Helen is "Passing Visit to Helen", a poem not included in MS 5. Instead we have "Return", in which the violin identifies the woman as Helen.[2] Her irritation may have to do with Lawrence's recent engagement. "Separated" is a poem to Jessie in a year when, in her own words, 'I saw him on fewer occasions than I could count on the fingers of one hand, but he begged me to write to him'.[3] As for the last poem, "Meeting"("After Many Days"), Jessie avers that it commemorates a reunion in February 1912. Of the three versions of this meeting, one fictional account by Lawrence and two equally divergent factual ones by Jessie, none bear any decisive resemblance to the poem.[4] It could possibly refer to another meeting in 1911. The difficulty in accepting Jessie's dating is that it would cause "Meeting" to fall so far outside the chronological experiences and composition-dates suggested by the poems immediately surrounding it in MS 5. Other poems, such as "And Jude the Obscure and His Beloved"("Passing Visit to Helen") and "The Sea" would considerably pre-date it in order of experience; and if "Meeting" did refer to February 1912, these other

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1. For "Snapdragon", see E.T., p.142. "Gipsy" resembles in tone the 'Fellah songs', particularly "Self-Contempt", and is concerned with many of the themes of the Louie poems -- sexual need, financial arrangement and loss of freedom in marriage. In "Wedding Morn" Louie would be an apt speaker, earnestly premeditating marriage. Cf. the third stanza with 'I wonder if love will turn out, to you, not what it seems'(Letters, ed. Boulton, p.65, 17 Dec. 1910). Cf. the poem's opening line with 'Pomegranate -- that's your symbol'(Letters, ed. Boulton, p.59, 6 Dec. 1910). Lawrence termed "Wedding Morn" 'fictional' (Poems, ed. Pinto, p.27): it exemplifies the personal character of his fiction. "'Other women have reared in me'" accords with the initial optimism of the engagement. Cf. 'You will be the first woman to make the earth glad for me'(Letters, ed. Boulton, p.57, 6 Dec. 1910).

2. Cf. The Trespasser, p.6.

3. E.T., p.184-85.

4. Sons and Lovers, p.505-09; Delavenay, II, p.706; E.T., p.195-97.

poems might have been expected to gain prior admission to MS 5. These are not sufficient grounds for rejecting Jessie's meticulous testimony in A Personal Record; but they do give some reason for doubting it, in this instance.

If one disregards for a moment February 1912, Lawrence's letters in October 1911 provide some information on MS 5. In October Edward Garnett offered Lawrence assistance in placing a first book of verse with a publisher.[1] Lawrence revised his poetry through October -- he had discontinued work on Paul Morel for a time -- and subsequently, when Heinemann made a tentative offer for the book of poetry, he spent all his nights working on verse.[2] Batches of poems were sent to Garnett, then to Heinemann. The first batch included "Violets" and "Lightning", which Garnett had published in the Nation (4 November 1911). The second included "Transformations", "Another Ophelia" and "Nils Lykke Dead". The third batch were described as 'the last, best verses, the latest, and most substantial'.[3] Considering the progression represented by the first two batches of poems, taken from MS 1 and midway through MS 5, and considering the description of the poems as 'the latest, and most substantial', it seems likely that the third batch of verses contained at least some of the poems represented at the end of MS 5 (71-85); and it is possible that they were then copied into the note-book. A convenient terminus ad quem for MS 5 would be the week-end of November 15 and 16, after which Lawrence fell seriously ill with pneumonia. Alternatively, the poems may have been copied into MS 5 before Lawrence's departure for the continent, just as MS 1 had been used to collect poems before his departure to Croydon. Thus "Meeting" could

1. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.139-40, 10 Oct. 1911.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.82, 11 Oct. 1911; p.83, 20 Oct. 1911.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, 7 Nov. 1911.

refer to February 1912. Yet Lawrence said he was unable to write poetry at this time, being preoccupied with Sons and Lovers.[1]

The origin of 110 of the 146 poems in the Rhyming Poems can be found in MS 1 and MS 5. The two note-books also contain 8 uncollected poems and 32 unpublished poems, besides many revisions. If we exclude Look! We Have Come Through!, which might be taken as a separate unit, at least three-quarters of Lawrence's poetic output up to 1920 originates in the years 1908 to 1911.

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1. E.T., p.200; Letters, ed. Moore, p.101, 6 March 1912.

CHAPTER II --THEY ARE MY PAST

> You can see they [the poems in Amores] make a kind of inner history of my life, from 20 to 26 ... The black book is a new scribble -- but the red college note-books -- they are my past, indeed. [1]

Lawrence's major creative work is in the novel, but his bias towards prose is less pronounced at different stages of his writing career. Prior to the completion of Sons and Lovers, the creative thrust of his writing first appeared in, or was discovered through, his poetry. "End of Another Home-Holiday" and "Monologue of a Mother" had been written before Paul Morel was even plotted out. Later this exploratory function was usurped by the essay; Birds, Beasts and Flowers and the Last Poems are more deliberative and less investigative than the early verse. It is for the early, exploratory verse that the critical tool, a chronology, is now to hand which enables a systematic and accurate assessment of the rapid process of growth during this, the important first phase of Lawrence's artistic development. This chapter acts as an introduction to this development, considering its initial progress on two fronts: firstly, the maturation of Lawrence's thought and the establishment of his themes, and secondly, the refinement of his technique. In studying this earliest phase, it is necessary to keep clearly in view the writing that pertains to it: the concern is still with MSS 1 and 5, not with the Collected Poems. Nevertheless, the general survey of the note-books in this chapter invites a consideration of Lawrence's later revision of his immature technique, as well as a consideration of his technique of revision. Valuable clues are also present in the note-books as to poetic influences, and these are cited. Finally, an attempt is made to separate those themes which characterize the drafts in MSS 1 and 5. One is broadly epistemological or ontological, a

1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.419-20, 1 Feb. 1916.

concern to formulate an acceptable world-view in the face of experience; the second is roughly confessional, dedicated to the probing of sexual and filial relationships. Hence, as in the foregoing chronology, the study of the thematic development of these drafts leads back at many points to the unfolding of the life. As Lawrence said, the College note-books are his early history.

Even prior to this early history is an essay on "Nature Study", which Lawrence wrote in 1904, while a pupil-teacher at the Ilkeston Training Centre:

> * But how can Nature be studied in the dusty gloom of a school? It is all very well to pass round the cones and broken needles of the pine, but the way to study the pine tree is to sit on the needle-strewn ground and see the cones hang darkly against the blue of the sky. Out in the free air of heaven, out among the wild things free, not passing round dusty specimens, should these wonderful lessons be learnt ... If Nature is to be studied, let it be Nature herself and not the manspoilt resemblance of her ...
>
> If properly carried out, no training is better than Nature Study for enhancing the powers of observation, for encouraging reasoning and thought, for inspiring the mind with a love for the beautiful and the pure. Not many boys would cruelly stone a bird after an interesting chat on its clever and charming ways; and after inspecting several times the wondrous adaptability of everything to carry out the work allotted to it, a fresh young mind cannot fail to be struck with awe at the wisdom and majesty of the Creator. In nature everything is true, and in its way divine; and in the right study of it, the mind is refined and enlarged, for it is not so necessary to cram the young with knowledge as to beautify the mind & enlarge the sympathies and intellect. * [1]

There is a long chronicle in the history of ideas to be traced from this, one of the first surviving specimens of Lawrence's prose, to the radically altered Nature studies of Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Very much of a prize essay in tone, the extract remains a lucid exposition of basic Christian tenets concerning the relation of God to his creation and to man. It is a scheme which, as M.H.Abrams has posited, the Romantic poets felt compelled to reformulate and rejuvenate according to their intellectual and metaphysical inheritance from the Enlightenment. Part of the purpose of this chapter will be to observe Lawrence's swift

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1. Nottingham University Library, La Bf 220.

rejection of the Christian scheme, in which he was brought up, in favour of a basically Romantic dualism, of the self in Nature, as it was mediated for him by the later nineteenth-century. Jessie Chambers has recorded how Lawrence read at College certain nineteenth-century scientific and positivist writers, Darwin, T.H.Huxley, Robertson and Haeckel; and how he 'seemed to feel compelled to take up a rational standpoint with regard to religion, though it made him miserable'.[1] But this chapter in Lawrence's intellectual history, the agnostic conversion that was a station on his path to the 'natural supernaturalism' of the Romantics, is documented in several of his early poems, including "Eastwood -- Evening".

Thematically, "Eastwood -- Evening" tells something of the associations Lawrence's childhood Christianity had for him; and technically, the poem typifies the processes of revision to which he later subjected the Eastwood poems:

* The chime of the bells, and the church clock striking
eight
Solemnly and distinctly cries down the babel of children
still playing in the hay
Bringing the church so near to me, as she puts off her
state
And softly spreads over the town the [grey] (brooding) mist-wings
of grey.

Like gathered chickens, the quiet houses sleep
Scarce seen 'neath the soft unruffled wings; but the
watchful head of the church is seen
Lifted, and her voice calls clear; the last [lights] (roofs)
creep
To rest, save the [embers] (red) of my [red] (great) lilies, and the
smooth lawn's smouldering green.

The great grey wings are closed, the voice is still;
Hardly a murmur comes to me from the sleeping brood;
lilies and lawn
Are blotted out; [I] in the open night I am chill,
But the wings of [Eastwood] (home) are closed against me who
beneath them was born. *

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1. E.T., p.84-86.

The poem was revised in Bay as "The Little Town at Evening", and little changed thereafter. Revision shortened the poem, compressing the long, irregular lines into a quicker, more even stress-pattern. The characteristic exception to this process was the first two lines, which are almost unchanged. Again and again, Lawrence used only the first line, couplet or stanza in remodelling a poem, or as an introduction to what was effectively a whole new poem. Frequently, the Eastwood poems were shortened, in line length (as in "Twilight") or in the length of stanzas (as in "From a College Window", "Study" and "Last Hours"), even where this broke down the regular stanzas of the originals. Most often sacrificed in this purge were semi-dramatic elements hinting at a submerged story-line, the inept or gauche metaphors and the adolescent emotions which prompted the poems' initial composition. They were pared to a more purely descriptive core.

From "Eastwood -- Evening" Lawrence excised the night-time perception of 'the smooth lawn's smouldering green', and much of the detail which had conveyed the impassioned familiarity of the scene. In effect, that was the poem's theme. The faintly preposterous simile of the hen is gone; but with it the idea of the houses' childish dependence on the maternally protective church has virtually disappeared. In "Eastwood -- Evening", exposed to the 'open night' which is like the barren freedom rejected in "The Wild Common", the poet is recognizing the need for a new creative faith and environment. In "The Little Town at Evening", on the contrary, he looks back with an older, sadder nostalgia to his birthplace:

> Why is it she should exclude
> Me so distinctly from sleeping the sleep I'd love best?

The sleep itself is an uncreative nullity, but the longing for it is a potent, formative force in the man's consciousness. An analogous revision occurs in the last line of "Piano". In the MS 1 version the

'mother's tunes [were] devoured of this music's ravaging glamour'; neither brother nor sister sang the mother's hymns any longer, and their new music had a mysterious sexual excitement. In the New Poems version, by contrast, 'it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour', for the poet's 'manhood is cast/ Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child for the past'. In acknowledging his need to move outside the maternal shelter of Eastwood, the young man was confronting the necessity of escaping his mother's influence. "Eastwood -- Evening" expresses a love tinged with impatience and even hatred, that is loosely attached to the church, but is focussed on those things associated with the church, on Eastwood and the mother.[1] Later the love softens to nostalgia and the hatred to sardonic wariness. Another burden repeated through the early poems, through "On the Road", "The Worm Turns" and "Married in June", was 'I'll work and I'll wive'; and by implication, find a new environment that would permit intellectual and emotional growth.

Work, at least, Lawrence had in plenty in Croydon during the years of his literary apprenticeship. A first casual insight into the young teacher's approach to composition is provided by the mere appearance of his manuscripts. Whether through preference or exigence, he used a minimum of paper when composing. Even allowing for the fact that many of the poems in the note-books are fair copies, the available evidence, in the foul papers of MS 2 and in whole stanzas interlined in the note-books, shows that Lawrence packed more verse into less space than any of his contemporaries, or his Romantic predecessors, counting the exception always of the Brontë sisters. He is at the furthest pole from a richly aural poet like Dylan Thomas, who would compose a single line on a sheet of drawing paper, allowing corrections and alternatives to proliferate from there, and keeping a maximum of interaction between

1. Cf. Johnathon David Chambers, "Memories of D.H.Lawrence", RMS, XVI (1972), 15.

the page and the eye. The inference to be drawn from the closely written note-books is that, paradoxically, Lawrence's mode of composition is the more aural and bardic; that he composed largely for his inner ear, allowing little interaction between his concentration and the words already recorded on the page. His habit in revising -- of starting from an unchanged first few lines, then adapting loosely or changing entirely the rest of the poem -- likewise indicates a free, aural method of revision, instead of enriching visual pastiche, distillation or compression.

In Croydon Lawrence evolved a form of discursive verse to describe his novel surroundings and explicate his impressions:

> * The hours have tumbled their lustreless tarnished sands:
> The sands are piled in a dull red heap in the west.
> I carry my anger sullenly across the waste lands:
> Tomorrow will pour them all back, the dull hours I detest.
>
> I pick my way over the thread-bare grass which is pressed
> Into mud: the space fast shrinks in the builders hands
> My soul is shrunk, my songs are crushed in their breast.
> The hours have tumbled their tarnished, lustreless sands. *

Because of its strict rhyme scheme, "Coming Home from School/ Rondeau Redoublé" is perhaps more metrically regular than other of the school poems, but the alternatively rhyming quatrains are characteristic, as is the line length, which might best be described as hypermetric pentameter. In other examples of this discursive form the line can lengthen to an alexandrian or heptameter; and, since three unstressed syllables can fall between stresses, or this space can shorten to a spondee, 'hypermetric' seems the aptest term for the irregularity. It is not dissimilar to the metrical loosening practised by Coleridge in Christabel or by Keats in Endymion to achieve a calculated heightening in the musical effect of the verse; but in Lawrence's verse irregularity is the rule rather than the exception, and the musical effects are often harsh and dissonant. The forever unsettled variation could be the result of a casual reading of Swinburne; and sometimes, when the verse

gains rhetorical momentum, the influence is at hand:

> * Greatest of all is Jehovah, the Father, the Law-Giver, the Stern
> Punisher: Forgiveness is only a flower from the Almighty trees. *

In these lines from "Winter" (MS 5, 57) not only the verse but the concept of God recall Atalanta in Calydon. Rarely, however, does the density of alliteration and assonance measure up to Swinburne's virtuosity. This restraint was exercized deliberately, in a search for aural variety; for, as Lawrence chided Rachel Annand Taylor, 'One can get good Swinburnian consonant music by taking thought, but never Shakespearean vowel-loveliness, in which the emotion of the piece flows'.[1]

A second influence on his loosened metric is revealed in a second letter:

> I think I came a real cropper in my belief in metre, over Shelley. I tried all roads to scan him, but could never read him as he should be scanned.[2]

Attempting to define Shelley's typical metric in, say, The Witch of Atlas, one would point to the vital, unresting flexibility of the rhythm which, though counterpointed by decisive stressing and strong, sometimes imperfect rhymes, seems to be distorted by the quotation of single lines, and to have for its natural unit not the foot or the line but the fit. Such a description seems to highlight the similarities between Lawrence's loosened, enjambed metres and Shelley's; but when one returns to their actual verse the disparity in movement is at once obvious. With its fertility of metaphor and confidence of grammatical period, Shelley's verse flies along, neat and compact where it needs to be, elsewhere relaxed and fluent. By contrast, Lawrence's verse chugs laboriously through the intersections of its difficult rhyme, its loosened metric always tending to hypermetry, and often evincing a sense

1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.66, 26 Oct. 1910.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.242, 19 Nov. 1913.

of difficulty or pain that is connected with its theme. Lawrence plainly lacked Shelley's phenomenal skill at versification, and this difference alone might account for the difference in movement of their verse, if much of Lawrence's early metric is assumed to be an attempt at the Shelleyan manner. There are exceptions even to this distinction, however. The firm, structural stress and the quick, variable rhythm of "Dog-Tired", as it finally came to be revised, are in the tradition of Shelley's best lyrics. In addition, among Lawrence's early experiments with free verse, one frequently encounters a lightness of touch and a rhythmic felicity that are finely adapted to the physical motion being described.

The study of manuscripts and textual variants is not always fraught with excitement. Perhaps for this reason, the first version of "A Still Afternoon in School" (MS 1, 41) does seem exciting, and worth quoting in full to reproduce its full effect:

* I have opened the windows to warm my hands on the sill
Where sunshine soaks in the stone. The afternoon
Is full of dreams, my Love. The boys are adream, all still
In a wishful dream of Lorna Doone.

The clink of the shunting engines is sharp and fine
Like [sof] savage music striking far-off.
On the great, uplifted blue Palace, light pools stir and shine
[In / Among] the blue glass, domed distance and/soft.

There lies the world my darling, full of wonder and wistfulness and strange
Recognitions and greetings of unknown things:
The frail blue space which my [change / wonder]ful, working years cannot change --
Far-off, hollow pleasure-domes, where forgotten [the old] music [no merriment] sings.

Dream of a great blue palace uplifted, and a nearer dream
Of Dora [Do] Copperfield and Norwood Hill
Wandering down the long dream tossed years[1] where the
hill and the gleam
Of glass open the doors of the years that now lie still.

I can see no hill aright, for the snows of yesteryear
Still cover the slopes of memories and soft
Warm reflections from the sunsets of glowing souls that
were here
Once, and are here forever.

There they lie, they are visible like a picture, [B]but
the men who move
Along the railway, the active figures of men
They have a secret, that flows in their limbs as they move
[Far] In the distance, and they command my dreamful world.

Here in the subtle, rounded flesh, and eternal eyes
Lies the great desired, the beloved
labours
Here in the rounded flesh [is throned] the power, the
hope, the God
The eternal creator -- these are creators -- the rest
are dreams, the finished, the created

Oh my boys, bending your heads over your books
It is in you that life is trembling and fusing and creating
The new pattern of a dream -- dream of a generation.
I watch you to see the creators, the power that patterns
the dreams.

Dreams are beautiful, fixed and finite,
But Oh My Love, the dream-stuff is molten and moving
mysteriously
Fascinating my eyes, for I, am I not also dream stuff
Am I not quickening and diffusing myself in the pattern,
shaping and shapen.

Here in my class is the answer for the [g]Great [y]Yearning
Eyes where [one] I can watch the swim of dreams reflected
on the molten metal of dreams
Watch the stir which is rhythmic, and moves them all like
a heartbeat moves the blood
Here, in the swelling flesh the great activity working
Visible there in the change of eyes and the face

Oh the great mystery and fascination of the unseen
shaper, Life
Oh the power of the melting, fusing force
Heat, light, colour, everything great and mysterious
in One swelling and shaping the dreams in the
flesh.

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1. MS written in pencil from this point.

Oh the terrible ecstasy of the consciousness [of] that
I am life
Oh the unconscious rapture that moves unthought with Life
Oh the miracle of the whole, the wide spread labouring
concentration of life
Swelling mankind like one bud to bring forth the fruit
of a dream[1]
That makes mankind at once one bud to bring forth the
fruit of a dream
Oh the terror of lifting the innermost I out of the sweep
of the impulse of Life
And watching the Great thing labouring through the whole
round flesh of the world.
[T] And striving to catch a glimpse of the shape of the
coming dream
Then to fall back exhausted into the molten unconscious
life. *

This is probably Lawrence's first poem in free verse. In a sense he discovers free verse in it. He discovers it is the verse-form appropriate to immediate experience and thought. "A Still Afternoon in School" begins in the familiar pentameter and quatrains, but rhyme is soon abandoned, and the lines become irregular in length, their divisions corresponding to the requirements of grammar and concept. The syntax itself becomes more parenthetic and repetitive, more simply parallel. At last the formal restraint of the quatrains is abandoned; stress and the length of line no longer dominate the poem's form, which is now equally governed by a parallelism of grammar and concept. There is a distinct possibility, in consideration of the condition of the manuscript, that Lawrence was composing at this point directly into the note-book; and that, while he had certain models to fall back on in the Authorized Version and in Whitman, nonetheless the 'frictional to-and-fro', which he was later to claim came naturally to him,[2] was indeed resorted to in this passage in an effort to cope with the flood of his ideas as they came to him. Lawrence rediscovered the simplicity of the verse-form in response to the very demands of his mode of composition. Notwithstanding, the hurried excitement and prophetic fervour of his 'new' free verse was appropriate to the poem's concluding theme -- the

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1. This line has been inserted above the ensuing line.
2. Phoenix II, p.276.

visionary role of the artist.

"A Still Afternoon in School" may need some exegesis. Jessie Chambers recounted how she and Lawrence had identified during their adolescence with the characters of David Copperfield and Lorna Doone.[1] The boys' absorption in the novel reminds the teacher of his own childhood and his youthful friendship with Jessie. The poem is in part an exploration of his present feelings towards her, as Jessie herself recognized: 'In "Dreams Old and Nascent" I knew he was trying to explain himself to me'.[2] Gazing 'north at the blue bubble of the Crystal Palace, fairy-like',[3] he transmutes the structure into a symbol of the past:

> * The frail blue space which my changeful, working years
> cannot change --
> Far-off, hollow pleasure-domes, where forgotten music
> sings. *

Jessie and her love for him is contained in the past; yet ambivalently, he affirms that what belongs to the past 'cannot change'. The personal element of ambivalence vitiates the poem; for in a few lines Lawrence will be showing how the past does change to become the present. Of literary interest is the allusion to Coleridge's "Kubla Khan": the poem as a whole demonstrates Lawrence's interest in and his ability imaginatively to construe symbolist poetry. The 'mighty fountain' of the present, seething with 'ceaseless turmoil', is embodied in the flesh of the men working on the railway. In their bodies the fixity of the past is seen dissolving and becoming the present. It is the fleshly present that the poet must fulfil, in spite of his dreaming past; the present that carries with it a new set of obligations, realized by the teacher as he turns from the window back to the 'trembling and fusing and creating' life of his boys. The distinction between the past and the

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1. E.T., p.96.
2. E.T., "D.H.Lawrence's Literary Début", The European Quarterly, I (Nov. 1934), 160-61.
3. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.27.

present, and the language and symbolism in which that distinction is couched, anticipate the later manifesto "Poetry of the Present". The association of free verse with the present and the more formal, discursive verse with the fixity of the past is implicit in the poem's discovery of vers libre. Although the poet's leaning towards the present with all its associations is evident, there is a further internal conflict uncovered by his meditations -- the dual claims on him of his individual selfhood, as against a transcendentalist life-force, the pure generation that reduces all men to One in the flesh:

> * Oh the terror of lifting the innermost I out of the sweep
> of the impulse of Life
> And striving to catch a glimpse of the shape of the
> coming dream ... *

The immediately revised draft of "A Still Afternoon in School", MS 1, 42, went some way towards marshalling and subjugating the second half of the poem within orderly quatrains. In "Dreams Old and Nascent", as the poem was published in the English Review (November 1909),[1] Lawrence realized the applicability of free verse to the "Nascent" section, and the variety of rhythm introduced by the revision is an interesting feature. In Amores[2] he reverted at many points to the excitement and the crude, rhetorical impetus of the earliest version. The final rescension for Collected Poems, during winter 1927-28, obliterated all the rhythmic interest of these early experiments: "Dreams Old and Nascent/Nascent" was expanded into a discursive, rather proselytizing and shambling collection of quatrains. The poem's history illustrates Lawrence's unsteady progress towards a concept of the poetry of the present, towards an organic integration of free verse with imagery and theme. The verse as such, while it does represent a personal discovery, is not particularly personalized, distinctive or original in MS 1, 41. In another sequence of poems, "Movements",

1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.27.
2. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.922.

Lawrence endeavoured to diversify the rhythmic mood and extend the range of his free verse.

"Movements" (MS 1, 44-48), a sequence of five poems, consolidates the early venture into vers libre. Again the poems deal with the present as revealed in the active human body, in the poet's own flesh or in a baby's, in a man punting on a river or in a regiment parading in Hyde Park. The carefully unified structure of the verse is exemplified in "A Baby Running Barefoot":

* When the bare feet of the baby beat across the grass
The little round feet nod like white flowers in the wind,
They poise and run like ripples [lapping / shaken] across the water
And the sight of their white play among the grass
Is like a little linnet song, winsome,
Is like when two white butterflies settle in the arms
of one flower
For a moment, then away with a flutter of wings.
I long for the baby to wander hither to me
Like a wind-shadow wandering over the water,
So that she can stand on my knee
With her little bare feet on my hands
Cool like syringa buds,
Firm, and silken like soft young peony flowers. *

The rhythm is textured by alliteration, assonance, internal rhyme and repetition. There is unity as well in the imagery: the 'white play' of the baby's feet generates a series or race of images for this colour and motion, beginning with and ending on the simile of a flower. Light, wind and fluttering animation are at last resolved in the 'Firm and silken ... pink young peony flowers'; movement closes in rest. In the first line the alliteration reproduces the falling stresses of the baby's feet; while the two syllables falling in the anacrusis between lines one and two ('The lit|tle round | feet nod') convey a quick, twinkling movement. The short vowels in 'like little a linnet's song, winsome' also reinforce lightness and quickness in the simile. In "A Man at Play on the River" longer lines are used for evocative passages, whereas shorter lines designate action. 'Up the river', 'Down the river'

point to the punt's scurrying 'Hither and thither/ Anywhere', while the description of the man's --

> * .. full fine body bending and urging like the stress
> of a song,
> Darting his light punt with the quick-shifting fancy
> of verse ... *

-- really draws attention to the inverse of the simile, how the poem's changing rhythms have mimicked the man's. In "Movements", then, Lawrence discovered his ability to write free verse with a personal and original cadence, as original as his own perception of a circumambient universe. But for the time this ability had severe limitations, being confined to the description of overt, physical action.

Even more successful was the re-application of this mimetic line in conventional verse, the experiment conducted in "Lost" (MS 1, 51). To take only two examples, there is the deadening halt of the short line which concludes the first stanza, 'Hollow echoed my heart', though this effect is lost in the later version "Turned Down"; and there is the wealth of mimetic sound in:

> * Two brown ponies trotting slowly
> Stopped at a dim-lit trough to drink
> The dark van drummed through the distance lowly ... *

The smart trochees of the first line break down in the second as the ponies' hooves clatter to a halt. But the second line initiates an alliterative pattern, continued in the third as the ponies start off again, the van 'drumming' behind them over the cobbled streets. In fact, the poem is full of syncopations, of pattering, tapping, fluttering and shuddering, which no doubt echo the palpitations of the lover's heart.

One of the technical faults of the early poetry is also one of its more promising symptoms:

* Somewhere beneath that piano's superb sleek back
Must hide my mother's piano, little and brown, with the back
That [stood close to / was against] the wall, and the front's faded silk, both torn,
And the keys with little hollows, that my mother's fingers had worn
. . . .
The full throated woman has chosen a winning, tiny song ... *
("The Piano")

* And the sense of her clinging flesh was sweet
Where her arms and my neck's surging blood-kiss might meet.
Holding her thus did I care
That the solid black night hid her from me every speck.
. . . .
When the lightning flew across her face
... I saw her an [hateful / awful], [impassable / infinite] space
[Across / Beyond] my soul's abyss ... *
("Lightning")

The Keatsian multiplication of adjectives and even prepositions in these lines is an attempt to pinpoint physical detail, sensation and emotional nuance. The will to exactness is there, but not the means. A second obfuscating element in the Eastwood poems is a certain clumsy staginess that recalls Hardy, in such poems as "Lightning" or "The Death of the Baron". As with Hardy, the emotion has the feeling of truth, but the situation seems too good to be true, or too simplified. Often, too, as has been seen in "Eastwood -- Evening", autobiographical feeling enters the poem obliquely, only as if by accident attaching itself to the ostensible theme. Such obliquity is traditional, of course, in poetry not dedicated to the Wordsworthian 'egotistical sublime'. But in view of the critical imputations sometimes brought against Lawrence's directly personal poetry, that he was incapable of writing anything else, it seems worth pointing out that he did not leap straight from the arms of Eastwood confessing his soul. The confessional aspect of his work, the 'poet without a mask' as de Sola Pinto dubbed it, was evolved only by stages.

In Croydon Lawrence began writing about his day-to-day work as a teacher. Previously his setting of poems in rural Nottinghamshire had been fortified by intimate knowledge of farm-life and botany; but the school poems introduced a new realism into the verse, by passing outside the sphere of the literary, pastoral convention. The poems even eschew the French tradition, after Zola, of urban nastiness; instead they have that quality which Keith Aldritt noticed in Lawrence's early writing, a capacity for doing justice to sensuous beauty and ugliness, perceived as a complex whole.[1] M.L.Rosenthal is another critic who has spoken appreciatively of the early writing, as it is represented in the school poems:

> Lawrence, even more than [William Carlos] Williams, takes his own life and the things and people he sees seriously in themselves. They are important to him not because they illustrate a thought or a tradition but by virtue of their simple existence. When he was a young teacher, he set down his feelings about his work with absolute directness -- not ironically, not aloofly, not in any sense pretentiously ... ["Last Lesson in the Afternoon"] may not be a great poem, but it expresses a real mood of teachers ... Such a poem assumes the plain necessity of expressing what we really are. [2]

In their Croydon setting Lawrence's problems as a teacher come before us with a fresh directness. The naturalism nurtures the confessional bent of the poetry. One recurrent problem is probed in "Discipline":

> * So I've torn some roots from my soul, & twisted them,
> good or bane
> Into thongs of discipline: from my anguished submission
> weaving another's.
>
> And, quivering with the contest, I have bound and beaten
> my fifty boys.
> The fight was so cruel, my love; I have torn the deep
> strings from my soul ... *

The echo of Keats's "Ode to Melancholy", clearly ringing in the first line of the quotation, is perhaps significant in a poem dealing with the place of pain in human intercourse. Lawrence suffered inflicting pain, and was even more morbid in his response to those whose pain demanded pity.

1. Keith Aldritt, The Visual Imagination of D.H.Lawrence, (London: Arnold, 1971), p.33-36.
2. M.L.Rosenthal, The Modern Poets: A Critical Introduction, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.161.

His powers of sympathy seem to have been acute to the point of imbalance. He investigates his own responses in "Brotherhood" and "Charity" (MS 1, 52, 53, 56), trying to evaluate the worth of the feelings aroused in him by the derelicts sleeping under the Hungerford Railway Bridge. These are his first poems to take central London for their background. "Restlessness" is the first direct confrontation of his sexual dilemma. Though more embarrassing than successful, the poem does indicate a growing confidence in his own subjectivity. The twin themes of sexual dissatisfaction and sympathy for pain are combined in "End of Another Home Holiday", perhaps the most powerful of all Lawrence's poems up to the end of 1910.[1]

The mise en scène of "End of Another Home Holiday" does not exceed the canons of realism, though the moonlight and mist in which the little town is bathed and swathed might be thought of as Romantic properties. They do perhaps glamorize Eastwood, or hide the Moorgreen Pit; but it is the very familiarity of the setting, not the moonlight, that invests each detail of the scene with an almost symbolic pitch of emotion. The attractions of the distant world of London, with its 'pursuits', waft through the 'open window' -- it is like Keats's 'casement ope at night' -- in the 'scent of the dim white phlox' and 'the long-drawn hoarseness of a train'. Despite the attractiveness of these impalpable insinuations and of the vaporous moonlight, the poet plainly gives his preference to detached, defined objects and sensations:

> Ah home, suddenly I love you
> As I hear the sharp clean trot of a pony down the road,
> Succeeding sharp little sounds dropping into silence ...

All these scenic details reinforce the presentation of the central dilemma, of the poet's attachment to his home and especially to his mother, as

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1. Ferrier, Unpublished thesis, has collected a wealth of variants for this poem, notwithstanding the close resemblance of the second draft in MS 1, 55, to the version in CP. Because of the approximation of the manuscript version to it, the final version is analysed and quoted here.

against the new connections, the detachment and self-sufficiency which he has developed away from home. In this respect the detail of 'the half-moon' is particularly significant: this is the first of many poems, subtly utilizing the moon as a symbol of the poet's selfhood, of the mother and of the relation between mother and son. Suspended above 'the black sycamore at the end of the garden', the half-moon threatens the extinction of the son's new-found independence, should he allow himself again to be absorbed in the 'sleep' of the home-place. The other side of the symbolic moon is the mother's waning life, frailly held above the darkness by her love for her son. Lawrence's lunar symbolism may owe something to Wordsworth's "'Strange fits of passion have I known'"; but in "End of Another Home Holiday" the setting of the moon, though imminent, is never witnessed, and the dramatic tension is released in an ironically commonplace naturalism: 'The light has gone out, from under my mother's door'. The mother asleep, the son is free to brood on their love.

In "Eastwood -- Evening" the church-bell had tolled the children to bed. Here, the spire still rises matriarchally above the 'low, pitiful, beseeching, resigned' roofs, and admonishes the son. Christianity imposes a duty of loyalty and pity for an aging mother; it remonstrates against the pursuits of the active present. Shying away from this moral ultimatum, the poet invokes the pagan, natural justification for his desires:

> Oh! but the rain creeps down to wet the grain
> That struggles alone in the dark,
> And asking nothing, patiently steals back again!
> The moon sets forth o' nights
> To walk the lonely, dusky heights
> Serenely, with steps unswerving;
> Pursued by no sigh of bereavement,
> No tears of love unnerving
> Her constant tread ...

But the debate cannot be externalized as a matter of conflicting theologies, or even of guilt. The figure of 'Piteous love' that hovers by

the poet, while seeming very much a creature of Spenserean allegory, has close affinities with the destitute woman of "Charity" ("Embankment at Night, Before the War: Charity") and with the mother herself. As in Sons and Lovers, where exorbitant demands are made on the infant Paul for sympathy, so here love and pity call to the young man from childhood and beyond: they call to his very blood:

> But when I draw the scanty cloak of silence over my eyes
> Piteous love comes peering under the hood;
> Touches the clasp with trembling fingers, and tries
> To put her ear to the painful sob of my blood;
> While her tears soak through to my breast,
> Where they burn and cauterize.

The concluding section introduces a new scenic detail. A corncrake begins rasping its irritatingly insistent, plaintive call, a call which continues to the last line, and beyond the last line, of the poem. This is one of Lawrence's first open-ended closures, and it is finely adapted to the character of 'Piteous love':

> Asking something more of me,
> Yet more of me.

"End of Another Home Holiday" gives expression to many of the technical tendencies in Lawrence's poetry. The long, flexible quatrain of the school poems is rhythmically at its most sensitive in the unrhymed stanzas which open the poem. The mimesis of "Movements" is at its most assured in:

> Why is it the long, slow stroke of the midnight bell
> (Will it never finish the twelve?)
> Falls again and again on my heart with a heavy reproach?

The changing metres often seem appropriate to the mood, in the dirge-like chant of 'Love is the great Asker', or in the swifter, dithyrambic 'Oh! but the rain creeps down to wet the grain'. The dramatic effectiveness of shifting verse-forms may have struck Lawrence, while reading Gilbert Murray's translations of the Greek tragedians. Thus, the poem's form may owe something to the alternating structure of the choric ode. Undoubtedly, the medley of metres does accurately recreate a hurried,

unresolved, internal debate. The poet's conscience has a thousand separate tongues, and each has its say. In the changing metres can be seen in embryo the rich variety of rhythms integrated in the expressionist free verse of Birds, Beasts and Flowers. The poem does have a remarkable mobility of feeling; at each descriptive detail new and conflicting emotions leap to the surface. Although these are not resolved, "End of Another Home Holiday" does not seem irresolute. It is a tough, fact-facing poem, not suffering from the vacillation and sentimentality that had marred Lawrence's poems to Jessie earlier in 1909.

"The [Solitary] Crow", MS 1, 71, is a first attempt to synthesize, in poetry, the crises of 1910. The conflict between pity and desire is again prominent, but it now includes the added complication or exemplification of the affair with Miriam:

* In the hall the scholars, singing the hymn
Move with their lips/in the sunshine, in
[Little As] silver-moist flashes such as silvery fishes trim.

Suddenly outside the window, I see in the sky one crow
Light down like a charioteer
Waving above [the a] dead oak-tree's shafts of woe.
The bird has taken [its a] place on the perished tree
Out of the brimming sky, a poised cup like a cup uplifted
A bitter black grail [is is] placed/silently before me

Like a fleshy pearl I dissolve away
In the black blot drop of night,
Swoon [in] and among the/crushed poison [crushed squeezed from] of
many a yesterday.

Far-off the lily-statues stand tall in the/garden at home --
Would Christ might come and lift the flower in the upper
room,
Or would the sun might suck from out the failing flesh
of her face
The liquid dark-blue drops that look for me out through
space
And find me not forever: would God she were dead --

In another county the poplars shake shadows over the
ponds
Of the far farm-house where my old love has shook down
the fronds
Of unfolding dark curls like a curtain to hide her
forsaken, ashamed,
From the glaring eyes of the/day: and [again] the curt crow
has blamed
[*]
[that] [*] is
Me for her desolation, [for her lost reserve/loose-shed]
for her [maiden reserve's] loose-shedding.
pure-bound pride's

Downcast, the children with folded hands are praying,
The blot of a bird sits still
Outside: I dread that the boys shall look up, [and find] dread their eyes
on mine
[curious] playing. *

Once "The Crow" has thus been set out in full, it can hardly be disputed that it is a single poem, in three well-defined sections. Structurally, it resembles "Scent of Irises", an object from the school environment leading the teacher's thoughts away from his immediate concerns into a dream 'of many a yesterday'. These memories and dreams constitute the second section of the poem; and in the third the teacher finds himself back in school, still confronted with the problems of the present. Christianity provides a poignantly uncertain backdrop to these imaginings: it enjoins the teacher to pity and guilt, which he does indeed feel, but these leave him incapable of decisive action. This complex of emotion finds its correlative in a single crow that appears, in a parody of the Christian ideals of compassion and self-sacrifice, a 'bitter black grail'. The survival in folk-lore of

divination by crows should also be remembered: 'One for sorrow, two for joy'.[1] But the solitary crow, as an image, is insufficient to bind together the heterogeneous events and emotions of the poem. It merely represents the poet's subjective turmoil and disorder; it offers no insight into it. Unlike Lawrence's better confessional poetry, "The Crow" offers a fragmented image of emotional crisis, not a medium for understanding the psychological patterns on which the crisis is built. It was Sons and Lovers that finally provided that medium. As such, it is not surprising that, in revision, Lawrence disintegrated the poem into fragments, on which he based three new poems. Two of these were perfunctorily occasional. In "At the Front" he propagandized his own idiosyncratic views on the Great War. "In Church" is a slight Imagist piece, redolent of War-time dissolution and desolation. "The North Country" is more interesting, though the idea of a mystical chromatic flux is repeated from "Blueness", and the views about industrialism do not anticipate, but derive from Women in Love.

The practice of disintegrating poems into constituent parts will be more fully dealt with in Chapter III, where the long poems and sequences thus dissolved constitute a considerable loss to Lawrence's oeuvre. This willingness to fragment poems and rebuild them from their constituents is an indication that, from quite early on, the very concept of a poem as an indissoluble unit was breaking down in Lawrence's own mind. The trend culminates in Pansies, which are to be considered as a 'little bunch of fragments', 'casual thoughts', 'thoughts which run through the modern mind and body, each having its own separate existence'.[2] Nevertheless, this disintegrative strain in Lawrence's aesthetic has its constructive aspect. Revision of a poem is not directed to formal ends; it is for the better realization of that experience of which the poem is a kind of avatar. Thus, poems do not only

1. See The White Peacock, p.99-100.
2. Poems, ed. Pinto, pp.417,423.

flow apart into their discrete experiences; they also flow together into larger units, into that total verse autobiography which Lawrence proclaimed as the end of his poetry. Thus, the Rhyming Poems 'make up a biography of an emotional and inner life'; and the stricter arrangement of narrative, theme and symbol in Look! We Have Come Through! should be read, 'not separately, as so many single pieces', but 'as an essential story, or history, or confession'.[1] The interrelationship of theme, symbol and myth in Birds, Beasts and Flowers makes this the most tightly organized of all Lawrence's volumes of poetry; while recent criticism of the Last Poems has proposed that it should be read 'as a single work, forming a loosely connected sequence of thought'.[2] Whether as verse autobiography or as prolonged, informal meditation, Lawrence's poetry in all its periods moves away from the stasis of the poem towards the greater fluidity of a poetry; and criticism of his poetry is most productive when poem is read into poem, and in its context of poems, and in its volume.

Evidence of the influence of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats has been uncovered in passing in MSS 1 and 5. The note-books do reveal the part played in the genesis of a poem by Romantic or Victorian forebears, a part which may be disguised by subsequent revision. Examples from Keats may be cited. "Written in Disgust of Vulgar Superstition" may have been the model for "Eastwood -- Evening" and "Week-night Service", though the last stanza of the latter may refer to Shelley's "To Night". Lawrence must have been aware of the impress of Keats's imagination, when he talked in "A Drama" of 'Pleasure so heavy intense it hurt too much'; and Keats's 'easeful death' is the precedent for the description in "Blue" of 'Death, but death at last become sweet to the mouth'. The unheard melodies of "Ode on a Grecian Urn" lend

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, pp.27, 191.
2. Michael Kirkham, "D.H.Lawrence's Last Poems", DHLR, V (1972), 97; and cf. Poems, ed. Pinto, pp.595, 597-98.

authority to the imperative of "Corot":

> * The music of stillness is stillness, you birds,
> Cease [thou / your shrilling] a moment in reverence ... *

In view of his possible influence on Lawrence's early metres, Shelley, as will be seen, is probably the most widely diffused influence in the poetry. Yet it is neither Shelley nor Keats, but Wordsworth and the mainstream of Romanticism that make the most deep-seated contribution to his poetic thought. From "The Wild Common", to "Snake", to many of the Last Poems, the recurrent form in Lawrence's poetry is that derived from the Wordsworthian existentialist encounter, the 'spot in time'. These poems can be numbered among, and illuminated by comparison with, the greater Romantic lyric, a genre which is defined by Reginald Watters in these terms:

> [The] spectator is presented in a clearly defined, outdoor setting. He addresses himself or a silent human companion in easy, fairly colloquial speech. This rises at times to more formal, heightened speech, as he describes the landscape around him, and is led by some aspects of it to recall memories, thoughts or feelings which relate the outer scene to his inner state. The poem thus recreates a form of meditation, in which the speaker is brought to the heart of loss, a moment of moral decision, or the central issue of a moral problem. Then, the poem often ends by returning to where it began, in the outer landscape, but with a deepened awareness, an understanding of the scene, because of the experience it has recreated. [1]

A companion poem to "The Wild Common", "Dim Recollections" (MS 1, 22) makes Lawrence's affinity with Wordsworth and the greater Romantic lyric abundantly clear:

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1. Reginald Watters, Coleridge (Literature in Perspective Series), (London: Evans, 1971), p.33.

* Where the minnows trace
A glinting web quick hid in the gloom of the brook
When I think of the place
I can see a lad lying watching, his eager look
Pierces his own pale reflection & plays in the luminous
chase.

A flicker, uncertain, perhaps only fancy:
(Is there a light flickers far on the sea?)
A sensation of playing in fellowship with the minnows
And the minnows playing, sporting with me.

I have a dim recollection
That the darting minnows, birds flutter and twitterings
in [the among] brambles
Roused a strong affection
In me, a boy; those wistful, childish rambles
Took me further into the run of life than all these
[deep] reflections.

Robes falling in sumptuous fold
Hang dignity round a naked man;
Vestment of knowledge and thought hold
The free-leaping soul, which untrammeled began. *

Echoes abound. The choice of scene may have been conditioned by Keats's brook --

Where swarms of minnows show their little heads,
Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams,
To taste the luxury of sunny beams . . .

-- or by Meredith's rill, 'where on sand the minnows wink'.[1] The 'free-leaping soul' of childhood inherits some of the traits of Blake's children, who 'leap' in "Chimney Sweeper" or "Infant Sorrow". But the presiding spirit of the poem is Wordsworth's, and especially his "Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood". The young Lawrence imbibing revelation from minnows is heir to the young Wordsworth learning wisdom from the owls and silences of Windermere. A general resemblance to The Prelude can be seen in the concluding stanzas of "Dim Recollections". Nature rouses and moulds the emotional and moral life of the child and, although this intercourse may be obscured or clothed by the mental acquisitions of the adult, memory can dimly recapture the most important sensations of childhood. Lawrence's hesitation about his

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1. From Keats's "'I stood tip-toe upon a little hill'" and Meredith's "Love in the Valley".

own memory's powers of recovery -- 'perhaps only fancy' -- reflects the Romantic distinction between fancy and imagination.

But Lawrence's main source is the "Immortality Ode", esteemed by him as one of the 'lovely poems which after all give the ultimate shape to one's life ... [being] woven deep into a man's consciousness'.[1] He took the title for one of his early baby poems from this source, and the title of this lyric is almost a quotation from Wordsworth's:[2]

> .. shadowy recollections,
> Which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
> Are yet the master-light of all our seeing;
> Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal Silence ...

Wordsworth's existential awareness of a void, 'the eternal Silence', surrounding and underlying all our knowledge of being, looks forward strangely to Lawrence's poems on his mother's death. Lawrence, too, came to realize introspectively, though not by recollections of his childhood, that darkness and light must be combined to furnish the 'master-light of all our seeing'. Wordsworth's dominant motif is of light, and it implies something more than mere perception. His 'vision splendid' includes perception but implies that, through the operation of the human faculties of memory, association and imagination, a further and better intimation of eternity can come. This belief is not susceptible to rationalization, but remains, nonetheless, 'A Presence which is not to be put by'. Wordsworth looks back on:

> .. a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth, and every common sight
> To me did seem
> Apparell'd in celestial light ...
> Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

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1. Phoenix II, p.597.
2. Although the title, "Dim Recollections", is by way of being a dead metaphor, it is interesting that Shelley uses the phrase to satirize Wordsworth's poetic modus operandi in Peter Bell the Third, V, 428. Cf. Coleridge's "Religious Musings", 86, for the possible Platonic overtones of 'dim recollections'.

A second motif is that of streams or running water, which, as in The Prelude, accompanies the return of happiness and inspiration. Both motifs, light and water, are united in Lawrence's 'luminous chase' or 'glinting web'. Wordsworth's streams may be thought of as running from and to 'that immortal sea/Which brought us hither'; and accordingly, Lawrence's grammatically obscure question -- 'Is there a light flickers far on the sea?' -- might be interpreted as alluding to the doctrine of pre-existence and an after-life. Perhaps Lawrence also had in mind the 'light of faith' in Arnold's "Dover Beach".

Within a characteristically negative construction, Wordsworth allows himself to be emphatic, not about Platonic pre-existence, but about his own subjectivity:

> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home ...

From the scant evidence offered by Lawrence's poem, it might be deduced that his child is even closer to the godhead; for he does not merely trail clouds of glory, he is that naked glory, and gradually assumes humanity. In this he is more kin to Blake's 'fiend hid in a cloud'. As in Wordsworth's ode, the child is the 'best philosopher'; he sees into the 'run of life', a vague phrase recalling the mysterious something that 'rolls through all things' in "Tintern Abbey". In "To One of My Boys" Lawrence returned to the concept of the child being wiser than the man. Age has its only consolation in a 'Vestment of knowledge and thought', this being Lawrence's stuffy, academic-sounding equivalent for Wordsworth's 'years that bring the philosophic mind'. In "Dim Recollections" or "The Death of the Baron" the young Lawrence can be observed mulling over Wordsworth's models for the human self in a close, passionate intercourse with Nature -- the child and the simple farm-labourer. Neither answers to Lawrence's needs; he had to find his own

model for a subject in vital connection with the objective world. "The Death of the Baron" was not published, and "Dim Recollections" was revised so as to expunge all trace of Romantic influence: the original meaning of the poem was obliterated.[1]

It is likely that the young Lawrence was steeped in Romantic poetry during his school-days. From Croydon he sent Jessie Chambers a 'school edition of Wordsworth's poems ... for the sake of The Solitary Reaper';[2] it may be presumed he was familiar with the whole of its contents. Jessie also tells how, immediately before Lawrence's first efforts at writing his own poetry, he gave her a copy of Palgrave's Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics, and that it 'became a kind of Bible' to them.[3] It is little wonder that the early verse is saturated with Romantic concepts and images. Finally, she remembers attending after Lawrence a series of lectures on English poetry at the Nottingham University College. These would have furnished the young poet with some academic knowledge of his mentors. The extent to which Romanticism, as much as Christianity, was part of Lawrence's cultural heritage can be gauged in the following extract from one of Jessie's unpublished letters of the period:

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1. See "Narcissus", Poems, ed. Pinto, p.161.
2. E.T., p.122.
3. E.T., pp.99-101, 77-78. The anthology was a present to Jessie on her eighteenth birthday. Cf. ed. Nehls, III, p.453: the year ascribed to the event in A Personal Record is plainly correct, but it is equally likely in this letter that Jessie would have remembered accurately that the book had been a birthday gift. Lawrence wrote to Jessie around 29 Jan. 1908 on the occasion of her twenty-first birthday (Letters, ed. Moore, p.4). Therefore, the book was given to her in January 1905; and it was in spring 1905 that Lawrence began writing poetry.

> * I have felt quite sorry for anyone being in town today. The country has been so perfect, the Garden of Eden was not comparable. I cannot believe Wordsworth when he says we journey further from the east and that things "fade into the light of common day".
>
> For today was no common light, mystery and wonder were in the air, the sky was wide with it, the bird's [sic] were wild and triumphant, the trees solemn and beautiful. Oh, they all breathed a wonder too deep for words, "Uttering leaves of joyous green"; the leaves were all brown and dead, but the joy and beauty were all there. In such glorious sunshine it seemed magnificent to be simply alive, to feel Nature's gladness vibrate through one, I wonder what it can be like to be a disembodied spirit, knowing the secrets we read so dimly in the sunshine and clouds and songs of the birds. There are spirits I am sure, on such a day as this, they seem so near they press upon one and are half painful in their eagerness to reveal the thrilling life they keep. I wish we could know more, it is strange and beautiful. I have loved today. * [1]

At the beginning of this chapter Lawrence's revolt against his Christian heritage, which was associated in his own mind particularly with his mother, was seen to be a matter of necessity, of the forces compelling his own intellectual and artistic growth. To complete the analogy, we might expect that Lawrence would have found it necessary to rebel against his Romantic inheritance, closely linked with Jessie, in order to find his own métier and artistic voice. The manner of his revolt is the subject of the following chapters. To succeed, a revolution must win control of the traditions and apparatus of its predecessors, and must re-organize and direct them to its own ends. Accordingly, our study of Lawrence's 'revolt' against Romanticism will continue to be a study of the influence of the Romantic poets upon him, and the uses to which he put these influences. The 'glinting web', an image from "Dim Recollections" which recurs and diversifies as a symbol through much of the early verse, is chosen to act as a motif, organizing the complex interrelationships between Lawrence and the Romantics. Its usefulness as a symbol, both for Lawrence and for this study, derives from its signifying a vital connection between the living, objective and the observing, subjective worlds.

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1. Nottingham University Library, La B188, letter from Jessie Chambers to Louie Burrows, 6 Feb. 1908.

CHAPTER III THE GLINTING WEB

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> The joy men had when Wordsworth ... made a slit and saw a primrose! Till then, men had only seen a primrose dimly, in the shadow of the umbrella. They saw it through Wordsworth in the full gleam of chaos. Since then, gradually, we have come to see primavera nothing but primrose. Which means, we have patched over the slit. [1]

> Wordsworth's preoccupation was with a distinctively human naturalness, with sanity and spiritual health, and his interest in mountains was subsidiary. His mode of preoccupation, it is true, was that of a mind intent always upon ultimate sanctions, and upon the living connexions between man and the extra-human universe; it was, that is, in the same sense as Lawrence's was, religious.

> If one demands a more positive valuation of the 'visionary moments' in Wordsworth ... it may be granted that they sometimes clearly signify a revitalizing relaxation of purpose, of moral and intellectual effort, in a surrender to:
>
> The gravitation and the filial bond
> Of nature, that connect him to the world.
>
> For if Wordsworth was too inveterately human and moral for the 'Dark Gods' (how incongruous a phrase in connexion with him!), he nonetheless drew strength from his sense of communion with the non-human universe. [2]

Citing The Prelude in the previous chapter as a possible influence on Lawrence's poetry tended to subvert the historical basis of the thesis thus far; for there is no sign that Lawrence had ever read Wordsworth's long narrative poem. Nevertheless, he would have been familiar with the accustomed extracts, published separately from the poem; and he was well schooled in Romantic poetry generally and in a Romantic climate of thought, which he regarded as germane to his own early attempts at poetry:

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1. Phoenix, p.256.
2. F.R.Leavis, Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962), pp.165, 175.

> We were introduced to Palgrave's Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics, when I was eighteen. This became a kind of Bible to us. Lawrence carried the little red volume in his pocket ... he would read to me over and over again, and he pointed out that Book IV comprised nearly half the volume. 'Getting nearer to our own day,' he said significantly. [1]

The early poetry, which seemed so up-to-date and Georgian, would probably have been acknowledged by the poet himself as little more than a return to and a personalization of Romantic Nature. Lawrence was at first repelled by the more nearly contemporary pre-Raphaelites, as he tells us in "Guelder Roses". But it can hardly be assumed, because he returned to the more congenial Romantic ethos, that he had read exhaustively the works of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats. Certainly the memoirs contain hints of a more general acquaintance with the works of Blake, Keats and Shelley than can now be taken as evidence of Lawrence's having read specific poems. Sometimes parallels between poems by Lawrence and a Romantic predecessor are sufficiently compelling to allow the critic some room for hypothesis: it seems likely, for instance, that Lawrence knew Shelley's Adonais. Jessie Chambers has cautioned against too cautious an assessment of the young Lawrence's reading: 'He certainly read much more than is indicated here; he seemed to read everything'.[2] For the most part, affinities between Lawrence's writing and The Prelude, or other of the central texts of English Romanticism, can only strictly be considered as analogies. Yet these analogies illuminate not only Lawrence's poetry but the Romantics'. In the case of The Prelude, if Lawrence was well versed in bits of it and in Wordsworth's shorter lyrics, then the whole text may be taken as the most complete exposition of that poetic world which Lawrence did know, in part. For this reason the 1805 text will be cited invariably,[3] although Lawrence could never have seen this version; for the text is the clearer exegesis of what he did understand, the spirit

1. E.T., p.99-100.
2. E.T., p.123.
3. William Wordsworth, The Prelude: A Parallel Text, ed. J.C.Maxwell, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971).

of the Lyrical Ballads, and it is closer to the spirit of Lawrence's own verse.

The breeze and the sound of running water are motifs, in The Prelude, which accompany joyful inspiration and the moulding and regulating influence of Nature on the growth of the mind. Joy is the medium which enables the poet to express a felt connection with Nature. Wordsworth is almost finicky in his distinctions. It is not 'the sweet breath of heaven' itself that inspires him to write, but 'A corresponding mild creative breeze' (I, 40-42). By contrast, although in "Song of a Man Who Has Come Through" Lawrence does use the traditional symbol for vatic inspiration, the wind of Time, apparently representative of external circumstance, takes it course freely through the inner emotional life of the poet; and unlike Wordsworth's complex 'gentle breeze', Lawrence's wind is gale force, it has some violence about it. In childhood the 'steady cadence' of the Derwent was to Wordsworth 'a dim earnest, of the calm/ That Nature breathes along the hills and groves' (I, 284-85): it helped compose his personality. The stream of "The Wild Common" is, by contrast, more symbolic, having overtones of the unstayable flow of experience; but experience is a matter of physical sensation, and the stream is not just a symbol: the poet dives in it. The climatic and topographical preferences of the two poets do illustrate their temperamental differences. Wordsworth always returned to the Lakes, to the sound of running water and the life-grudging toughness and unchanging grandeur of the fells. Having abandoned the richly variegated, rural countryside of his youth, Lawrence preferred volcanoes and the untamed chaos of his New Mexican ranch.

The Prelude is a procession of varying interrelationships with an external world. In the naked savagery of childhood come calmer moods, when 'joys of subtler origin' are felt. The joys arise from innate, rather Platonic correspondences between the human and the extra-human, from 'first-born affinities that fit/ Our new existence to existing things' (I, 582-84).

Sublime or beautiful, Nature conducts a kind of conditioning, inflicting on the child both pleasure and pain to arouse and intertwine 'The passions that build up our human soul' (I, 433-34). 'Fostered alike by beauty and by fear' (I, 305-06), the growth of the human psyche should remain deeply equivalent to the organic processes of Nature. But no single paradigm suffices to lay bare the passions that build up a human soul. The development is intellectual as well as emotional, and leads to a recognition of what was previously only experienced:

> .. that universal power
> And fitness in the latent qualities
> And essences of things ...
> (II, 343-45)

But such recognition also demands the development of spiritual awareness, 'an obscure sense/ Of possible sublimity' (II, 336-38). Finally, that epiphany, which is remembered as well in "Tintern Abbey", is achieved:

> .. I was only then
> Contented, when with bliss ineffable
> I felt the sentiment of Being spread
> O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
> O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
> And human knowledge, to the human eye
> Invisible, yet liveth to the heart ...
> .. Wonder not
> If such my transports were; for in all things
> I saw one life, and felt that it was joy.
> (II, 401-30)

One should not say 'finally' of this enlightenment, however; for it is The Prelude's creed that the bond between the mind of man and Nature changes and grows as long as imagination persists.

In contradistinction to the rich and manifold programme of growth and relationship set out in The Prelude, the lyrics selected in Palgrave's Golden Treasury are conducive to a simplistic concept of Wordsworthian Nature. His memory of these may have prompted Lawrence's rather Philistine comment in a late essay, that:

> Wordsworth ... worshipped Nature in her sweet-and-pure aspect, her Lucy Gray aspect ... [She], alas, was the form that William Wordsworth thought fit to give to the Great God Pan. [1]

The lyrics do represent a variety of simple pantheism, dwelling on the 'one life' of Wordsworth's youthful epiphany. Lucy is born into and raised by 'an overseeing power/ To kindle and restrain'; and her death is a complete re-absorption into that power. "Lines Written in Early Spring" proclaim a faith that every flower, bird and tree 'Enjoys the air it breathes', and that this communal link permits a rapport between Nature's 'fair works' and the 'human soul', despite 'What man has made of man'. But Wordsworth seldom writes solely of the 'one life' and the medium of joy;[2] and Lawrence's poetry shows, especially if sexual happiness be equated with Wordsworthian joy, an appreciation of the darker side of 'The passions that build up our human soul' (I, 434).

Wordsworth and Lawrence differ in their concepts of the place of pain in Nature. After Darwin and Tennyson's 'Nature, red in tooth and claw', the fear and pain emanating from the phenomenal world were no longer to be sought for in rocky sea-shores and Alpine sublimity; they were in animate objects, in 'the sow ... grabbing her litter/ With red snarling jaws' and in 'the cries/ Of the new-born, and then, the old owl, then the bats that flitter'.[3] Lawrence's circumambient universe is not so likely to compose the mind as to disquiet it, unsettling cultural conventions. Particularly in his later writing, the universe has the aspect of a raging chaos, with which, therefore, it is all the more important that a civilization keep a substantial connection. Notwithstanding, Lawrence's idea of education in his early verse does seem to be that of Hartley filtered through Wordsworth or Coleridge. Yet a preliminary distinction should be

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1. Phoenix, p.23.
2. See M.H.Abrams, "Introduction: Two Roads to Wordsworth", Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays (Twentieth Century Views), (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1972).
3. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.908.

made. In The Prelude mountains and lakes do practically all the tuition, and even London, insofar as it does shape the imagination, is converted into a kind of historical Nature. The child's mothering and fathering is taken on by the Lakes District. Contrariwise, in "Discord in Childhood", although the violent storm and lashing tree are deeply equivalent to human anger, it is the fury of antagonism within the family itself that actually frightens and moulds the child. In "Renaissance" the girl is a 'quicker instructress' than the valley. As for Lawrence's London, "Discipline" tells of the painful and prolonged struggle between the teacher and his class that was the education of both parties. Lawrence's concept of growth is more rawly human than Wordsworth's, and his Nature is more alien, more irreconcilably other.

A handful of Lawrence's poems -- "Dim Recollections", "Piano", "Twenty Years Ago" and "Discord in Childhood" -- are concerned with childhood, notably the latter two poems, which were extracted from the sequence "A Life History/ In Harmonies and Discords". The alternate structure in "A Life History", of harmonious and discordant experiences, crudely charts the fostering of a youth's mind by beauty and fear. "Twenty Years Ago" formed the third harmony; "Discord in Childhood" its antiphony. The second harmony (MS 5, 16), which is enclosed in inverted commas, appears to be a monologue spoken by a mother over her infant. Thematically, it has affinities with some of the Lyrical Ballads, "Her Eyes Are Wild" in particular. The baby suckles from the mother her sorrows, and restores her to thoughts of life:

* ["]Now open at my bosom
Two eyes that are blue like mine
Eyes like the outer twilight
Where the sun's last sufferings shine.

Now clinging over my bosom
Two little crisping hands
Plant my heart like a garden,
Grow lilies in brackish sands." *

Abrams considers the nurturing of the babe in the mother's arms to be Wordsworth's 'crowning figure' for the bond between the individual and his environment:

> Natural objects enter, flow, are received, and sink down into the mind, while the mind dwells in, feeds on, drinks, has intercourse with, and weaves, intertwines, fastens and binds itself to external objects until the two integrate as one. [1]

Thus the poetic lexicon which Wordsworth developed around this bond may have helped to shape Lawrence's symbol of the glinting web. But in the main, Lawrence's metaphors for the subject/object relationship and the sphere of his poetic concerns lie outside the realm of his own infancy and childhood. A biographical hypothesis could be advanced for this exclusion; an early draft of "End of Another Home Holiday" ends on a note of abhorrence at the mutual dependency fostered by the mother/child relationship:

> * Oh inexorable love that drew me home,
> Drew me back, to ask for the heart of my childhood,
> Do not ask me, but let me go! * [2]

Although Lawrence does return to his childhood, it remains an area suffused by a sentimental tranquillity or racked by melodramatic turbulence. Natural piety came instantly to Lawrence. Filial piety, that binds one's days each to each, was a continuing source of conflict in his writing, perhaps subconsciously productive.[3] Characteristically, Lawrence returns to feed, not on childhood, but on adolescence. Their different spheres of recollection affect the timbre of the writing of the two poets: Wordsworth in his sessions of thought achieved a balance and repose, whereas Lawrence's memories of the past are taut with electric, antagonistic tensions.

Lawrence's early verse concentrates on the trials of sexual adolescence and the nervous <u>rite de passage</u> to manhood. In <u>Sons and Lovers</u>, too, although Paul Morel's childhood is formative of his character,

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1. Abrams, <u>Natural Supernaturalism</u>, p.281; and <u>cf</u>. <u>The Prelude</u>, II, 255-69.
2. Ferrier, MS 6.
3. See George H.Ford, <u>Double Measure: A Study of the Novels and Stories of D.H.Lawrence</u>, (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1965), ch.3.

especially inasmuch as Mrs Morel demands a precocious sympathy from her child, nonetheless the experiential grist of the novel is located in adolescence, in the tensions of the relationship with Miriam. By complete contrast, Wordsworth's oeuvre, as Shelley acidly remarked in Peter Bell the Third, is virtually asexual. Leavis's observation, that this never strikes one as the product of morbidity or repression, is just. But Leavis refrains from turning up the obverse of his observation, namely that Lawrence is akin to Shelley and not Wordsworth in his preoccupation with sexuality, and in his poetic 'suggestions and associations'.[1] In Sons and Lovers it is Miriam who rejoices in:

> It is a beauteous evening, calm and free.
> The holy time is quiet as a nun ...

Paul is attracted by the sultry evenings of Baudelaire and Verlaine, by 'la beauté des caresses'.[2] Yet both Lawrence and Wordsworth do share an unease at the part played by pain in the joy of existence or in sexuality. Wordsworth goes further towards justifying its place in the scheme of things; Lawrence towards understanding its psychopathology. And both emphasize strongly the need to accept suffering as an integral part of life, since the totality of life is their ultimate moral positive, their ground value. The works of each are:

> Attempered to the sorrows of the earth,
> Yet centring all in love, and in the end
> All gratulant, if rightly understood.
> (XIII, 383-85)

As "Dim Recollections" and the "Immortality Ode" made clear, Lawrence followed Wordsworth and most traditions of Western mysticism in symbolizing a revelation of life, be it spiritual, transcendent or immanent, by a flash of light, a 'visionary gleam'. Wordsworth's light tends to glitter from the great, fundamental inanimate objects, refracted by mist or clouds, or reflected by the lakes, sea or mountains.[3]

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1. Leavis, Revaluation, p.166-69.
2. Sons and Lovers, p.257.
3. The Prelude, I, 362-67, 391-94, 604-08, 614; II, 144-45, 387-93; IV, 371-72; VIII, 55-56, 559-83; XIII, 36-43.

Lawrence has no taste for inanimate 'Gleams like the flashing of a shield'. The quality of light to which he is drawn is the 'active sheen' present in the 'glimmer of limes', or 'daisy-froth', or the flittering of a 'moon-blue moth'. The poets' discrimination between what shimmers and what gleams signals an important divergence: Lawrence sees the phenomenal world as a 'flickering river',[1] woven with regenerative life that involves the observer; Wordsworth considers it a Power, represented in the permanent being of lakes and mountains, that:

> Holds up before the mind intoxicate
> With present objects, and the busy dance
> Of things that pass away, a temperate show
> Of objects that endure ... (XII, 33-36)

Despite or because of the endurance and immutability of these objects, Wordsworth believes that the extra-human world must be perceived by means of an 'auxiliar light', supplied by the poet's imagination (II, 381-95). In this phenomenological context, he exalts the powers of the poet who, though he must deal with the commonplace, nonetheless transfigures it with the 'transparent veil' of his vision and art:

> Even forms and substances are circumfused
> By that transparent veil with light divine,
> And, through the turnings intricate of verse,
> Present themselves as objects recognized,
> In flashes, with a glory scarce their own. (V, 625-629)

This may be contrasted with the words used by Paul Morel to describe the light which he attempts to reproduce in his paintings:

> .. scarcely any shadow in it; it's more shimmery, as if I'd painted the shimmering protoplasm in the leaves and everywhere, and not the stiffness of the shape. That seems dead to me. Only this shimmeriness is the real living. The shape is dead crust. The shimmer is inside really. [2]

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1. Quotations from "Dog-Tired", "From a College Window", "Twilight" and "A Man at Play on the River" respectively.

2. Sons and Lovers, p.189.

Although as an artist Paul claims the ability to penetrate the essence infusing the 'dead crust' of things, he is more willing bluntly to attribute their lambent vitality to the things themselves. Palpitant light continued to be a touchstone for vitality and quickness of perception in Lawrence's work up to the manifesto, "Poetry of the Present". There poetry is called on to imitate the shimmering 'living plasm' of sensory experience. Thereafter, however, Lawrence's model for perception does alter, drawing on symbols of apocalypse.

But for the young Lawrence the mere living activity of living things was sufficient, unsupplemented by 'light divine'. Light for Wordsworth implies a further, spiritual dimension, 'A Presence which is not to be put by'. In the highest of his epiphanies 'the light of sense/ Goes out in flashes that have shown to us/ The invisible world' (VI, 534-36). This throws up the radical distinction between the Wordsworthian spot in time and the Laurentian:

> * A sensation of playing in fellowship with the minnows
> And the minnows playing, sporting with me. *

'The light of sense' has not gone out; it has been reactivated by a moment of sensuous interplay, of heightened at-one-ness with the living, material universe.

<u>The Prelude</u> does hold one close parallel to "Dim Recollections":

> As one who hands down-bending from the side
> Of a slow-moving boat, upon the breast
> Of a still water, solacing himself
> With such discoveries as his eye can make
> Beneath him in the bottom of the deeps,
> Sees many beauteous sights -- weeds, fishes, flowers,
> Grots, pebbles, roots of trees, and fancies more,
> Yet often is perplexed and cannot part
> The shadow from the substance, rocks and sky,
> Mountains and clouds, from that which is indeed
> The region, and the things which there abide
> In their true dwelling; now is crossed by gleam
> Of his own image, by a sunbeam now,
> And motions that are sent he knows not whence ...
> Such pleasant office have we long pursued
> Incumbent o'er the surface of past time ... (IV, 247-63)

The situations are basically the same. 'The breast/ Of the still water' collects reflections which are like 'emotions recollected in tranquillity'. In them the poet sees his own image, like his past, interspersed with mountains, sky, submarine objects, a flashing sunbeam and 'motions that are sent he knows not whence'. In "Dim Recollections" the poet's thoughts of the place correspond to the boy's poring over the brook; but the poem is concerned less with this correspondence than with what the lad saw in the brook. Wordsworth's long and finely detailed metaphor is deployed precisely to probe this correspondence, and so explore the psychology of memory. As his investigation deepens, he is forced to admit:

> .. so wide appears
> The vacancy between me and those days
> Which yet have such self-presence in my mind,
> That sometimes, when I think of it, I seem
> Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself
> And of some other Being. (II, 28-33)

Wordsworth confesses that his mental image of his childhood may not be purely objective; it may 'Confound ... present feelings with the past'.[1] Yet memory offers something more valuable even than objective historical fact; it allows him the consciousness of 'some other Being'.

Lawrence's verse yields a second parallel to this passage in The Prelude. It occurs in the early version of "The Wild Common", where:

> Naked on the steep, soft lip
> Of the bank I stand watching my own white shadow quivering
> to and fro.

The poet's 'shadow' (Lawrence employs the archaism) symbolizes his intellectual, 'insolent soul'. It scorns the body, which is present in the 'pliant folds rippling' of the water beneath it. The poem clarifies the dependence of the soul on the body; and in the last stanza, when the poet commits himself to the water, the two mingle in a moment that recalls the playing of minnows in "Dim Recollections". Lawrence's metaphor

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1. "Nutting", 49.

evinces a consciousness, not divided in time, but in itself, and it works towards the resolution of that division. Where the metaphors differ, the poets part ways. In writing about Nature, Lawrence hardly ever refers to memory as a faculty. He scarcely seemed to need it; Nature was always there for him; he could turn it on, as George Orwell said, like a tap.[1] Later he posited his theory of the demon, perhaps to account for this facility:

> To the demon the past is not past. The wild common, the gorse, the virgin youth are here and now, the same: the same me, the same one experience. [2]

Of the same late period is the second version of "The Wild Common", in which he seemed to conjoin a symbolism of memory with that originally designating the mind/body dichotomy, almost as if to take issue with Wordsworth's concept of memory as twin consciousness. Such consciousness is 'neither here nor there' in Lawrence's material metaphysic:

> White on the string wimples my shadow, strains like a
> dog on a string, to run on.
>
> How it looks back, like a white dog to its master!
> I on the bank all substance, my shadow all shadow looking up to me, looking back!
> And the water runs, and runs faster, runs faster,
> And the white dog dances and quivers, I am holding his
> cord quite slack.
>
> But how splendid it is to be substance, here!
> My shadow is neither here nor there; but I, I am royally
> here!

As will be seen, the image wavering on the water originally gave rise to a much more positive symbol, that of the glinting web.

Wordsworth's concept of memory, for all its tinge of mysticism, is more commonsensical. Lawrence never had much time for the 'language of common sense',[3] but an undertow of understatement and a dour reasonableness

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1. George Orwell, The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1968), Vol. IV, p.31.
2. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.850.
3. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.488.

and rationality can be felt always operating its restraining power in Wordsworth's sensibility. Peering into the water, he really does want to 'part/ The shadow from the substance' -- Lawrence tried to unite them -- and to determine the origin of each image. Recurrent adjectives in The Prelude are 'solid' and 'real'. They reassure. No splendour of light can quite annihilate the objects which reflect it: 'The solid mountains were as bright as clouds' (IV, 334), but they were still solid. The external, material world is stubbornly there for Wordsworth, never or seldom to pass away:

> .. I still
> At all times had a real solid world
> Of images about me. (VIII, 603-05)

This commonsensical materialism has the effect of keeping in check millennial and radical political enthusiasms. We should be content with the here-and-now which, taking human fallibility into account, is better than most Utopian dreams. Our dealings are with:

> .. the very world which is the world
> Of all of us, -- the place in which, in the end,
> We find our happiness, or not at all! (X, 726-28)

There are affinities here with the dogged realism of Lawrence's novels, and his insistence in "Manifesto" and "New Heaven and Earth" on the need to find fulfilment here in the flesh:

> real fulfilment, nothing short.
> It is our ratification,
> our heaven, as a matter of fact.
> Immortality, the heaven, is only a projection of this
> strange but actual fulfilment,
> here in the flesh.

In the excitement of the moment Wordsworth's material universe can be apparently transformed. To the boy plundering the ravens' nests on the high crags of Esthwaite Vale 'the sky seemed not a sky/ Of earth -- and with what motion moved the clouds!' (I, 349-50). And skating on the frozen Esthwaite Water:

.. oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me -- even as if the earth had rolled
with visible motion her diurnal round! (I, 478-86)

Such sensations, conducive to the subjective intuition of a further world, remain scientifically verifiable. The visual field has merely been distorted by an extraordinary sensory input; indeed, these visual misrepresentations have been investigated over the past decade by scientists applying the schemata of computer engineering to the brain. We are still in the world of phenomena. Yet in both passages Wordsworth reduces the level of reality of his vision to that of metaphor, to an 'as-if'. The exhilaration of the poetry itself strains in the opposite direction, but the reminiscences end in moments of composure and moral reflection. This scepticism, or diffidence about drawing conclusions from moments of heightened awareness, is almost a mental tic. It bespeaks Wordsworth's heritage from the Enlightenment. In "Tintern Abbey", after one of his most authoritative explanations of the spot in time and the transcendent 'one life', Wordsworth very nearly retracts: 'If this/ Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft --'. In "Dim Recollections" Lawrence briefly picked up the habit -- 'A flicker, uncertain, perhaps only fancy' -- though he was to become more resolutely and dogmatically intuitive:

You tell me I am wrong,
Who are you, who is anybody to tell me I am wrong?
I am not wrong.

But for Wordsworth, and this is perhaps another part of his inheritance from the Enlightenment, the material universe has an almost Lockian permanence and intransigence: our common sense tells us it is there; therefore, it is a basic premise. George Fraser has characterized these two

poles of Wordsworth's poetic thought, his introspective fascination with such mental faculties as memory, and his strong sense of material objects, as 'dualistic immanentism'; or in other words, 'Wordsworth's mountains are as tough as his mind'.[1]

But Wordsworth's universe is not Lockian. In fact, he despises Locke's paradigm of sense-impressions mechanically imprinting the tabula rasa of a passive observer. He scorns the conception of the mind as a 'mean pensioner/ On outward forms' (VI, 667-68). His statements on the respective values of sense as against the 'obscure sense/ Of possible sublimity' fluctuate considerably. In "Tintern Abbey" Wordsworth was content 'to recognise/ In nature and the language of the sense/ The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse'. In The Prelude external reality had become merely an anchor, well adapted to keep the mind from running after sick fancies. But the mind must make its own world (III, 121-67); more, it must commune with an invisible and eternal world (VI, 525-48). By the "Prospectus" to The Recluse, a marked hostility to sense had emerged. One end of poetry must be to 'arouse the sensual from their sleep/ Of Death'.[2] Wordsworth's depreciation of sensation and the phenomenal world in favour of spirit and a world of eternity comes increasingly to resemble conventional Christianity. On balance he might be said to prize the senses, not in themselves, but insofar as they lead to glimpses of an invisible world. The mind should be:

> By sensible impressions not enthralled
> But quickened, rouzed, and made thereby more fit
> To hold communion with the invisible world. (XIII, 103-05)

In the intensest spots in time objects are irradiated by powerful spiritual forces, 'As if a voice were in them' and all of material Nature were only 'The types and symbols of Eternity' (VI, 549-72). The

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1. G.S.Fraser, Vision and Rhetoric: Studies in Modern Poetry, (London: Faber, 1959), p.27-28.

2. Wordsworth, Poetical Works, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, revised Ernest de Selincourt, (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p.590, "Preface to the Edition of 1814".

archetypal Wordsworthian moment in "Tintern Abbey" is at two removes from the Laurentian moment, in being filtered through memory and in quietly extinguishing the senses.

Not all manifestations of the invisible world bring with them spiritual peace, composure of the mind or reconciliation with the world. In Simplon Pass the aspect of the phenomenal universe apocalyptically revealed to the poet is of a chaos, dark and turbulent, before whose immense powers and workings the tiny light of the adventuring human spirit pales and dwindles (VI, 549-72). Another of these 'visitings/ Of awful promise' took place in the poet's childhood, after the theft of a skiff and an illicit expedition on Ullswater:

> .. and after I had seen
> That spectacle, for many days, my brain
> Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
> Of unknown modes of being; in my thoughts
> There was a darkness, call it solitude
> Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
> Of hourly objects, images of trees,
> Or sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
> But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
> Like living men, moved slowly through my mind
> By day, and were the trouble of my dreams. (I, 417-27)

These 'mighty forms' that haunt the child's mind, at the time and in retrospect, are plainly associated with the scene of the misdemeanour, and with the cliff that:

> Rose up between me and the stars, and still,
> With measured motion, like a living thing,
> Strode after me. (I, 410-11)

Thus, while the forms linger in the child's mind, becoming the archetypes of his subconscious, they also inform the natural scene for him, as genial, demonic or mythic presences. It is scarcely fortuitous that the passage in which Wordsworth apostrophizes the 'Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe' follows immediately after this incident. The narrative offers a remarkable insight into the sources of his 'dualistic immanentism'. Metaphysically, psychologically and mythologically, Wordsworth's 'mighty forms'

are predecessors of Lawrence's dark gods -- those denizens of the groves of Birds, Beasts and Flowers, mysterious dwellers in the 'dark forest' of the individual soul and in the unknown beyond that 'little clearing in the forest'.[1] By now perhaps the parallel has become a critical commonplace, though an important one. Aldous Huxley was the first to draw attention to it in what remains the best introduction to Lawrence's work, the introduction to his edition of the Letters:

> Lawrence's special and characteristic gift was an extraordinary sensitiveness to what Wordsworth called 'unknown modes of being'. He was always intensely aware of the mystery of the world, and the mystery was for him a numen, divine. Lawrence could never forget, as most of us continuously forget, the dark presence of the otherness that lies beyond the boundaries of man's conscious mind. [2]

A distinction can be made between Lawrence's and Wordsworth's 'unknown modes', namely that Lawrence's concept of the unknown, perhaps inevitably in an age when psychoanalysis and anthropology were founded, is at once more deeply hidden in the human psyche, and also more remotely estranged in an animistic but extra-human, external world. Wordsworth is preeminently the poet of those states of mind which lie adjacent to mental consciousness, the poet of the sub-conscious;[3] Lawrence is a poet of the unconscious. It is a distinction to which we shall return. In sum, however, Wordsworth's understanding that 'The perfect image of a mighty Mind' must include the sense of an 'underpresence' (XIII, 69, 71) is a remarkable anticipation of Lawrence's model for perception of the object in depth, in Birds, Beasts and Flowers.

Does the adult Wordsworth then believe that the dark powers and the bright spirits, which he came to associate with the scenes of his

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1. Studies in Classic American Literature, p.22.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.1249. The affinity was rediscovered by Leavis in Revaluation, p.175; and by Herbert Lindenberger in "Lawrence and the Romantic Tradition", A D.H.Lawrence Miscellany, ed. Moore, (London: Heinemann, 1961), p.331.
3. See Kenneth R.Johnston, "The Idiom of Vision", New Perspectives on Coleridge and Wordsworth: Selected Papers from the English Institute, ed. Geoffrey H.Hartman, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p.9.

childhood, are in philosophical fact immanent in that landscape? This would be pantheism. The Prelude approaches pantheism as a delicate problem. At times it states with conviction that there is a 'Soul .../ That giv[es] to forms and images a breath/ And everlasting motion' (I, 429-30); at other times this same physical Nature, of 'forms' if not images, is mere matter, requiring the animation conferred on it by the creative mind to provide the least enlightenment in return (II, 377-95). This apparent indecision gives rise to a string of 'as-ifs': the cliff that pursues the delinquent rower, for instance, rises up 'As if with voluntary power instinct'. Is it, though? The Prelude seems to hedge its bets, to have its cake and eat it. There is, in fact, a clash between Wordsworth's metaphysic and his psychology, a tension tentatively resolved in the following passage:

> .. 'mid that giddy bliss
> Which, like a tempest, works along the blood
> And is forgotten; even then I felt
> Gleams like the flashing of a shield; -- the earth
> And common face of Nature spake to me
> Rememberable things; sometimes 'tis true
> By chance collisions and quaint accidents
> (Like those ill-sorted unions, work supposed
> Of evil-minded fairies), yet not vain
> Nor profitless, if haply they impressed
> Collateral objects and appearances,
> Albeit lifeless then, and doomed to sleep
> Until maturer seasons called them forth
> To impregnate and elevate the mind. (I, 609-24)

The active, god-inhabited Nature of the pantheist is immediately evident here: it speaks to the poet, but in contradiction of the initial impression of an indwelling intelligence, its language consists of 'chance collisions and quaint accidents'. It is hardly coincidental, however, that such accidents were, upon a time, customarily attributed to the pranks of fairies. If Nature is to be thought of as vocal, a guiding force in life, then it must surely be animated with some intelligent force or forces, be they fairies or demons, dark gods or one god, or a 'Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe'. If it is not so animated, on the other

hand, then the most vivid of Wordsworth's childhood experiences, the sources of his inspiration as a poet, are based on a superstitious fallacy. The universe would then be made up of no more than 'collateral objects and appearances', a horror of Newtonian or Lockian clockwork. Wordsworth here confronts the dilemma of poetry since the Enlightenment, the clash in allegiances between what he can, as a thinking and rational man, seriously believe, and what he must, as an artist possessed of religious insight into the relationship between man and his universe, convey in his art.

The 'dualistic immanentism' of Wordsworth's poetry is the model of his psychological insight, not of his philosophical belief. The effects of this schism are twofold. In one direction his poetry displays what might be called a dissociation. (The term is borrowed, of course, from T.S.Eliot's 'dissociation of sensibility';[1] but its application in this limited context is intended to curtail the cultural, historical and evaluative perspectives radiating from Eliot's use of the term.) One manifestation of this dissociation is to be found in Wordsworth's prose criticism, in his reiterated insistence that:

> .. Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings...
> .. Poetry is passion: it is the history or science of feelings.
> The appropriate business of poetry, (which, nevertheless, if genuine, is as permanent as pure science,) her appropriate employment, her privilege and her duty, is to treat of things not as they are, but as they appear; not as they exist in themselves, but as they seem to exist in the senses, and to the passions. [2]

Thus, eschewing at least in part the disciplines of recorded and verifiable fact and the strictures of his own philosophical scepticism, Wordsworth, in an act of poetic faith, writes of the world as it appears in the moment of passional experience. In these contexts it is wrong to ask of his poetry the vexed questions -- is there a god in the bush, or ghost in the machine? -- or does there truly exist 'A motion and a spirit

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1. T.S.Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets", Selected Essays, (London: Faber, 1951) (Third edition), p.288.
2. Romantic Criticism, 1800-1850, ed. R.A.Foakes, (London: Arnold, 1968), p.43; Wordsworth, Poetical Works, pp.701, 743.

that impels/ All thinking things, all objects of all thought/ And moves through all things'?[1] It is all too easy to juxtapose quotations -- 'Our destiny, our nature, and our home/ Is with infinitude, and only there' (VI, 538-39) against 'the world/ Of all of us -- the place in which, in the end,/ We find our happiness or not at all' (X, 726-28) -- to prove that Wordsworth contradicts himself. As a poet of the emotions he does not contradict himself: the one is our aspiration, the other our despair. The point may be made with greater clarity by juxtaposing, not quotations, but descriptions of incidents. The first is his entry into London as a young man, and the alternations of accidie and imagination accompanying this culture shock (VII, 694-751). Wordsworth claims that, 'even there/ Where disappointment was the strongest', he had felt pleased in the end to accept the city as it was:

> .. pleased
> Through courteous self-submission, as a tax
> Paid to the object by prescriptive right,
> A thing that ought to be. (VII, 141-45)

Concerning his first sight of Mont Blanc, however, he recalls:

> That day we first
> Beheld the summit of Mont Blanc, and grieved
> To have a soulless image on the eye
> Which had usurped upon a living thought
> That never more could be. (VI, 452-61)

The passages demonstrate how little Wordsworth could afford to adhere to a rigid phenomenological paradigm in a poem dedicated to tracing the 'Growth of a Poet's Mind'. Truth to particular mood had to take priority in this narrative over any metaphysical system. Philosophical contradiction is an index only of the confessional and aut obiographical accuracy of the poem. Wordsworth's poetry of passion sets an important precedent and may even influence, in this way, Lawrence's confessional poetry. A similar lack of consistency in metaphysical symbols marks the evocations of intense feeling in Lawrence's poetry. But it is an

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1. "Tintern Abbey", 100-02.

influence filtered through the later nineteenth-century: more pertinent precedents are George Meredith's autobiographical poems of sexual passion.

The subjectivity of Wordsworth's poetry of passion does, nevertheless, point the direction of the synthesis that is achieved in The Prelude between psychological and artistic imperatives and philosophical belief. One greatness of Wordsworth's poetry is the suspension in which the demands of rational scepticism and subjective passion are finally held. The passage cited above, describing Nature's moulding by 'chance collisions and quaint accidents' of his personality in childhood, indicates how Wordsworth resolved this dilemma of belief. He affirms that, however vivid and formative these childhood experiences may have been, they were 'lifeless then'. (Noticeably, this contradicts the impression recreated by the poetry itself.) Nonetheless, Wordsworth avers that the forms and images then impressed on his mind only came to furnish religious and psychological insight, the awareness of an 'underpresence' and of a higher 'Presence which is not to be put by', in later life when augmented by adult powers of memory and introspection. Wordsworth ends by siting all the divinity, which he instinctively locates in the landscape, in the faculties of the human mind. His eternity is always mediated by the human mind. The Prelude is informed, even when it appears to express a conventionally Christian regard for spiritual values, by a rich but not strident humanism. The only end of the 'Wisdom ... of the universe' is to 'recognize/ A grandeur in the beatings of the heart' (I, 440-41). In order to reconcile insight and belief, Wordsworth foregoes the immanentism of his instinct, and retires into an idealism in which the value of the images perceived by the senses does not inhere in the forms which gave rise to the images, but is bestowed upon them by the creative mind. Wordsworth's idealist solution to the dilemma, it may be surmised, was supplied by Coleridge. It does not arise from the sources of Wordsworth's own poetic

sensibility, and it does not appear to have been a productive turning for that sensibility to take.

Nature, therefore, plays a surprisingly small part in the metaphysic of Wordsworth's longer, discursive poems. Leavis is right to propose that his art is succoured by a communion with the non-human universe. But Wordsworth himself accurately fixes the 'haunt, and the main region of [his] Song' in 'the Mind of Man':

> For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
> Deep -- and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
> To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil. [1]

It was in order to retain his sense of these otherworlds that he was compelled to retire into a psychological idealism. He became, not a poet of Nature, but of the states of mind aroused by Nature.

Lawrence drew on Wordsworthian Nature as he found it in the shorter lyrics. Much less metaphysically cluttered and transmuted, the lyrics were far more likely to exhibit to him 'Powers/ Which of themselves our minds impress'.[2] In particular, poems such as "The Green Linnet", combining a light as palpitant as that of "Dog-Tired" with an exultation in embodied life as rich as that of "The Wild Common", may well have exerted their influence on the landscape of Lawrence's early verse:

> My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
> A Brother of the dancing leaves;
> Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
> Pours forth his song in gushes;
> As if by that exulting strain
> He mock'd and treated with disdain
> The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
> While fluttering in the bushes.

But there is evidence to suggest that Lawrence was little drawn to the blend of inner and outer worlds in either Wordsworth's shorter or his longer poems.[3] Lawrence had a closely analogous dilemma to resolve in his own time, and his working out of the schism between science and intuition is at

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1. Wordsworth, Poetical Works, p.590.
2. "Expostulation and Reply", 21-22.
3. See Phoenix II, pp.447-49, 455-56.

once more objectifying and more subjective than was Wordsworth's. Merely through elision of the mental faculty of memory, and through mistrust of introspection carried to excess, he seems to be carried into a more resolutely intuitive, mythologizing stance, and to be attracted to primitive ways of looking at the natural world. A determination to discover a centre of religious value in the phenomenal world motivated him. His abhorrence of psychological and artistic idealism, and the intellectual solipsism which this seemed to imply, far outweighed the repugnance aroused in him by atavistic regression. The effects of these divergences from the mainstream of Romanticism become evident in the vision of Nature in Birds, Beasts and Flowers; and they are central to the analysis of that volume.

The most finely balanced statement in The Prelude of the respective claims of intuition and belief is the immense symbol of the ascent of Snowdon in the final book. Elements of immanentism are retained in this final assessment, and in these are found the similarities to Lawrence's vision in Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Rising out of the sea of mist, Snowdon in moonlight seemed to Wordsworth 'The perfect image of a mighty Mind'. As such it included a chasm giving access to the darkness beneath; for such a mind 'feeds upon infinity' and 'is exalted by an underpresence'. Nature, Wordsworth asserts, in such instances exerts her own power to impress scenes on the mind, so that 'even the grossest' 'cannot choose but feel' (XIII, 73-84). On the other hand, Nature's action in this case resembles nothing so much as the processes of the creative mind and of the imagination, which transforms natural objects in order to rouse other minds from their sensual sloth to an awareness of the invisible world. The final metaphysic is one of reconciliation, of a mystical bridge built between subjective and objective worlds, in which we come to realization of another world beyond the senses and beyond the self. The concept of an existential bridge is marvellously reinforced by the metaphoric figure.

The technique suggests that the reconciliation is a matter, not of philosophical dogma, but poetic faith.

Wordsworth locates the image for the imagination in that cleft in the clouds, which permits a sense of the world beneath the mist:

> .. a blue chasm; a fracture in the vapour,
> A deep and gloomy breathing-space through which
> Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
> Innumerable, roaring with one voice!
> The universal spectacle throughout
> Was shaped for admiration and delight,
> Grand in itself alone, but in that breach
> Through which the homeless voice of waters rose,
> That dark deep thoroughfare, had Nature lodged
> The soul, the imagination of the whole. (XIII, 55-65)

Through the cleft 'Mounted the roar of waters', the sound which had shaped and regulated the child's mind. By virtue of his metaphor Wordsworth is able to symbolize, in the dark 'underpresence' sensed through the chasm, a subconscious in the mind and a corresponding mythic hypostasis in Nature. As has been mentioned, these dark presences prefigure Lawrence's dark gods; they are also a remarkable anticipation of Shelley's chthonic deity, Demogorgon, who is more likely to have acted as paterfamilias to the Laurentian pantheon. The temperamental differences between Wordsworth on the one hand and Shelley and Lawrence on the other are made plain in Wordsworth's metaphysically cautious and emotionally diffident evocation of his Presence in this context. Shelley and Lawrence would be longing to probe into the chasm, to tear aside the veil of mist, to invoke an eruption in which the underlying, unknown darkness would reveal itself. Wordsworth merely notes its presence. Nonetheless, he does employ the imagery of apocalypse. In Wordsworth's 'blue chasm' might be seen the darkness of Bavarian gentians, leading an imagination deeper and deeper into the underworld adventure of death; in his 'deep and gloomy breathing-space', a repetition of the 'fissure in the earth-wall in the gloom', from which a golden snake was to emerge into the glare of a Sicilian noon.

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> And don't talk about putting me in the safe with Keats and Shelley. It scares me out of my life, like the disciples at the Transfiguration. But I'd like to know Coleridge when Charon has rowed me over. [1]

Coleridge's poetic vision is more idealist and his phenomenal world less intransigent than Wordsworth's. To the young Coleridge the 'Supreme Reality' was 'God/ Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole'. Nature thus harmonized and 'all that meets the bodily sense' are symbolic of an informing spiritual reality.[2] In "The Eolian Harp" the moment of harmony with Nature is a moment of supernatural revelation, which leads the poet to speculate:

> .. what if all of animated nature
> Be but organic harps diversely fram'd,
> That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
> At once the Soul of each, and God of all?

The philosophers who had attracted Coleridge, from his schooldays, were Plato and the neo-Platonists: the transcendent 'intellectual breeze' or Demiurge may spring from that quarter. As has been seen, the wind as a symbol of some transcendental life-force, or inspiration, is a poetic property occasionally found in Lawrence's verse; but his source is probably Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind", and the philosophical implications of the symbol remain extrinsic to his fundamental concerns. Sometimes, as in "The Wild Common", the wind, in its detachment from solid objects, is taken to be the type of a barren, unfulfilling freedom. Having posited a transcendent spiritual One, Coleridge quickly and piously recants, lest he should commit himself to a heresy. The Christian God could not be thought of as the Soul of 'all of animated nature' and of the

1. Letter to Amy Lowell, Moore, Intelligent Heart, p.170, 16 Oct. 1914.
2. "Religious Musings", 130-33; "The Destiny of Nations", 18-19.

mind of man. Yet he retains a belief in the validity of the experience, however interpreted, which inspired the poem; he holds to 'a Faith that inly feels'. The diffidence and dissociation recall Wordsworth. The willingness to stand by personal spiritual conviction is perhaps a peculiarly Protestant strain in Coleridge's theology, and a remote cultural ancestor of Lawrence's 'demon' or 'daimon'. The demon, whom Lawrence encouraged to speak in his poems, is a symbological inversion of Coleridge's 'indwelling angel-guide'; on the other hand, he is a direct transliteration from the Greek of another term for inspiration, 'genial spirits'.[1] But it is Blake, marrying heaven and hell, who completes the identification of the Protestant inner light of conscience with the imagination and subjectivity of Romanticism. Lawrence also inherits this religious tradition. The faith in a profoundly intrinsic self and the moral independence, coupled with an intense moral concern, are legacies of his Congregationalist upbringing.[2]

Like Wordsworth, Coleridge was aware of an expanded self, embracing sub-rational nether depths. Indeed, of all the Romantics it was he who was most harrowingly conscious of realms beyond the reach of consciousness or the will's control. His interest in superstition and primitive custom was probably stimulated by a realization that these patterns of ritual and belief offered access to, and effected release from tensions within the subconscious mind. The symbological inversion of Lawrence's demon was employed by Coleridge to evoke an amoral, irrational substratum of being, on which the world of reason, light and love uncertainly rested. In "Love" the minstrel tells a tale of a knight crazed by unrequited passion:

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1. "Religious Musings", 186; "Dejection: An Ode", 39.
2. A.Whigham Price, "D.H.Lawrence and Congregationalism, II", The Congregational Quarterly, XXXIV (October 1956), 324-25.

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade,--

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright;
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight!

The ancient Mariner sails into a region where powers rising from beneath the surface control, by superstition, malevolence and chance, an irrational universe. Christabel lapses into a world of hypnotic trance, where the horrors that befall her cannot be resisted. It is from a region 'savage', turbulent and unknown that the sacred river of "Kubla Khan" rises:[1]

A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover!

The notion of subconscious, pre-civilized, subterranean motivation certainly haunted Lawrence, as did these lines from "Kubla Khan". They are quoted by Rupert Birkin in Women in Love to evince the quality of spontaneous, non-mental sexuality which he admires.[2] Coleridge's symbolist poem, while it undoubtedly has ramifications beyond this, is principally concerned with the creation of art, with the difficulty of capturing these impulses from the unknown, and rendering them accessible to consciousness in an aesthetic object. The artist is an inspired, Sybilline creature, in contact with a further world -- 'Beware! Beware!/ His flashing eyes, his floating hair!' -- and in a critical essay Coleridge specifies the source of his inspiration, 'the genius of the man of genius' as this 'unconscious activity' of his mind.[3] The idea of the artist as well as the man drawing inspiration from the well-springs of the subconscious or the unknown profoundly influenced

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1. Lawrence had read Coleridge's "Christabel" (E.T., p.115) and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (Poems, ed. Pinto, p.351). From Palgrave he knew "Kubla Khan", "Youth and Age" and "Love". His acquaintance with Coleridge's poetry therefore extended beyond Palgrave. There is presumptive evidence that he was familiar with "Dejection: An Ode" (cf. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.131-32), and he may have also known the conversation poems discussed in this analysis.

2. Women in Love, p.47.

3. S.T.Coleridge, "On Poesy or Art", The Literary Remains, ed. H.N.Coleridge, (London: Pickering, 1836), Vol. I, p.223.

Lawrence, in his essay "Poetry of the Present". While in "Kubla Khan" the torrent that issues from the subterranean 'chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething', cannot be controlled or manipulated, the artefact that is built on its waters -- 'a miracle of rare device,/ A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice' -- does demand a measure of conscious, Apollonian control in its making. The dome floats 'midway on the waves'. The conscious is reconciled with and impressed on the subconscious; artistry and inspiration are united. Lawrence's re-working of these symbols, converting the 'pleasure-dome' to 'the very white quick of nascent creation', places the quick in the flood and at the very head of the fountain.[1] Like Shelley, Lawrence opts for a more extreme poetic, emphasizing vatic experience and depreciating conscious craftsmanship. Lawrence rejoices in the power emanating from regions beneath consciousness; Coleridge withdraws from them with horrified fascination.

As was the case with Wordsworth, Coleridge's revelations also descend from an 'Almighty Spirit', glimpsed in "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison", for instance. The poem represents another mystical encounter with Nature than was recorded in "The Eolian Harp", or another formulation of the same experience. In this instance the revelation is remembered, and the poet wishes that his friend may share his experience:

> Ah! slowly sink
> Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!
> Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
> Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!
> Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
> And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my friend
> Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
> Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
> On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
> Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
> As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
> Spirits perceive his presence.

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.182-83.

As in "Tintern Abbey" the satori involves a breach in sensory experience, but the power revealed in this moment is more spiritually active than Wordsworthian Nature: 'he makes/ Spirits perceive his presence'. Coleridge has the weight behind him, if not of orthodox Christianity, of Bishop Berkeley's philosophy. Berkeley believed that all reality was a matter of cognition: in perception it is the perceiving that gives existence to the objects perceived. What is perceived remains constant, because it is eternally perceived by the divine intellect. In "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" the illusory material landscape fades momentarily from sight and the observer looks directly upon God, or 'such hues', non-sensory, 'As veil the Almighty Spirit'.[1] In sensory terms it is the sun that mediates this vision, its 'slant beams' seeming to set alight all earthly objects; just as the vetches in Lawrence's "Dog-Tired" burn red in their sunset. The sun's light, by an agency symbolic of the divine, endows the scene with life and colour, and if it does not unite all things in a transcendent One, like the breeze of "The Eolian Harp", nonetheless it does compose all separate sights and sounds into a harmony. This symbolism again hints at philosophical affiliations, possibly with the neo-Platonists, for whom the sun was the type of the One and the Good, a radiant fountain of light and life, the pattern of a great mind actively perceiving and illuminating all objects.[2] To generalize and label for convenience, the perception of the observer in this poem might be termed Berkeleyan, that of the 'Almighty Spirit' neo-Platonic.

Neo-Platonism exerted a potent appeal for Coleridge. It seemed to answer to his own religious experiences and mystical bent, providing a system in which universal harmony was based on natural law;

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1. A letter to Southey, containing an early version of this passage and declaring 'I am a Berkleyan', is cited in The Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. E.H.Coleridge, (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), p.180; and cf. Watters, Coleridge, p.48-49.

2. See M.H.Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p.58-59.

and it offered reassurance against that other Manichaean universe, the perilously divided world of the Ancient Mariner, in which unreason held sway. Coleridge adopted Berkeley's philosophy for more intellectual reasons, largely to avoid the determinist and mechanist consequences of the theories of mentation proposed by Hobbes, Hume and Locke, and to set in their place a theory of libertarian, organic mental growth. To the extent that Lawrence thought about rival theories of cognition -- and an early poem such as "The Wild Common" or a late essay such as "On Being a Man" are on record to show he was deeply influenced by metaphysical paradigms -- he certainly preferred, of the two Enlightenment philosophers whom he had read, Locke to Berkeley.[1] Materialism attracted him before idealism, in seeming to leave a solid universe for the senses to grasp. At the same time he maintained an unembarrassed certitude in the libertarian spontaneity and organicist models of self-education for which Romantic idealists,such as Coleridge and Carlyle, had argued so tenaciously. It was this line of descent that led Raymond Williams to bracket Coleridge, Carlyle and Lawrence together as polemical prose-writers, espousing the cause of the sane development of individual potentiality against the dehumanizing inroads of industrial civilization.[2] Lawrence could not long remain oblivious to the clash between his own circumambient universe and that prescribed by science and positivism. Yet his response was not to retire into the tower of the individual soul or the impalpable spirit; he carried the war into the phenomenal world, and his mysticism, evolved in defence of his poetic intuition, revolved around the senses. His was, as Huxley defined it, a 'mystical materialism'.[3]

"This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" depreciated the senses in order to appreciate an awareness 'less gross than bodily'. Indulgence of the senses, whether in sensuality or in metaphysics, leads only to the chains

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1. E.T., p.112.
2. Raymond Williams, Culture and Society, 1780-1950, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), pp.200, 207.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.1257.

of political repression or of determinism. "France: An Ode" extolls libertarianism equally with liberty in proclaiming:

> The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,
> Slaves by their own compulsion!

To Lawrence light, hyper-consciousness and sexual repression were the principle sources of compulsion. To Coleridge freedom depended on free will and a just ordering of human faculties. Until men freed their higher selves from the senses' manacles, their actions would be a 'mad game', determined by their own worst nature. Freedom lay in love, a realization of the harmony of all things:

> And there I felt thee! -- on that sea-cliff's verge,
> Whose pines, scarce travell'd by the breeze above,
> Had made one murmur with the distant surge!
> Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
> And shot my being through earth, sea and air,
> Possessing all things with intensest love,
> O Liberty: my spirit felt thee there.

The senses may help to lead us towards this revelation, but the spirit achieves it. Coleridge castigates, even more severely than Wordsworth, a misplaced reliance on the senses. This was the fault of 'that compendious philosophy which, talking of mind but thinking of brick and mortar' had constructed no more than a prison for the human spirit, a 'despotism of outward impressions'.[1] It is ironic that the minute discrimination of shades of colour and the delicate feeling for palpitant life, exhibited in the conversation poems,[2] should bring him closer than any other of the major Romantic poets to Lawrence in his verbal painting of the English rural landscape.

It is the notion of a transcendent One to which Coleridge returns again and again in his poetry, not only as a cognitive paradigm, but as the fulfilment of a deep spiritual and emotional need. In "Frost at Midnight" God is manifest, not as a spirit behind or beyond Nature, but in both the

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1. S.T.Coleridge, Biographia Literaria: Or Biographical Sketches Of My Literary Life and Opinions, ed. George Watson, (London: Dent, 1965), pp.136, 64.

2. See Coleridge: Selected Poems, ed. John Colmer, (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p.27.

human mind and Nature, and in their interaction: 'Himself in all, and all things in himself'. Thus, the mind acquires those unifying powers which the sun typified. In "Dejection: An Ode" the mind should have, but lacks, the power to irradiate, unify and make beautiful the natural world. In this poem Coleridge turns from an outer spiritual power, that was not, however, present in Nature, to an inner, idealist power, quasi-divine, that allows a revelations of the divine:

> Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
> A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
> Enveloping the earth ...

But afflictions have robbed the poet of joy, and only through joy's intervention can the imagination give forth that transforming 'Life's effluence'. So it is, that in the penultimate section of the ode a universe of unrestrained horror, 'Reality's dark dream', is unleashed. Were the imagination exercising its proper function, it would send forth its 'beauty-making power'. The effluence, radiating from the self, imbues all things or all impressions of things with its own light and sound, restoring them to harmony before returning full circle to the self. It unifies and harmonizes. This cyclical emanation resembles the neo-Platonic circuitus spiritualis which, radiating from the One, informs all things with one soul in its descent, before re-ascending to the One.[1] In a striking metaphor, the imagination's effluence is compared to magnetism or electricity:

> To her may all things live, from pole to pole,
> Their life the eddying of her living soul!

Shelley was to take much further this identification of imaginative thought, neo-Platonic emanation and electro-magnetic waves. In "Kisses in the Train" Lawrence resorts to a similar metaphor, though the pulsating force is not intellectual but sexual:

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1. See Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.152.

.. firm at the centre
My heart was found,
My own to her perfect
Heartbeat bound,
Like a magnet's keeper
Closing the round.

It is not an attractive concept of woman that Lawrence expresses in this poem -- a mere completion of the sexual forces of the male. Neither does Coleridge's ode leave a very sizeable role for Nature to play in the development of the human mind: the battery is imagination, the wiring emotion and the phenomenal world a switch (there may be others, in parallel) for closing the circuit,

Both in his philosophical speculations and in fulfilment of his own religious and emotional tendencies, Coleridge adopted an idealism which, while not denying existence to the material world, left little possibility of interplay between mind and Nature. What has been said of Wordsworth's drift towards idealism can be applied to Coleridge, only more so. Coleridge differed from his contemporary in his ability to investigate the subject/object dichotomy, underlying his poetry, with the stringency of a metaphysician, and to arrive in Biographia Literaria at far-reaching philosophical and aesthetic conclusions. Despite occasional verbal echoes, reminders that both writers belong to the same Romantic tradition, there is no evidence that Lawrence read Coleridge's book. But as the central text of Romantic idealism, the Biographia is critically indispensable in any evaluation of Lawrence's orientation towards this tradition. Its mystical idealism is devil's advocate to Lawrence's mystical materialism.

Biographia Literaria is a study of the imagination, conceived, according to Coleridge, from a desire to reach a critical understanding of Wordsworth's poetry. The imaginative qualities recognized in his poetry were 'an original gift of spreading the tone, the atmosphere and with it the depth and height of the ideal world, around forms, incidents and situations of which, for the common view, custom has bedimmed the lustre';

and an ability to 'contemplate the Ancient of Days as if all had then sprung forth at the first creative fiat', giving to his verse a 'freshness of perception which is the constant accompaniment of mental no less than bodily convalescence'.[1] It has been proposed that Lawrence's tubercular childhood and later illnesses contributed to his own enhanced awareness of life and living things. But 'freshness of perception' is a constant touchstone in Lawrence's critical prose; he searches for that 'intrinsic naïveté without which no poetry can exist', and the naïveté is termed, in imitation of Carlyle who was in turn adapting from both Wordsworth and Coleridge, 'wonder'.[2] The religious and philosophical concepts, which are drawn on by Coleridge to isolate the imaginative qualities of Wordsworth's poetry, are a useful break-down of some of the elements which are compounded in his final definitions of the imagination. They include the Christian creation, the notion of a Platonic essence, and of a plane of being, as distinct from becoming, to which the poet has access. Another necessary introduction to understanding Coleridge's final definitions is the involved philosophical preamble in which he purports to lay down a metaphysical basis for literary criticism.

A distinction is made between subject (that which perceives, self or intelligence) and object (that which is perceived, Nature, 'confining the term to its passive and material sense').[3] An act of knowledge must involve a synthesis of these two terms. The greater part of the discourse in devoted to setting out from the subject in order to arrive, by a series of theses, at the object. If this could be done, Coleridge would solve the basic problems of epistemology, including the mind/body problem. In one thesis, however, he postulates the SUM (I AM, self-consciousness or spirit), in which:

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1. Coleridge, Biographia, p.48-49.
2. See Basil Willey, Nineteenth-Century Studies: Coleridge to Matthew Arnold, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p.130-31; Phoenix, p.261. Cf. E.T., p.105-06; Phoenix II, p.598.
3. Coleridge, Biographia, p.144-45.

> .. object and subject, being and knowing, are identical, each involving and supposing the other. In other words, it is a subject which becomes a subject by the act of constructing itself objectively to itself; but which never is an object except for itself, and only so far as by the very same act it becomes a subject. [1]

This postulate falsifies the original thesis. The spirit or subject can hardly convert itself by definition into an object originally defined as material Nature. Coleridge has shifted his ground, as he recognizes, from a 'total and undivided philosophy' to a 'transcendental philosophy', which 'rigidly confines itself to the subjective, leaving the objective ... to natural philosophy, which is its opposite pole'. Early in his discourse he abandons any attempt to integrate material Nature within his philosophic system, concentrating instead on a subjective idealism and on 'facts of mind'. Nevertheless, from this secure eyrie he does make gestures towards the material world and the sense-impressions which the mind gleans from it.

In the SUM, and not the subject, is to be found 'the act of self-consciousness [which] is for us the source and principle of all our possible knowledge'. Out of reach of our knowledge is the possibility that our self-consciousness has for its source the modifications of some higher, or yet higher, self-consciousness 'in an infinite regressus': nonetheless, it is a possibility. Transcendental philosophy has the advantage of reducing all natural history and even modern mechanistic philosophy to the 'sole reality' of the self contemplating itself. In a moment reminiscent of the <u>satori</u> of the poetry, Coleridge hints that he may have found the principle uniting all things in the One. He may indeed, but only through lapsing into an idealism verging upon solipsism.

The SUM has powers both of self-consciousness and self-representation; it may be considered:

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1. Coleridge, <u>Biographia</u>, p.152.

> .. under the idea of an indestructible power with two opposite and counteracting forces which, by a metaphor borrowed from astronomy, we may call the centrifugal and centripetal forces. The intelligence in the one tends to objectise itself, and in the other to know itself as object. It will be hereafter my business to construct by a series of intuitions the progressive schemes that must follow from such a power with such forces, till I arrive at the fulness of the human intelligence.

Coleridge's business is primarily with one faculty of human intelligence, the imagination, though his definitions of the imagination include something not dissimilar to sensation. Using a Kantian dialectic, he points out that the dual forces in the SUM can mutually exist, and are, moreover, productive of a third thing:

> The counteraction then of the two assumed forces does not depend on their meeting from opposite directions; the power which acts in them is indestructible; it is therefore inexhaustibly re-ebullient; and as something must be the result of these two forces, both alike infinite and indestructible; no other conception is possible but that the product must be a tertium aliquid, or finite generation. Consequently this conception is necessary. Now this tertium aliquid can be no other than an interpenetration of the counter-acting powers, partaking of both ... [1]

Clearly Coleridge's argument is tending towards the generation, from the interaction within itself of the spiritual SUM, of something approaching the original definition of the object. If not material Nature, it may be a sensorium, whether mental or material, finite or infinite, capable of receiving sense-impressions from Nature. It is a very tentative gesture towards resolving the mind/body problem. It remains tentative because it violates the tenets of Christianity, science and common sense. It points in the direction, not of an infinite regressus, but a progressus, producing a sensorium, sense-impressions and Nature from the generative action of the SUM. At this juncture, however, Coleridge breaks off, providentially dissuaded from continuing by a letter which he has written to himself. It is another pious retraction, a locus classicus for Romantic diffidence. He returns to his argument only to offer the summary and cryptic definitions of the primary and secondary imaginations.

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1. Coleridge, Biographia, pp.156, 164.

The primary imagination, the 'prime agent of all human perception', is clearly the tertium aliquid generated by the SUM. It inherits the polarity which is intrinsic to the SUM, and so is able to perceive actively and even create the Nature it beholds:

> The primary imagination I hold to be the prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. 1

In a more measured interpretation of this famous crux, Basil Willey points out that Coleridge does not deny the separate existence of Nature, though he does strive towards as complete an idealism as the concession of a material world's existence allows:

> The mind ... works actively in the mere act of perception; it knows its objects not by passive reception, but by its own energy and under its own necessary forms; indeed, it knows not mere objects as such, but itself in objects ... [In] the commonest everyday acts of perception we are making our own world. We make it, indeed, not ex nihilo, but out of the influxes proceeding from Nature ... 2

In his stipulation that the cognitive act must be active, Coleridge is attempting to escape the mechanist consequences of defining perception as mere passive observation. But in flying from these consequences, he has retreated to an almost solipsistic idealism, in which the mind does not so much perceive an external reality as create a world from its introspective processes. Certainly Coleridge has not synthesized his original subject and object. But in any case his metaphysical speculations are of less value than his aesthetic: our primary concern is with what he calls the secondary imagination, the faculty of artistic invention:

> The secondary [imagination] I consider as an echo of the [primary], co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in its mode of operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still, at all events, it struggles to idealize and unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

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1. Coleridge, Biographia, p.167.
2. Willey, Nineteenth-Century Studies, p.22.

Since the secondary imagination is an 'echo' of the primary, we can expect it, too, to have inherited all the properties of the mind or SUM which gave it birth.

The first trait that the secondary imagination might be expected to exhibit is the polarity inherent in the SUM, constantly being resolved and dissolved. This is found in the antithetic syntax of the much-debated 'dissolves, diffuses and dissipates, in order to recreate'. As Colin Clarke has pointed out, one of the salient ambiguities of these verbs is whether they are to be read as transitive or intransitive.[1] The answer is, they are both.[2] The ambiguity precisely reflects the duality of the SUM, which is forever splitting itself into subject and object, and forever dissolving and analysing that object, before re-constituting itself. The creative polarity in the secondary imagination complements those paradigms of vital action and organic growth which are built into the definition. In the metaphors implicitly and explicitly used to define the imagination, Coleridge borrows ideas from the chemical and biological sciences. By reference to these disciplines, the esemplastic resolutions achieved by the imagination are kept 'most remote, in their intimacy, from the conjunction of impenetrable discretes in what he called the "brick and mortar" thinking of mechanical philosophy'.[3] Stephen Prickett summarizes this organicist trait in Coleridge's thought:

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1. Colin Clarke, River of Dissolution: D.H.Lawrence and English Romanticism, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p.29-32.
2. See Coleridge, Biographia, p.153: 'Again the spirit (originally the identity of object and subject) must in some sense dissolve this identity, in order to be conscious of it: fit alter et idem.' By talking of an identity dissolving itself, Coleridge indicates that he wishes the verb to be understood as both transitive and intransitive contemporaneously.
3. Abrams, Mirror and the Lamp, p.169.

> In contrast to the 'mechanical' psychology of Hartley, which had seen the human mind as a thing, passive and cumulative in its organization, [Coleridge] felt [his] own mental processes, at a personal level, as organic, active and unified. The image most frequently used to illustrate the 'organic' view of the mind is that of a growing plant, whose growth, though it could be helped or stunted by outside forces, was essentially inner-determined. [1]

Coleridge had to wrestle with some of the implications of his plant model, with the possibility of preformation and the symbolic overtones attendant on a lower form of life. But by means of this model he could conceive of personality and intelligence as growing and endogenous, or in philosophical terms, as libertarian, self-determining potentialities, even though each faculty or component of the whole remained organically interdependent on the other faculties. This is Coleridge's legacy to his century, the model of personality as a plant-like, self-determining growth.[2] The keystone of this attempt to impose a vitalist paradigm was the imagination. The foundation was a spiritual idealism that, by isolating the essential self from the impressions of random and mechanical stimuli, could consider intelligence as 'a self-development, not a quality supervening to a substance'.[3]

Coleridge's influence on Lawrence's verse, however indirect, can be seen in the instinctive and accomplished deployment of the sycamore trees in "Discipline" as symbols for the educational development of the child's mind.[4] Though Lawrence rarely resorts thereafter in his poetry to the symbol of a plant or tree to convey the development of human potentiality,

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1. Stephen Prickett, Coleridge and Wordsworth: The Poetry of Growth, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p.14.
2. Willey, Nineteenth-Century Studies, pp.12, 32-38, passim.
3. Coleridge, Biographia, p.155, my italics. Cf. Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. E.L.Griggs, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), Vol. IV, p.969, 30 May 1815, for a summary of organicist self-development, and a précis of Coleridge's intentions in the Biographia.
4. See also Poems, ed. Pinto, pp.51-52, 915-17, 919-20.

other organic models are prevalent in his verse. Seasonal metaphors are common, and the patterns of seeding, flowering, fruition and autumnal decay are seen as running equally through natural and human life. Coleridge would perhaps have appreciated the vigour and complexity with which the model of fruition is developed and proliferates through Birds, Beasts and Flowers; though he might have had misgivings about a pagan element which this seems to introduce into the volume. In Lawrence's work organicism tends to animism. Not content with ousting mechanism from the psyche, he seeks to expunge it as well from the phenomenal world. Both Coleridge and Lawrence agree in extending their organic and experiential model from the imagination to the artefact. A work of art for them is made in the image of its creator: its rules 'are themselves the very powers of growth and production'.[1] But they differ widely in assessing the 'powers of growth' and the living experiences that underlie the making of a poem. The criterion that a creation should reflect creative experience suggests to Lawrence that the poem must be quick and inconclusive in its organization:

> There must be mutation, swifter than iridescence, haste, not rest, come-and-go, not fixity, inconclusiveness, immediacy, the quality of life itself, without dénouement or close. There must be the rapid momentaneous association of things which meet and pass on the forever incalculable journey of creation: everything left in its own rapid, fluid relationship with the rest of things. [2]

To Coleridge the same mimetic requirement implies that art should unify and reconcile the discordant facts of experience, reflecting the creativity of the SUM or self-consciousness. The poem should achieve a high formal poise:

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1. Coleridge, Biographia, p.218.
2. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.183.

> .. the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature ... [1]

Coleridge's conception of the difficulty of a poem and his critical insight into the antinomies resolved in great poetry seem to have been of an altogether higher order than Lawrence's. In one direction, however, his proposal that 'a predominant passion' may be a potent means of 'reducing multitude to unity' of effect, paves the way for Lawrence's confessional poetry; and his summary declaration that 'The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity'[2] seems only a more inward version of Lawrence's proclamations, that novels 'in their wholeness' should 'affect the whole man alive', and that 'the essential quality of poetry' is that it 'makes a new act of attention, and wakes us to a nascent world of inner and outer suns'.[3]

Elsewhere Coleridge formulates a less restrictive idealist aesthetic, which appears to allow room for interplay between the mind and Nature. In "On Poesy or Art", for example, he proposes that the function of the imagination is to perceive and copy the essence of Nature:

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1. Coleridge, Biographia, p.174.
2. Coleridge, Biographia, pp.177, 173.
3. Phoenix, pp.259, 536.

> If the artist copies mere nature, the natura naturata, what idle rivalry ... you must master the essence, which presupposes a bond between nature in the higher sense and the soul of man.
>
> The artist must imitate that which is within the thing, that which is active through form and figure, and discourses to us by symbols -- the Natur-geist, or spirit of nature, as we unconsciously imitate those whom we love; for so only can we hope to produce any work truly natural in the object and truly human in the effect. 1

The theory derives not only from German philosophy, but from the epistemology of Plato and the aesthetic theories of the neo-Platonists. Noting the discrepancy between Coleridge's two definitions of imagination, I.A.Richards termed the first idealist (that 'the mind of the poet creates a Nature into which his own feelings ... are projected') and this second definition realist (that the mind of the poet penetrates a film of familiarity, or 'dead crust' as Lawrence called it, to gain insight into the essence of Nature).[2] Coleridge's realist imagination is obviously more akin to Lawrence's, though the essence or Natur-geist which the artist perceives is spiritual, not the embodied, protoplasmic life, accessible to the senses, which is perceived by Paul Morel. Discussing the value of Nature to the realist imagination, Coleridge recalls how:

> From my very childhood I have been accustomed to abstract and as it were unrealize whatever of more than common interest my eyes dwelt on; and then by a sort of transfusion and transmission of my consciousness to identify myself with the Object -- and I have often thought, within the last five or six years, that if ever I should feel once again the genial warmth and stir of the poetic impulse, and refer to my own experiences, I should venture on a yet stranger & wilder Allegory than of yore -- that I would allegorize myself ... 3

In the second half of this passage, Coleridge returns to an idealist model, but the first, in which he tells of unrealizing the object in order to identify it with the self, is an extension of the realist imagination.

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1. Coleridge, Literary Remains, Vol. I, pp.222, 225.
2. I.A.Richards, Coleridge on Imagination, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960) (Second edition), p.145.
3. Coleridge, Letters, ed. Griggs, Vol. IV, p.1214-15, [Nov. 1819?].

The simplest example one could hope to find of this imagination at work would be a meditation on a single object; and "The Snow-Drop" provides such an example, though it does not describe the object directly, but a poetess contemplating the object:

> Her eye with tearful meanings fraught,
> She gaz'd till all the body mov'd
> Interpreting the Spirit's thought --
> The Spirit's eager sympathy
> Now trembled with thy trembling stem,
> And while thou droopedst o'er thy bed,
> With sweet unconscious sympathy
> Inclin'd the drooping head.
>
> She droop'd her head, she stretch'd her arm,
> She whisper'd low her witching rhymes,
> Fame unreluctant heard the charm,
> And bore thee to Pierian climes!
> Fear thou no more the Matin Frost
> That sparkled on thy bed of snow;
> For there, mid laurels ever green,
> Immortal thou shalt blow.

Although the poetess appears to attain to a state of emotional and spiritual communion with the flower -- the voice of 'eager sympathy' might protest that she shares its very feelings -- the poem insists that the imagination achieves its rapport primarily with the body and the senses, and with itself, 'Interpreting the Spirit's thought'. Even in this realist situation the imagination, because 'the bond between nature ... and the soul of man' must be spiritual and the material object lacks spirit, is principally concerned with self-interpretation and -dramatization. The actual flower, which is the occasion for this introspective exposition, has its recompense in being elevated to fields of artistic immortality, <u>aere perennius</u>. "The Snow-Drop" does, however, display a degree of sensuous as well as spiritual sympathy, in the detail of the 'drooping head'. Here and in the conversation poems Coleridge shows himself possessed of that power of sensuous empathy, which was to become the hallmark of Keats's verse. One need only open <u>The Complete Poems</u> to find Lawrence richly endowed with the same capabilities. "The Wild Common" 's metaphor for the rabbits, 'handfuls of brown earth', evokes not just their colour, but the

warmth, weight and waiting, potent stillness. When 'the hill bursts and heaves under their spurting kick', not only does the earth come alive, but one feels the rabbit wrestling in the hands to break loose. Even the stream that 'pushes/ Its bent course mildly' seems to have a consciousness. One imagines the difficulty of pushing something fluid, like a garden hose. Even more subtly, the opening couplet --

> The quick sparks on the gorse-bushes are leaping,
> Little jets of sunlight texture imitating flame ... 1

-- conveys the heatless, almost spiritual vitality of the sparky flowers, a vitality which seems to lie beyond the range of sensuous empathy, as if human life could not quite participate in the regeneration of the spring. But the sensual connotations of 'leaping' and 'little jets' lead up to the physical apprehension of the paradox which the gorse-flowers embody, being both sunlight and texture. Responding to these connotations, the reader is put in touch with the rebirth of spring.

Criticizing "The Snow-Drop" from a Laurentian point of view, one would point out that the poem is comparatively deficient in sensuous awareness of the flower; and that the poetess has failed to recognize the plant's inhuman life by reducing it to a repository for her all-too-human sentimentality. The distinction between the idealist Romantic object and the realist twentieth-century object can be made by comparing Coleridge's snow-drop with a descriptive passage in The White Peacock, and with poems by Ted Hughes and Jon Silkin. The narrator, Cyril, serves as Lawrence's spokesman:

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1. A version. CP omits the comma, leaving open the possibility of reading the first line as enjambed. Rhythmically, it is preferable to read the second line as grammatically parallel to the first. Thus, the 'quick sparks' are modified into 'little jets' rather than identified with them.

> As I talked to Emily I became dimly aware of a whiteness over the ground. She exclaimed with surprise, and I found that I was walking, in the first shades of twilight, over clumps of snowdrops. The hazels were thin, and only here and there an oak tree uprose. All the ground was white with snowdrops, like drops of manna scattered over the red earth, on the grey-green cluster of leaves. There was a deep little dell, sharp sloping like a cup, and a white sprinkling of flowers all the way down, with white flowers showing pale among the first in-pouring of shadow at the bottom. The earth was red and warm, pricked with the dark, succulent green of bluebell sheaths, and embroidered with grey-green clusters of spears, and many white flowerets. High above, above the light tracery of hazel, the weird oaks tangled in the sunset. Below, in the first shadows, drooped hosts of little white flowers, so silent and sad; it seemed like a holy communion of pure wild things, numberless, frail, and folded meekly in the evening light. Other flower companies are glad; stately barbaric hordes of blue-bells, merry-headed cowslip groups, even light, tossing wood anemones; but snowdrops are sad and mysterious. We have lost their meaning. 1

The snow-drops are described in considerable sensuous detail, seen from a variety of different angles and in changing lights, en masse and in close-up. The emotional associations of the flowers are given -- they 'droop' and are frail, meek, 'sad and mysterious' -- and these qualities, it is implied, inhere in the flowers themselves. Even in this early piece of writing, Lawrence plays on the double-meaning of 'hosts of little white flowers' and creates overtones of a sacred grove, in order to hint at a further immanent mystery in living things. Ted Hughes's "Snowdrop" is a much tougher customer, a microcosmic reflection of 'the globe shrunk tight for winter'. Hughes offers a revelation of the seemingly fragile plant's preformed inflexibility, and the powers of ruthless endurance which enable it to survive its early flowering:

> She, too, pursues her ends,
> Brutal as the stars of this month,
> Her pale head heavy as metal. 2

A grudging respect and even awe emerge for the innate life that remains. Jon Silkin's "Snow Drop" is an unremitting close-up, the flower a focus for scientific diction and physical forces. The detached, clinical observation creates an emotional void, into which there starts an unforeseen,

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1. The White Peacock, p.153.
2. Ted Hughes, Lupercal, (London: Faber, 1960), p.58.

elegiac sense of loss:

> A white
> Cylinder with two
> Thin bands of green, broken
> Away where that part finishes.
> There is no more.
> The sun's heat reaches the flower
> Of the snowdrop. [1]

All these poems and descriptions lie along the one historical perspective, solving, dissolving and despairing of the contrary claims of poetic intuition and scientific positivism to the world perceived by the senses.

Criticizing the Laurentian twentieth-century pieces from a Coleridgian point of view, one would put forward that the different emotional overtones of the descriptions demonstrate convincingly how the poets were interpreting, not the flower itself, but their spirits' thoughts; that 'Poetry is purely human, for all its materials are from the mind, and all its products are for the mind'.[2] Coleridge would recognize Hughes and Silkin as documenting a de-humanized Nature, in which the lack of spiritual or imaginative intercession has reduced the phenomenal world to the horrific chaos of "Dejection: An Ode". Lawrence's Nature he would dismiss as pantheistic delusion, that fallacy to which Wordsworth was so distressingly prone. Although he would not allow that the poetess of "The Snow-Drop" sees only herself, he would insist that all she sees of value is impressed by herself on the object or sense-impression:

> O Lady! we receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone does Nature live. [3]

The snow-drop is incidental to the poem's <u>raison d'être</u>. The feeling of the poetess motivates the poem, and to this the snow-drop offers not so much a correlative, as a means or irritant on which feeling can be crystallized. Coleridge is aware that such a sphere of imaginative action may seem limited and self-consuming:

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1. Jon Silkin, <u>Amana Grass</u>, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), p.37.
2. Coleridge, <u>Literary Remains</u>, p.217.
3. "Dejection: An Ode", 47-48.

> Disturbed as by the obscure quickening of an inward birth ... man sallies forth into nature -- in nature, as in the shadows and reflections of a clear river, to discover the originals of the forms represented to him in his own intellect. Over these shadows ... Narcissus-like, he hangs delighted: till ... he learns at last that what he seeks he has left behind, and but lengthens the distance as he prolongs the search. [1]

His metaphor here, for the realist imagination's eventual recognition of itself in the idealist, recalls Lawrence's "Dim Recollections" (later entitled "Narcissus") and Wordsworth's symbolic reflections seen from a boat in The Prelude (III, 247-68).[2] Lawrence's brook had permitted some self-knowledge, but its principal revelation had been of a life beyond the self, communion with which was to be preferred to 'deep reflections'. Wordsworth's lake had offered him primarily an image of himself, though this had seemed like some other self, and half the fascination of the reflection lay in the disentangling of image from image and substance from shadow, and in the understanding of their interrelationships. Coleridge's river represented to him 'the originals of the forms' of his own intellect, and the lesson it eventually taught was of the unity of the representational and observational powers of the mind. Nevertheless, all three poets intimate that, at the moment of sensuous communion, of discovery of relationship or of self-revelation, a further, mystical power supervenes from beyond the phenomenological components evident in the scene.

Abrams dubs Coleridge a 'compulsive monist'.[3] One of the attractions of idealism for him must have been its reduction of all discourse and experience to a single principle: even the subject/object dichotomy of mind and Nature became only an extension of the polarity of

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1. Coleridge, The Friend, Vol. I, p.508-09; quoted from Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.269.

2. Reflection in water is an image common to much Romantic poetry. Cf. Keats's "'I stood tip-toe upon a little hill'"; Shelley, passim, e.g., "To Jane: The Recollection"; and Clare's "Recollections After a Ramble", which looks back to childhood as a time:

> When by clearing brooks I've been,
> Where the painted sky was given,
> Thinking, if I tumbled in,
> I should fall direct to heaven.

3. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.269.

the SUM, whose antinomies 'in the one tends to objectise itself, and in the other to know itself as object'.[1] The excited moment in Biographia Literaria, in which, developing the creative powers of the SUM, he adumbrates how these may be the unifying principle connecting God, the mind and all its multiple faculties, its subconscious and its sensorium, all discourse, art, philosophy and science, and all the powers of material Nature; then goes on to quote an extract from Synesius, summarizing at once triumph and Romantic diffidence -- 'Father, be gracious if contrary to the world and fate I have touched the One';[2] -- this excitement is exactly that of the revelations of "The Eolian Harp" and "France: An Ode", in which God unifies all things, or the mind, through grace 'Possessing all things with intensest love', 'shoots its being through earth, sea and air'.[3] Coleridge's monism reveals itself in the similarity of all his paradigms, whether for freedom, love or metaphysics, communion with Nature or with God. In practice and in theory, the realist imagination reduces itself to the reality transcending all other realities, the One of idealism. Yet Coleridge does also leave room in his philosophy for multiplicity. Unity must be 'unity in multeity', especially in aesthetics, where art must reproduce the diversity and complexity of nature. His highest praise is reserved for the fundamentally realist imagination of Shakespeare, who could dart his being into 'all things, yet remain himself'.[4] In the case of Wordsworth it was suggested that the underlying mode of his poetic sensibility lay in the intuition of an immanence in Nature. For Coleridge this basic mode, while not restricted to the perception of the phenomenal world, is to be found in a deep religious gratitude for moments in which the chaos of thought and experience are clarified, becoming a unified and harmonious whole:

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1. Coleridge, Biographia, p.156.
2. Coleridge, Biographia, p.155.
3. Cf. Coleridge, Biographia, p.177; and "France: An Ode", 100.
4. Coleridge, Biographia, p.180.

As late I journey'd o'er the extensive plain
   Where native Otter sports his scanty stream,
Musing in torpid woe a Sister's pain,
   The glorious prospect woke me from the dream.
At every step it widen'd to my sight --
   Wood, Meadow, verdant Hill, and dreary Steep,
Following in quick succession of delight, --
   Till all -- at once -- did my eye ravish'd sweep!
May this (I cried) my course through Life portray!
New scenes of Wisdom may each step display,
   And Knowledge open as my days advance!
Till what time Death shall pour the undarken'd ray,
   My eye shall dart thro' infinite expanse,
And thought suspended lie in Rapture's blissful trance.

The mystical experience and the joy in this early sonnet, "Life", where a sudden brightening and a broad prospect allowed the poet to shoot his being through earth and air, to obtain an intimation of the infinite, and to hope in later life that he might achieve like revelations through Wisdom and Knowledge, was epitomized some forty years later in these lines of praise and gratitude, interpolated in "The Eolian Harp":

O! the one Life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where ...

At such moments as these, all ontological barriers are surpassed, and the self in its unified vision communes not only with itself, but with an infinite beyond. The SUM and its self-communings should be considered:

.. neither as infinite nor finite exclusively, but as the original union of both. In the existence and recurrence of this contradiction consists the process and mystery of production and life. [1]

Lawrence, too, saw in 'production and life' a mystery. The involuted polarities of his essay, "The Crown", produce from their various resolutions a mysterious third thing, consummate life, of which Lawrence avers in Look! We Have Come Through!:

.. perfect, bright experience never falls
To nothingness, and time will dim the moon
Sooner than our full consummation here
In this odd life will tarnish or pass away.

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1. Coleridge, Biographia, p.153.

But though undimmed by it, Lawrence's sensuous eternity exists in time, and is of another order than Coleridge's spiritual infinite, out of time. Again, Lawrence was attracted by the mystical transcendence of ontological barriers in moments of heightened awareness. The equivalent to Coleridge's shooting his spiritual being through the elements occurs at the crisis of the Tortoises sequence in Birds, Beasts and Flowers -- a moment of material transcendence, when:

> .. the last plasm of my body was melted back
> To the primeval rudiments of life, and the secret.

But whereas for Coleridge the principle of unity transcends the individuality of the parts which compose the whole, for Lawrence the fact of individual being is of prime importance. Characteristically, he thinks in terms, not of transcendent wholes, but of relationships between single beings. In this he more closely resembles Wordsworth. 'We live', Lawrence wrote, 'in a multiple universe ... either a dualistic or a pluralistic universe. The Greeks, being sane, were pantheists and pluralists, and so am I.' Lawrence looked to the depths of both subject and object, and to the existential rift between them, to search out the 'gods and strange gods and unknown gods' of this 'pluralistic universe'.[1] Coleridge, by contrast, was convinced that the true source of the Many was to be found in self-consciousness: 'The postulate of philosophy, and at the same time the test of philosophic capacity, is no other than the heaven-descended Know thyself!' The basis of imagination was 'the sacred power of self-intuition'.[2] To Lawrence 'Know thyself' seemed a dangerous half-truth, and no absolute, having been so long 'the great commandment to consciousness of our era'. He sought to replace the active SUM or self-consciousness of Coleridge with a commandment of active being, 'Be thyself!'[3] Too much

1. Phoenix II, p.432.
2. Coleridge, Biographia, pp.144, 139.
3. Phoenix, p.719; Phoenix II, p.456.

self-knowledge led to obfuscation; an excess of spiritual idealism to solipsism. He would have endorsed Shelley's verdict on Coleridge:

> .. he who sits obscure
> In the exceeding lustre and the pure
> Intense irradiation of a mind
> Which, with its own internal lightning blind,
> Flags wearily through darkness and despair ... 1

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1. "Letter to Maria Gisborne", 202-06.

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> Adherence to a metaphysic does not necessarily give artistic form. Indeed the over-strong adherence to a metaphysic usually destroys any possibility of artistic form ... When a young painter studies an old master, he studies, not the form, that is an abstraction which does not exist: he studies maybe the method of the old great artist: but he studies chiefly to understand how the old great artist suffered in himself the conflict of Love and Law, and brought them to a reconciliation. Apart from the artistic method, it is not Art that the young man is studying, but the State of Soul of the great old artist, so that he, the young artist, may understand his own soul and gain a reconciliation between the aspiration and the resistant. 1

A point of introduction to Shelley's poetry can be found in Biographia Literaria. Coleridge had shown how one might proceed, not by transcendental philosophy but by science, to elevate the object to the spiritual subject:

> The highest perfection of natural philosophy would consist in the perfect spiritualization of all the laws of nature into laws of intuition and intellect. The phaenomena (the material) must wholly disappear, and the laws alone (the formal) must remain ... In the appearances of magnetism all trace of matter is lost, and of the phaenomena of gravity, which not a few among the illustrious Newtonians have declared not otherwise comprehensible than as an immediate spiritual influence, there remains nothing but its law, the execution of which on a vast scale is the mechanism of the heavenly motions. The theory of natural philosophy would then be completed when all nature was demonstrated to be identical in essence with that which in its highest known power exists in man as intelligence and self-consciousness ... 2

Shelley's fascination with the physical sciences becomes comprehensible in the light of this passage. Recent criticism has exposed the extent to which description and symbolism, in such poems as Prometheus Unbound, "The Cloud" or "Ode to the West Wind", are based on his personal observation of natural phenomena, the accounts of natural historians and

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1. Phoenix, p.477-78.
2. Coleridge, Biographia, p.145-46.

the scientific knowledge of his day.[1] Peter Butter has pointed out that contemporary physics sometimes attributed a common origin or principle to the phenomena which attracted Coleridge in his metaphysical speculations; and that Shelley, in his fit of youthful materialist proselytism, had asserted the identity of light, electricity and magnetism with thought itself.[2] In his later poetry it is thought which assimilates gravity and electro-magnetic radiation into its operations, a unity which leads M.H.Abrams to conclude that 'in Shelley's spiritual physics' these forces and waves 'are material correlates of the attractive and life-giving powers of universal love'.[3] Earl Wasserman would dispute whether, in the completeness of Shelley's idealism, a distinction such as 'correlates' has any validity.[4] Things and, in particular, forces are thoughts to Shelley, interconvertible manifestations of the One, the universal Mind or universal Love. If anything, Shelley is an even more ardent monist than Coleridge, although idealist transcendence has a different significance for him. In lieu of the Coleridgian longing for order and harmony, one finds Shelley revelling in the sheer excitement and the access of psychic energy which such transcendence offers. What had been for Coleridge a focus for religious craving becomes for Shelley the source of energy, of a burning desire for transformative, magical power. Again, one seems to be light-years from Lawrence's mystical materialism. But Shelley's identification of the inner life with some principle of material Nature does have direct and important repercussions on Lawrence's verse. As has been mentioned,

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1. Peter Butter, Shelley's Idols of the Cave, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1954); Desmond King-Hele, Shelley: His Thought and Work, (London: MacMillan, 1971) (Second edition); G.M.Matthews, "A Volcano's Voice in Shelley", Shelley: A Collection of Critical Essays (Twentieth Century Views), ed. G.M.Ridenour, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p.111-43.
2. Butter, Idols of the Cave, pp.133, 143-45, 157-58.
3. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.307.
4. Earl R.Wasserman, Shelley: A Critical Reading, (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1971).

the equation in Prometheus Unbound (IV, 319-492) of magnetic and gravitational force-fields with neo-Platonic emanations and with the sexual impulse is partially reproduced in "Kisses in the Train"; and it specifically enters into other of Lawrence's 1911 poems, such as "Come Spring, Come Sorrow". Shelley's remarkable assimilation of science into the discipline of poetry had, however, little to contribute to the combative stance of Lawrence's maturer verse.

Contra Leavis, Shelley's 'grasp of the actual', in "Ode to the West Wind" and elsewhere, must be upheld. His powers of observation are acute and accurate, and these faculties are considerably sharpened by scientific knowledge and curiosity.[1] Yet notwithstanding his keen eye for a waning star or the web of light refracted in water, Shelley's poetic vision is always straining beyond sensory experience and immediate circumstance. He values the individual phenomenon, in its evanescence, as the point of interaction of greater, eternal, abstract forces. The specific he generalizes; men become mankind. The concrete he abstracts; Nature becomes an aggregate of disembodied forces. The physical he idealizes, so that even the natural Demiurge, 'the one Spirit's plastic stress' in Adonais, must be surpassed and the soul transcend into the realm of being. It is only in this ideal quest that he finds the imaginative release for which he craves. Hence, too, comes his impatience with Wordsworth's prosaic limitation of his imagination to the confines of daily experience:

> He had as much imagination
> As a pint-pot; -- he never could
> Fancy another situation
> From which to dart his contemplation
> Than that wherein he stood. [2]

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1. Leavis, Revaluation, p.204-06; see Selected Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. John Holloway, (London: Heinemann, 1960), p.xxi - xxii.

2. Peter Bell the Third, IV, 298-302.

The darting or shooting vision, which was a feature of Coleridge's idealist imagination, is a perpetual accompaniment of Shelley's perhaps too effortless transcendence of the everyday, his endless surpassing of the pedestrian ontological barriers of mind and matter, the one and the many, the human and the superhuman.

Yet Wordsworth is probably the definitive influence on Shelley's early poetry: without his Nature and his 'visionary gleams' of a world beyond Nature, the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" could hardly have been written. In Shelley's hymn 'The awful shadow of some unseen Power' manifests itself throughout in images reminiscent of Wordsworth's landscapes. Inanimate Nature furnishes the forms in which apparitions of the Power occur. In fact, the shadow which the poet has sensed is the form assumed by the 'Spirit of Beauty', an eternal spirit, but one whose visitations in this sphere must be veiled and momentary. Hers is an 'inconstant glance'; but as his adjurations prove -- 'Depart not as thy shadow came,/ Depart not' -- Shelley for one is not content with intimations of immortality. It is a blazing, all-encompassing apocalypse for which he longs -- one remembers that he shared Lawrence's taste for volcanoes and earthquakes[1] -- and for the acquisition of power and the enhancement of life that would follow from such a revelation:

> Man were immortal and omnipotent,
> Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
> Keep with thy glorious train firm state with in his heart.

Shelley's "Hymn" is more truly Platonic than Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode". A translation which Shelley himself made of Plato's Symposium contains an exact analysis of Shelley's own longing to proceed through abstraction and idealization towards 'Intellectual Beauty':

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1. See, e.g., Kangaroo, ch.8, and p.187. The newspaper article inserted here by Lawrence contains a misquotation from "Mont Blanc", 72-73: 'Where the old Earthquake-daemon taught her young/ Ruin'.

> 'He who has been disciplined to this point in Love, by contemplating beautiful objects gradually, and in their order, now arriving at the end of all that concerns Love, on a sudden beholds a beauty wonderful in its nature ... It is eternal, unproduced, indestructible; neither subject to increase nor decay: not, like other things, partly beautiful and partly deformed; not at one time beautiful and at another time not ... Nor does it subsist in any other place that lives or is, either in earth, or in heaven, or in any other place; but it is eternally uniform and consistent, and monoeidic with itself. All other things are beautiful through a participation of it, with this condition, that although they are subject to birth and decay, it never becomes more or less, or endures any change. When any one, ascending from a correct system of Love, begins to contemplate this supreme beauty, he already touches the consummation of his labour. For such as discipline themselves upon this system, or are conducted by another beginning to ascend through these transitory objects which are beautiful, towards that which is beauty itself, proceeding as on steps from the love of one form to that of two, and from that of two, to that of all forms which are beautiful; and from beautiful forms to beautiful habits and institutions, and from institutions to beautiful doctrines; until, from the meditation of many doctrines, they arrive at that which is nothing else than the doctrine of the supreme beauty itself, in the knowledge and contemplation of which they at length repose.' [1]

It is to be remembered that in the Symposium Socrates prefaced these remarks on the true nature of Love or Eros, by confessing that he himself had been instructed in these mysteries by the Orphic priestess Diotima. R.G.Woodman has persuasively argued that it is this impulse, Eros, which is the ruling passion and dominant theme of Shelley's poetry. In the poetry Eros is to be understood less as the basis of a discursive metaphysical system than as a fundamental religious drive, connected with the poet's very inspiration.[2] Lawrence recognized as well, in the Study of Thomas Hardy, that Shelley in his poetry adhered to an otherworldly religious impulse such as Eros, though he avoided Platonic terminology, preferring to call this impulse Love or maleness. Despite a religious orientation, both Shelley and Lawrence also point to a connection between these motor

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1. The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Roger Ingpen, (London: Benn, 1965), Vol. VII, p.206-07.

2. Ross Greig Woodman, The Apocalyptic Vision in the Poetry of Shelley, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1964), p.31-33.

spiritual forces and sexuality. What scandalized Victorian readers of Shelley's poetry was, according to Abrams, the realization that:

> .. his persistent paradigm was sexual love with the result that in his poetry all types of human and extra-human attraction ... are typically represented, both in myth and metaphor, by categories which are patently derived from sexual union. [1]

Shelley's own account of the correlation was that sexual attraction was only a type or symbol of Eros, of the force which urges us to union with universal Love and ideal beauty. Love is:

> .. the universal thirst for a communion not merely of the senses but of our whole nature, intellectual, imaginative, and sensitive, and which, when individualized, becomes an imperious necessity, only to be satisfied by the complete or partial, actual or supposed fulfilment of its claims ... The sexual impulse, which is only one and often a small part of these claims, serves from its obvious and external nature as a kind of type or expression of the rest, as common basis, an acknowledged and visible link. [2]

This sop for the nineteenth century proved bait for the twentieth. Finding peculiarly distasteful the apparent idealization of fleshly love, and unwilling to acknowledge in this a symbolizing of ideal love by sexual, contemporary critics have arraigned the erotic content of the poetry with morbid, self-stimulating, self-deceiving fantasy.[3] Shelley may be the spiritual father of much that is unpleasant or diffuse in pre-Raphaelite poetry, but modern prejudices are in danger of obscuring the presence, beneath some of his most swooning passages, of his toughest

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1. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.220.
2. "On the Manners of the Ancient Greeks", Shelley's Prose, ed. David Lee Clark, (Albuquerque: New Mexico University Press, 1954), p.220. This edition prints the complete essay.
3. See Leavis, Revaluation, pp.167-68, 222; Edward E.Bostetter, "Shelley and the Mutinous Flesh", Shelley: Modern Judgements, (London: MacMillan, 1968), p.241-52. In fact, the reverence for sexuality expressed in "On the Manners of the Ancient Greeks" is by no means dissimilar to that in Lawrence's Pornography and Obscenity and Introduction to These Paintings. There are some odd pronouncements on the proper state of mind in which to engage in sexual intercourse; but Lawrence was not impervious to such speculations himself.

and most compact poetic thought. A suitable focus for discussion is Epipsychidion, in which Shelley not only elucidates at some length his understanding of Eros, but blends it with and distinguishes it from erotic love.

Epipsychidion contains an idealized autobiography, in which Shelley recalls how as a youth he was roused by a vision of a 'Being' (190) -- the Intellectual Beauty of the "Hymn" -- to seek in woman some more permanent revelation of the eternal spirit. Compelled to search for 'one form resembling hers', time and again the poet was frustrated. At last, however, he met with the incarnation of 'this soul out of my soul', this type of the ideal One:

> Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun,
> When light is changed to love ... (335-36)

Like a mirror, the beloved reflects the purest soul of the lover, which is aspiring to the beautiful in her inmost self. She and he are thus united with the eternal spirit of beauty 'Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world' with radiance (91-104). The innermost becomes one with the uttermost. The impulse to this One is, up to a point, cognate with imagination as well as love;[1] but the poem is only an image of eternity, another veil, and can be no substitute for the thing itself. Although the One is the only theme worthy of poetry, poetry is inadequate to its theme:

> The wingèd words on which my soul would pierce
> Into the height of Love's rare Universe,
> Are chains of lead around its flight of fire --
> I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire! (588-591)

In "Etruscan Cypresses" Lawrence has similar reservations about the capacity of modern language -- 'Nay, tongues are dead, and words are hollow as hollow seed-pods' -- to penetrate the dark, non-ideal secret of the trees. Shelley does perceive depths of being in the ideal object --

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1. See Woodman, Apocalyptic Vision, pp.xiii, 56, 59.

In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,
The sunbeams of those wells which ever leap
Under the lightnings of the soul -- too deep
For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense. (87-90)

-- but the primary aim of passionate love is complete union with the finest essence of the beloved:

The fountains of our deepest life shall be
Confused in Passion's golden purity,
As mountain-springs under the morning sun.
We shall become the same, we shall be one. (570-573)

The process of the union is a succession of minglings, dissolvings, sublimations and diffusions, for which the characteristic metaphors are the blending of odours, or the consonance of notes in a musical chord. The tenuity of these metaphors is no more important than their implications of union with a universal element, the air, or with a universal harmony, such as was inferred in the Pythagorean theory of musical chords. On the isle to which the lovers retire:

.. every motion, odour, beam, and tone,
With that deep music is in unison ...
Like echoes of an antenatal dream. -- (453-56)

The final goal of love is not union with the beloved but with this ideal One, in which the identities of the beloved and of the lover are subsumed. The beloved is a means, not an end. The various phases of the self's sublimations towards this end provide Shelley with his diction for both Eros and eroticism. Eros necessitates a series of assumptions and divestments. Just as it sheds language, so the soul must purify itself from the 'Suffering and dross' of the 'world of life', from 'whatsoe'er of dull mortality', including the body, belongs to the inferior self and to the beloved, and finally from eroticism itself. According to Woodman, 'The goal of Eros is death'.[1] Hope in this life depends on faith in a plane of being beyond life, on a:

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1. Woodman, Apocalyptic Vision, p.54.

.. philosophy, whose taste
Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom
As glorious as a fiery martyrdom ... (213-215)

On the face of it, such a philosophy would hold little appeal for Lawrence. In Point Counter Point Aldous Huxley portrayed Lawrence as Mark Rampion, and although Lawrence later disclaimed the likeness,[1] there is perhaps a biographical basis for Rampion's savage attack on Shelley, evidently directed at Epipsychidion:

> 'And oh, that dreadful lie in the soul! The way he was always pretending for the benefit of himself and everybody else that the world wasn't really the world, but either heaven or hell. And that going to bed with women wasn't going to bed with them, but just two angels holding hands ... So spiritual. And all the time he was just a young schoolboy with a sensual itch like anybody else's, but persuading himself and other people that he was Dante and Beatrice rolled into one, only much more so. [2]

'Sensual itch' is more Huxleyan than Laurentian, but Lawrence did come to regard Shelley's idealism as a falsification and prettification of sex, contemptuously referring to the emphasis on spiritual union as 'this Shelley stuff'.[3] In his impatience with any attempt to idealize the complexities and difficulties of a relationship between two people, Lawrence also detected a narcissistic element in Shelley's eroticism, or at least in his personality.[4] The two poets' conceptions of love are diametrically opposed. Erotic love, valueless in itself, seemed to Shelley a possible means of transcending the limitations of the flesh, though it might easily pervert the soul from its spiritual course. Physical love seemed to Lawrence in danger of having its instinctual purity contaminated by the meddling spirit and intellect. Lawrence considered love, not as the extinction of the self in union with another, but as a fulfilment of the self, to be achieved through arduous struggle with, and developing recognition of, another self. Emphasizing other-

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1. "I Am in a Novel", Poems, ed. Pinto, p.489.
2. Aldous Huxley, Point Counter Point, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1963), p.166-67.
3. Boy in the Bush, p.196; Phoenix, p.161.
4. Phoenix II, p.124.

ness, his ethic demanded that in love an equilibrium should be maintained between two distinct individuals, who were yet engaged in a vitalizing exchange with each other. The goal of union with the beloved was a perversion of true relationship; and although melting and dissolving are important principles in Lawrence's metaphorical lexicon for sexuality, such mingling has overtones of corrosion or dissolution, since it presupposes the destruction of the parties' individual selves. Although dissolution can be a refining of the intrinsic self, and hence an enhancing component in a complete relationship, by itself it is a purely destructive process. Like Shelley's Eros, it leads to death. In Women in Love Gerald Crich's demonic idealism, in work and in love, leads to the disintegration of his identity, and ends in death. Shelley, too, is aware of the terrifying consequences of Eros in its ultimate union with being:

> We shall become the same, we shall be one
> Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?
> One passion in twin hearts, which grows and grew,
> Till like two meteors of expanding flame,
> Those spheres instinct with it become the same,
> Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still
> Burning, yet ever inconsumable:
> In one another's substance finding food,
> Like flames too light and pure and unimbued
> To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,
> Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away:
> One hope within two wills, one will beneath
> Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,
> One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,
> And one annihilation. (573-587)

Set against Rupert Birkin's arguments for a 'star-equilibrium' between lovers, a curiously exact pattern of contrast emerges.[1] Compared with a scene from the incomplete, later novel, "Mr Noon", the coupled parallelism of metaphor and inversion of ethic are even more striking. This passage evokes Emmie Bostock's raptures while 'spooning' with Gilbert Noon:

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1. Women in Love, pp.164, 170.

> She seemed to melt and become tinier; and yet she swung in an immeasurable hungry rhythm, like a meteorite that has fallen through worlds of space, yet still swings, not yet burnt out, caught in some unstable equilibrium beyond the stars.

'Suspended in perfection', the couple achieve a 'oneness' in the 'infinite', though with 'none of your bestial loss of faculties'.[1] In some early poems, such as "Dreams Old and Nascent", Lawrence is torn between the conflicting claims of selfhood and a web of generative sexual desire which threatens individual consciousness. In Sons and Lovers, though it enables connection with a vitalist Demiurge, the web of sexual interrelationship does not annul, it enhances and refreshes the self. "Mr Noon" satirizes a consciously manipulated eroticism -- described in language strongly recalling Shelley's own -- which is seen as destructive, via bathos rather than tragedy, of the intrinsic self. The abandoned novel might be thought of as a repeat of Women in Love, where the concept of disintegrative eroticism -- again evoked in symbolism which seems in part to derive from Shelley -- is worked into the ethical complex of the novel; and many of these themes come in turn to be reflected in the mature poetry. By inversion, Lawrence may have derived many of his ideas about physical individuality from the 'starry Shelley'. Thus, despite sharing the contemporary dislike for Shelley's ideas on love -- he could dismiss Shelley's emphasis on the spiritual as purely deathly -- Lawrence could lay claim, through his own writing, to a much more finely intuitive response to the poetry's eroticism.[2] It is Huxley, not Lawrence, who anticipates Leavis's attack.

On the grounds of the evidence surviving in letters and memoirs, it must be concluded that Lawrence had a broader and deeper acquaintance with Shelley than with any other English Romantic. The young Lawrence must have gone well outside Palgrave in his reading, for he gave Jessie

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1. Phoenix II, p.427-28.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.220, 17 August 1913; Phoenix, pp.552, 561.

Chambers a presentation copy of "The Sensitive Plant", as one of his favourite poems. He knew Francis Thompson's essay on Shelley and 'he liked to apply some of it to himself'.[1] In addition, he had read Edward Trelawny's Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron, probably on two occasions, Henry Brailsford's Shelley, Godwin and Their Circle, and a fourth unidentified volume.[2] This was probably a simple collection of the poetry, since the donor, Lady Ottoline Morrell, knew of Lawrence's penchant for Shelley; and John Middleton Murry also recalled the poet as being one of his friend's 'discarded prophets'.[3] Confirmation of their testimonies is given by Lawrence himself, who esteemed Shelley as philosophically and spiritually 'our greatest poet'.[4] In the summer of 1913 Lawrence had moved south with Frieda, in order to live in the region of 'Lerici, somewhere near Leghorn -- Shelley and Byron tradition', and his letters from Lerici contain frequent references to the former poet. He found at least one point of likeness between himself and his admired predecessor: 'I don't swim more than a dozen yards, so am always trying to follow the starry Shelley and sit amid the waves'.[5] Subsequently, too, Lawrence's remarks on and criticisms of Shelley were more abundant and continuous than were his references to any other English poet. They permit a reconstruction of Lawrence's rapidly developing and changing assessment of this major

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1. E.T., pp.135, 119; Delavenay, II, p.689.
2. In Letters, ed. Moore, p.495, 21 Dec. 1916, Lawrence reminisced with A.W.McLeod about Croydon days when they had read together 'Trelawny's Shelley'; and in 1916 Lawrence asked Dollie Radford to bring the Trelawny book if she had a copy (ed. Nehls, I, p.389, 8 July 1916). According to Rose Marie Burwell, "A Catalogue of D.H.Lawrence's Reading from Early Childhood", DHLR, III (1970), 241, this was probably the first version of Trelawny's memoir. See Letters, ed. Huxley, p.237, 'Thursday', and p.299, 27 Dec. 1915, for the two remaining volumes.
3. Ed. Nehls, I, pp.308, 377, 388; and cf. John Stevens Wade, "D.H.Lawrence in Cornwall: An Interview with Stanley Hocking", DHLR, VI (1973), 253-54. Lawrence was still able to quote stanzas from his 'discarded prophet', and was evidently fond of doing so, in 1917.
4. Letters, ed. Moore, p.474, 11 Sept. 1916.
5. Letters, ed. Moore, p.220, 17 August 1913; p.231, 14 Oct. 1913.

influence on his poetry. In Shelley's poetry Lawrence came to grips with the most purely Platonic and, in many ways, the most extreme exponent of Romantic idealism.

It has been suggested already that Shelley was a formative power in Lawrence's early versification. His adaptation of Shelley can be seen in a slight, unpublished piece like "After School", in which the poet, accidentally a voyeur, witnesses a scene of marital harmony:

* There in the heart of a star set [far off small] in the night
She turned and kissed him, and his eyes were the soul of the star,
And the white nape of her neck was the beauty of the star
And I, in immeasurable night, looked on from afar -- afar! * [1]

The poeticizing of a household lamp as a star is Shelleyan in itself, as is the implied union of the couple as the soul and beauty of a single entity; but these concluding lines specifically echo the conclusion of Adonais. Eros, however, has been restricted to unfulfilled sexual longing, and the poem's sights are lowered from death and being to domestic happiness. Shelley's influence explodes into full flower in 1911, in "Transformations" and other of the longer poems obliquely referring to the mother's death. These meditations and elegies will be discussed later in this chapter. In retrospect, Lawrence perhaps realized that he himself had adhered, during this period more closely than any other, to the pattern of feeling and the career which Eros prescribes for the lyric poet. In 1913, ostensibly writing about a recently deceased minor poet, Richard Middleton, Lawrence obviously has Shelley in mind throughout as the type for the lyric poet:

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1. MS 1, 35.

> I think he [Middleton] always felt some obstruction. I think one has as it were to fuse ones physical and mental self right down, to produce good art. And there was some of him that wouldn't fuse -- like some dross, that hindered him, that he couldn't grip and reduce with passion. And so again he hated himself. Perhaps if he could have found a woman to love, and who loved him, that would have done it, and he would have been pure. ...
>
> It seems to me a purely lyric poet gives himself, right down to his sex, to his mood, utterly and abandonedly, whirls himself round like Stephens' philosopher till he spontaneously combusts into verse. He has nothing that goes on, no passion, only a few intense moods, separate like odd stars, and when each has burned away, he must die. It is no accident Shelley got drowned -- he was trying to drown himself -- it was his last mood. 1

In his allusion to the suicidal trait in Shelley's character, Lawrence is remembering certain incidents recorded by Trelawny.[2] But he is further aware that the model of lyric poet applied equally to his own life and art during 1910 and 1911, when the elegies to his mother and the lyrics to his other loves all culminated in 'the mystery of death, and the haunting of death in life':

> [The] world began to dissolve around me, beautiful, iridescent, but passing away substanceless. Till I almost dissolved away myself, and was very ill ... 3

Lawrence looked back on 1911 as the year in which he had very nearly burned himself out, consumed by a Shelleyan Eros whose consummation in death he understood all too well. Following this period, the love poems to Frieda in the opening of Look! We Have Come Through! were structured around a tense polarity between life and death; but later poems in the sequence, tending away from pure lyricism and introducing more discursive elements into the poetry, attempt to reconcile mystery and the everyday, Love and Law, life-transcending Eros and the living body.

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.251, 2 Dec. 1913. The reference to 'Stephens' philosopher' is possibly to a poem by James Stephens, "The Lonely God", in Georgian Poetry, 1911-12, ed. Edward Marsh, (London: Poetry Bookshop, 1912).

2. See Trelawny, Recollections (1854), in The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Humbert Wolfe, (London: Dent, 1933), p.189-90.

3. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.851.

As the "Foreword to Sons and Lovers" testifies, Lawrence soon returned to the vital materialism of his earlier vision, though this was deepened now by the awareness of a mysterious underdark, whose presence is felt throughout the poems of this period. How Lawrence continued to sustain an admiration for Shelley during this time, when he was increasingly aware of the divergence of their 'metaphysics', can be gathered from the Study of Thomas Hardy. Lawrence defines a pair of antinomies in the Study: on the one hand a restless, spiritual aspiration towards a transcendent goal, which he calls Love or maleness; on the other a sinking back into inertia and a maternal, material security, which he terms Law or femaleness:

> The pure male is himself almost an abstraction, almost bodiless, like Shelley or Edmund Spenser. But, as we know humanity, this condition comes of an omission of some vital part. In the ordinary sense, Shelley never lived. He transcended life ...
>
> Why should Shelley say of the skylark: "Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!-- Bird thou never wert!--"? Why should he insist on the bodilessness of beauty, when we cannot know of any save embodied beauty? ...
>
> I can think of no being in the world so transcendently male as Shelley. He is phenomenal. The rest of us have bodies which contain the male and the female. [1]

Lawrence talked (in the epigraph to this section) of studying an 'old great artist', not for his form, but in order to understand how he 'suffered in himself the conflict of Love and Law', and so oneself to bring about a reconciliation of these principles. Plainly, Lawrence's old master is Shelley, and his criticisms of Shelley in this context are an effort to define his own reconciliation of Love and Law against that of his master. For Shelley, 'so transcendently male', is a virtual avatar of Love; and Lawrence's high regard for the poetry, that is the perfect expression of maleness or, in Platonic terms, of Eros, shines through his strictures. Part of his esteem relies on his recognition that Eros has not been abstracted, formulated into a 'philosophic or geometrical idea ... a sign that the male impulse has thrown the female

1. Phoenix, p.459-60.

impulse and recoiled upon itself'. Although it strains beyond the sphere of becoming, Shelley's Eros remains a religious drive, continuing for the most part to express itself through emotion and the rich symbolic world of the poetry. Thus, whereas Lawrence could warn against the disregard for material, living reality in Shelley's maleness --

> But we do not want to transcend life, since we are of life ... If we were so singled out as Shelley, we should not belong to life, as he did not belong to life. But it were impious to wish to be like the angels. So long as mankind exists it must exist in the body, and so long must each body pertain to the male and female.

-- he was able to retain as well his admiration for the poetry, by discovering in this a rarefied consummation of Love and Law. In a splendidly sensitive analysis of the first stanza of "To a Skylark", he demonstrates not only the effectiveness of his antinomies when they descend from wild generalization to the arena of practical criticism; he also displays the acuteness of his reading of Shelley:

> Shelley wishes to say, the skylark is a pure, untrammelled spirit, a pure motion. But the very "Bird thou never wert" admits that the skylark <u>is</u> in very fact a bird, a concrete, momentary thing. If the line ran, "Bird thou never art," that would spoil it all. Shelley wished to say, the song is poured out of heaven: but "or near it", he admits. There is the perfect relation between heaven and earth. And the last line is the tumbling sound of a lark's singing, the real Two-in-One.
>
> The very adherence to rhyme and regular rhythm is a concession to the Law, a concession to the body, to the being and requirements of the body. [1]

Thus, in its abandonment of the female elements of metre and rhyme, in its lofty disregard for 'the popular division into verse and prose' as a 'vulgar error', and in its radical innovation on previous traditions of versification,[2] Lawrence's free verse in <u>Look! We Have Come Through!</u> complies more with the Shelleyan principle of Love than does Shelley's own verse.

Lawrence's later disaffection to the poet who had had so much to do with his literary formation can be traced from the point at which

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1. <u>Phoenix,</u> pp.459-60, 478.
2. See Shelley, "A Defense of Poetry", <u>Works</u>, ed. Ingpen, Vol. VII, p.113-14.

he refused to acknowledge any adequate resolution in Shelley's work of the antinomies of Love and Law, of the respective claims of spirit and body:

> Shelley and Franklin conceive of themselves in terms of pure abstraction, pure spirit, pure mathematical reality. But Rousseau and Crèvecoeur exist in terms of emotion and sensation. And surely this is the duality of spiritual and sensual being, spirit and senses, soul and body, mind and matter ... Shelley sought for pure spiritual consummation, that alone. [1]

Lawrence saw as intensely damaging to the total psyche the separation of spirit from body, and the consequent exaltation of the disembodied spirit to the degradation of mere corporeal substance. It was the mistake of Christian and Western civilization, and Shelley was the apotheosis of this tendency. Lawrence links Shelley's concept of man as a pure spirit or intelligence more specifically with the sceptical empiricism of the Enlightenment. Man's ability to think and reflect upon himself was the basic premise of his existence to the Enlightenment. By exalting this premise into a universal imaginative principle, Shelley gained the freedom to range over and the power to control an unlimited mental universe. It required first, Lawrence saw, the denial of man as a single and limited biological organism; it demanded the extinction of his consciousness of himself as a body, a physical individual. But Lawrence recognized as well the intense excitement of the intellectual transcendence to which such a negation gave access:

> When I have submerged or distilled away my concrete body and my limited desires, when I am like the skylark dissolved in the sky yet filling heaven and earth with song, then I am perfect, consummated with the Infinite. When I am all that is not-me, then I have perfect liberty, I know no limitation. [2]

By denying the physical self, a man becomes one with mankind and ultimately one with a monist, universal spirit. Under Lawrence's scrutiny, self-abnegation becomes a devious means of acquiring intellectual or

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1. The Symbolic Meaning, pp.55, 57.
2. Twilight in Italy, p.47.

spiritual power. He links denial of the physical self, not only with Christianity, but with the rise of technology and abstract science, with all the ills of the modern world. He unearths a contradiction between Shelley and Godwin's overt protestations of humility, their advocacy of democratic, anti-aristocratic political systems, and the lust for intellectual and spiritual domination of the Many revealed in their mental habits of generalization and abstraction. In living fact, Lawrence insists, 'Shelley could not bear not to be the aristocrat of his company'. So there is something spurious in Shelley's ideal love, resulting from the failure to admit the wholeness of his own being.[1] Shelley and Godwin can only entertain the idea of human perfectibility, on which their political theories are based, by thinking of themselves as abstract, bodiless minds. They ignore the dark, physical aspect of human consciousness, asserting by a quasi-magical act of spiritual will, that man is intrinsically good. In consequence, the repressed, physical half of their consciousness does indeed become an ogre of destructive evil. It is left to 'Mary Shelley, in the midst of idealists' to give 'the dark side to the ideal being, showing us Frankenstein's monster'.[2] As Christianity did its Devil or as modern industrial civilization does its bohemianism and wars, so idealist art creates its own necessary antinomy of evil.

Some of Lawrence's information on Shelley and Godwin's perfectibilism is drawn from Brailsford's book on these two writers. It is Brailsford, too, in his compact and exciting study, who fills in the background to Pantisocracy, and so enables Lawrence's gibe at Shelley and Coleridge for their Utopian schemes and romanticizing of America.[3] Lawrence certainly paid close attention to Brailsford's account of Manichaeism in The Revolt of Islam, where the twin principles of good

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1. Twilight in Italy, p.79; Apocalypse, p.26; Phoenix II, p.370.
2. The Symbolic Meaning, p.36.
3. H.N.Brailsford, Shelley, Godwin and Their Circle, (London: Butterworth, 1913), pp.102-05, 51-55; Studies in Classic American Literature, p.28.

and evil, symbolized by the snake and the eagle, battle for control in the world. This dual symbol is found in Lawrence's work as well,[1] though, given its prevalence since Homer, it need not be assumed that Lawrence derived it from The Revolt of Islam. It is a symbological curiosity, however, that both in Shelley's poetry and in The Plumed Serpent the reconciliation of these antagonistic principles is symbolized by the evening star. Shelley's perfectibilism could not long entertain the idea of good and evil holding equal sway in the world. But the concept intrigued Lawrence, who transformed them to amoral principles of light and darkness, when he wrote to Lady Ottoline Morrell:

> I have just read Brailsford on Shelley and Godwin -- very good. I like Brailsford. Can I meet him? ... Do you notice that Shelley believed in the principle of evil, coeval with the principle of good. That is right ...
>
> My novel is so good -- please have patience with it.
>
> I have just had a great struggle with the Powers of Darkness again. I think I have got the better of them. Don't tell me there is no Devil; there is a Prince of Darkness. Sometimes I wish I could let go and be really wicked -- kill and murder -- but kill chiefly. I do want to kill ... We cant so much about goodness -- it is cant. Tell Russell he does the same -- let him recognize the powerful malignant will in him. [2]

Lawrence used Brailsford to condemn Shelley out of his own mouth. The dualistic cosmogony of The Revolt of Islam seems to have been transposed into a psychological realm in order to suggest Shelley's suppression of subconscious forces in his own psyche, his deliberate blindness to the dark monsters of the physical psyche. In fact, Shelley had apparently more psychological insight than Lawrence credited him with. His Manichaeism may well have influenced the novel which Lawrence was writing at this time, Women in Love. The twin antagonistic principles of creation and dissolution, not to be equated with good and evil in Lawrence's ethic, do struggle continuously in the novel for control of the individual psyche and of civilizations. Lawrence

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1. Brailsford, Shelley, p.226-27; Robert E.Gadjusek, "A Reading of The White Peacock", A D.H.Lawrence Miscellany, ed. H.T.Moore, (London: Heinemann, 1961), p.192-93.

2. Letters, ed. Huxley, p.237, 'Thursday'.

symbolizes the principles as two rivers, one silver and the other dark; and again, a possible source for his symbolism is Shelley, through Brailsford:

> At one moment in Hellas Shelley toys with the dreary sublimity of the Stoic notion of world-cycles. The world in the Stoic cosmogony followed its destined course, until at last the elemental fire consumed it in the secular blaze, which became for mediaeval Christianity the Dies irae. And then once more it rose from the conflagration to repeat its own history again, and yet again, and for ever with an ineluctable fidelity. That nightmare haunts Shelley in Hellas:
>
> Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
> From creation to decay,
> Like the bubbles on a river,
> Sparkling, bursting, borne away.
>
> The thought returns to him in the final chorus like the "motto" of a symphony; and he sings it in a triumphant major key:
>
> The world's great age begins anew ... [1]

While Stoic world-cycles may have seemed 'dreary sublimity' to Brailsford in 1913, to Lawrence in the war-time England of 1915 they loomed as an imminent and frightening reality. Women in Love was to be called Dies Irae. Lawrence's cosmogony is endlessly cyclical, but at this stage more Christian than Stoic. He needed little help from Brailsford or Shelley to develop a psychology and historiography based on emotional and social apocalypse. As early as 1911, his poetry had been brooding on these themes, probably partly influenced by Shelley; but the 'world's great age' is glimpsed through the Protestant hell-fire of Revelation. Later, Look! We Have Come Through! and Birds, Beasts and Flowers have their narratives and symbolism organized around 'Cycles of generation and of ruin'.[2] If it is impossible to ascertain the extent to which Lawrence is directly influenced by Shelley in this respect, their mutual pre-occupation with psychological crisis and social cataclysm must be considered as evidence of a close temperamental affinity.

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1. Brailsford, Shelley, p.244-45.
2. Hellas, 154.

Shelley's imagination led him to the transcendent, the ideal and the essential; Lawrence's to the immanent, the sensual and the elemental. But, as was the case with Wordsworth and Coleridge, not all of Shelley's revelations descend from the plane of being; some ascend, and their metaphysical provenance seems to be a world of empirical necessity and sheer matter. Earl Wasserman has pointed out that the young Shelley was, under the influence of empiricists like Godwin, as absolute a materialist as he later became an idealist; that the extremity of one position led him inevitably to the other; but that the transition of his poetic thought was at least complex, possibly confused.[1] Whether they describe him as the Power behind all process, Eternity, Necessity or Fate, most critics agree in linking Demogorgon, the mysterious figure whose action is the action of Prometheus Unbound, with Godwin's materialism. In this shapeless essence of necessitarian materialism, this strange deity of atheistic myth, a correspondence can be found between Shelley's quest for the infinite and Lawrence's for the inherent. Just as Lawrence's mystical materialism often appears to be an inversion of Romantic idealism; so Demogorgon appears in Shelley's metaphysic as a chthonic mirror-image of the quest for being.

Harold Bloom points out that Demogorgon is approached via examples of Shelley's 'narrowing image' -- dying echoes, glimmering dew, fading flowers -- images which in their evanescence reveal 'the swift Heavens that cannot stay' (II, ii, 19). Lawrence is led to his anagogical perception of 'the primeval rudiments of life, and the secret' in Birds, Beasts and Flowers by recognitions of the immutably other selves of living creatures. Transmitted to her by Panthea's erotic dream, and by the voluptuous singing of the nightingales, a large component of the power impelling Asia to a deeper understanding of the unknown

1. Wasserman, Shelley, p.140.

Demogorgon is sexual. Lawrence would say that the whole of our recognition of other life depends on empathy with its 'strange undying desirableness';[1] that it is the 'same cry' that issues from a tortoise in coition as 'from Christ, the Osiris-cry of abandonment'; but that our understanding of sexuality must be expanded before this commonalty will be perceived. Both Shelley's Demogorgon and Lawrence's dark gods can be known in one sense, yet remain unknown in another. They are inaccessible to the conscious mind. Demogorgon is a 'veiled form', yet even after 'The veil has fallen' (II, iv, 1-2), he remains mysterious, something experienced rather than comprehended. So, too, in "Tortoise Shout" 'The silken shriek of the soul's torn membrane' is an apocalypse, yet one which, 'half music, half horror', can never be retold in language, but only evinced and averred. It might be argued that, since both gods must remain unknown, except by personal experience, any critical comparison is possible between them. In fact, Demogorgon does have certain symbolic attributes:

> I see a mighty darkness
> Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
> Dart round, as light from the meridian sun.
> -- Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,
> No form, nor outline; yet we feel it is
> A living Spirit. (II, iv, 2-7)

Lawrence's dark gods, similarly unsusceptible to excessively mentalized modern visuality, dwell in gloom and darkness. Shelley's concession to his god of a 'seat of power' is of interest, in view of his political radicalism; but he defines this centralized power as well by an impression of amorphous vacancy. Fascinated by Egyptian sculpture, Lawrence often associates his dark gods with thrones, or with the other appurtenances of royalty. Most strikingly, however, the portrait of Demogorgon resembles the dark sun behind the sun in The Plumed Serpent. Both Demogorgon and the dark gods are impersonal and non-human; yet they are not irrelevant to human affairs. Shelley's Power has 'a voice ... to repeal/ Large codes of fraud and woe';[2] fidelity to the

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1. Phoenix II, p.451f. 2. "Mont Blanc", 80-81.

unseen hosts has direct social consequences in Lawrence's leadership novels.

In Birds, Beasts and Flowers Lawrence's gods are both chthonic and volcanic. G.M.Matthews has shown how Demogorgon not only lives in a volcano; he 'is accurately described in terms of molten magma', and his violent eruption, dethroning Jupiter, is in part an allegory for a successful uprising by the oppressed lower classes.[1] An analogously interrelated cluster of symbols -- volcano, lava, revolution as eruption, uprising by the working class -- underlies the symbolic world of Birds, Beasts and Flowers. A final parallel can be found in the dithyrambic hymn, sung by the Spirits for Demogorgon:

> Resist not the weakness,
> Such strength is in meekness
> That the Eternal, the Immortal,
> Must unloose through life's portal
> The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne
> By that alone. (II, iii, 93-98)

In "Snake" Lawrence, egged on by the voice of his education, had resisted the weakness or 'cowardice' of liking the snake, and driven him back to the 'burning bowels of the earth' under Etna. Asia, through a deepening understanding of herself and her condition, succeeds in calling Demogorgon forth. Remembering Shelley's soubriquet, given him by Byron -- 'the Snake'[2] -- one might detect in these concluding lines of the hymn traces of primitive Greek ophiolatry. Demogorgon, though metaphysically something quite other, draws many of his mythic resonances from the primitive archetype of a divine king of fertility and the underworld. Drawing life from the symbols which surround him, he grows more and more:

> .. like a king,
> Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,
> Now due to be crowned again.

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1. Matthews, "A Volcano's Voice", Shelley (Twentieth Century Views), ed. Ridenour, p.111-43.
2. Trelawny, Recollections, ed. Wolfe, p.187.

The quotation from "Snake" re-awakens one's sense of the discrepancies between Shelleyan and Laurentian Powers; but these differences have more to do with political opinion and professed metaphysic, than with underlying psychological affinities and basic sensibilities of the poets. If the comparison with "Snake" serves to heighten one's awareness of Demogorgon as a figure of myth, a religious creation, then it serves its purpose. Yeats was disappointed in his youthful aspiration to make a religion out of Prometheus Unbound; in poems such as "Come Spring, Come Sorrow" the young Lawrence can be seen adapting parts of Shelley's drama as elements of the religion which he attempted to evolve to cope with bereavement.[1] Metaphysically, Demogorgon sorts ill with the idealism that helps to explain much of Shelley's other abstract verse. He seems to correspond to what Lawrence called 'Law'; he is an archetypal object, and in Asia's encounter with him can be discerned an acknowledgement that the human spirit must adapt itself to the non-human, material, circumambient universe. At this level, then, Asia's confrontation with Demogorgon and Lawrence's with the snake do concur: each is a journey, not to the underworld, but to a mystic hypostasis of the phenomenal world.

Psychologically, Demogorgon suggests another level of interpretation, again comparable with "Snake" or Tortoises. Abrams posits that all of the dramatis personae, with the exception of Demogorgon, can be regarded 'as externalized correlatives of the powers, aspects, and activities of Prometheus' mental states'.[2] Shelley himself directs us to the fact that the 'imagery which I have employed' has 'been drawn from the operations of the human mind'.[3] Thus, it is possible that

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1. Harold Bloom, Shelley's Mythmaking, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p.123, discusses Yeats and Prometheus Unbound. There is no certain historical evidence that Lawrence knew Shelley's drama. A reference in Letters, ed. Moore, p.301, (? 19 Dec. 1914), could be to Aeschylus or Shelley.

2. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.302.

3. Shelley, Poetical Works, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, revised G.M.Matthews, (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.205.

Demogorgon, too, should be numbered among a cast including all aspects of the human spirit. Asia's self-questionings before Demogorgon, that lead her to ever deeper intuitions concerning her own and Prometheus' true nature, indicate that this 'shapeless form' may be some changeless substratum of human consciousness, possibly the unconscious, where self becomes indistinguishable from the dark, chaotic unknown of the non-self. Only by integrating within her self-knowledge what cannot be known in full, but is a necessary part of human existence, does Asia bring to pass the apocalypse of the individual psyche, re-uniting the divided, fallen self in a new age of harmony. The snake had, in like manner, revealed to Lawrence the division in his psyche between the voices of education and of his subconscious, between sudden, excessive disgust and sudden, irrational liking: 'And I have something to expiate'. Demogorgon is a figure of myth: his meaning is inexhaustible. Brailsford recognizes him as a religious creation; whereas Shelley and Godwin avoid anthropomorphism, they do appeal to a level of primitive consciousness in positing a god:

> [Godwin] regards with reverence and awe "that principle, whatever it is, which acts everywhere around me". But he will not slide into anthropomorphism, nor give to this Supreme Thing, which recalls Shelley's Demogorgon, the shape of a man. "The principle is not intellect; its ways are not our ways."
> [Shelley] gives Humanity a friendly Power [Prometheus] ... Humanity at grips with chaos is curiously like a nigger clan in the bush. It needs a fetish of victory. But a poet's mythology is to be judged by its fruits. A faith is worth the cathedral it builds. A myth is worth the poem it inspires. [1]

Similarly, in "Snake" the numen evoked has deliberately non-human associations; and evidence will be produced to show that Lawrence, like Shelley, is intentionally tapping funds of primitive mystical feeling in order to recreate in his reader a religious wonder before the phenomenal world. In their different ways both "Snake" and Prometheus Unbound deserve to be regarded as myths. But differences should be

1. Brailsford, Shelley, pp.184, 229.

insisted on. Demogorgon is an amorphous and abstract principle, a Law, conducive to what may prove the permanent amelioration of the human condition. The snake is an individual living creature, a specimen of Sicily's fauna: it is not so much a symbol as an avatar of new life, possibly ushering in a new epoch of consciousness that will be no more permanent than the last.

Demogorgon certainly obstructs any simplistic analysis of Shelley's poetry according to the tenets of that extreme idealism, which Shelley and Wasserman have dubbed the 'Intellectual Philosophy'.[1] Yet like the One or universal Mind of that philosophy, Demogorgon allows imaginative release, a free play of imagination, not through the worlds of the intellect and spirit, but through the mythic underworld inhabited by Wordsworth's 'mighty forms' and Coleridge's submarine demons. Lawrence would say that Demogorgon is as well a safety-valve to Shelley's longings for power and lordship. Certainly, this mythic, material underworld constitutes an extension of the Platonic cosmogony of the Intellectual Philosophy. Besides becoming (Existence or Nature) and being (Love, Beauty, the One), there is a third plane, Power. It is this sphere that Demogorgon or the Power in "Mont Blanc" occupies; and it is from this sphere, and not from being, according to Wasserman, that the Demiurge, for which the Arve and the West Wind are synecdoches, issues into the plane of becoming. Wasserman admits, however, that Shelley never troubled to integrate this trinity in a coherent system.[2] It might be proposed that his deeper interest lies, not with the metaphysical, but with the psychological ramifications of his cosmogony; that he is seeking, in his adoption of the Platonic Eros or in his descent into a mythic underworld, to probe the processes of his own creativity. 'Poetry', Shelley wrote in "A Defense of Poetry", 'is connate with the origin of man', with his childhood and with the childhood of the race.[3] Elsewhere he returns to his

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1. See Wasserman, Shelley, p.131-53.
2. Wasserman, Shelley, pp.177, 182, 222.
3. Shelley, Works, ed. Ingpen, Vol. VII, p.109.

own childhood:

> Let us recollect our sensations as children. What a distinct and intense apprehension had we of the world and ourselves! ... We less habitually distinguished all that we saw and felt, from ourselves. They seemed as it were to constitute one mass. There are some persons who, in this respect, are always children. Those who are subject to that state called reverie, feel as if their nature were dissolved into the surrounding universe, or as if the surrounding universe were absorbed into their being. They are conscious of no distinction. And these are states which precede, or accompany, or follow an unusually intense and vivid apprehension of life. As men grow up this power commonly decays and they become mechanical and habitual agents. [1]

The passage is not dissimilar to Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode", but it has the stamp of its author's distinctive sensibility. Shelley, it might be ventured, is less concerned with formulating a precise metaphysical system than with developing an analogue by which to gain insight into his poetic production. The account of the subject dissolving itself 'into the surrounding universe' characterizes the frequent metaphors of melting in sexual passion or in response to beauty in his poetry;[2] and these are regarded as equivalent to Eros and the imagination, in certain of their phases. Shelley's idealism seldom gives the impression of solipsism or withdrawal. It is a generous going-out of the self, 'an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action or person not our own'. Yet immediately before this he had defined poetry as that which 'awakens and enlarges the mind' so as to contain a world of thought within itself;[3] and in his recollections of childhood he leaves it an open question as to whether the mind in reverie dissolves into the surrounding universe, or dissolves the universe into itself. From this imprecision it might be inferred that the metaphysics of the subject/object problem are of less vital concern to Shelley, the poet -- as they did not, in the final analysis, concern Coleridge in his poetry -- than the experience of imaginatively and artistically bridging

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1. Shelley, "On Life", Works, ed. Ingpen, Vol. VI, p.195-96.
2. See Butter, Idols of the Cave, p.19-22.
3. Shelley, Works, ed. Ingpen, Vol. VI, p.117-18.

this impasse. For Shelley the experiential keystone of his vaulting imagination seems to have been less of the order of a mystical or religious experience than for Coleridge. The basic mode of his sensibility was more intellectual; as a poet, and not just as a prose-writer, he realized it in 'the beautiful which exists in thought ... not our own'. Above all, he found it in the excitement of his own poetic inspiration, an excitement which he perhaps contrived to cultivate in himself.

There is a second objection to interpreting the whole of Shelley's poetry according to the canons of the Intellectual Philosophy: part of his greatness lies in the very fact that such an idealism is not an assumed premise of the poems; that all objects are not automatically symbols; and that many poems begin from a frightening, untenably dualistic or chaotically pluralistic universe, before struggling towards a faith in some correspondence or principle of unity between inner and outer worlds. Harold Bloom's contention that Shelley should be looked on as a religious mythmaker, whose poetry is dedicated to bringing the self and its universe into a rapport which is called, after Martin Buber, an 'I-thou relationship', is in this respect salutary. Bloom perceives that Shelley's relating of inner and outer worlds is not so much metaphysical as mythopoeic, having affinities with primitive modes of thought. The "Ode to the West Wind" has a 'magical aim', for instance. The wind is not, in some loosely defined sense, symbolical or allegorical of a subjective state of mind. The poem drives towards acceptance on the part of the poet and recognition on the part of the reader that the soul of the poet is part of the West Wind and the West Wind part of the soul; and hence, that the poet can draw energy from this potent other aspect of himself. The ode's impassioned rhetoric, its rapidly modulating images and long, rushing periods, are a conjuration to the wind, in which the breath of the poet, mimicking the blast,

takes on its aspect in order to assume, finally, its powers. Bloom protests that the poet and the wind only come into a mythopoeic relationship, each with the other.[1] But the ode itself explicitly enforces the identification of wind and soul --

> Be thou, Spirit fierce,
> My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

-- and, as the magician plans to focus and control cosmic power in his own person, so the ode aims to augment, by these means, the poet's power for good in the world:

> Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
> Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
> And by the incantation of this verse,
>
> Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth,
> Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind.

Nevertheless, the ode should be read, not as Bloom does in the light of a single religious dogma, but in the full context of Shelley's intellectual concerns and work. The ode has, for instance, a Platonic element in its composition. In his invocation to the West Wind as a 'Wild Spirit' and 'the breath of Autumn's being', Shelley hints that it is to be regarded as a kind of anima mundi. It animates Nature, but only as a 'Destroyer and Preserver': it did not create the world, but it governs mutability within it. Moreover, it is 'moving everywhere', a reminder that, in Plato's thought, self-motion is an attribute of the soul. The West Wind can be equated with the Demiurge of Plato's Timaeus, an 'unseen presence' woven into Nature (becoming or Existence) from a higher, ideal plane (being or, in Shelley's case, Power). Its counterpart in Adonais is 'the one Spirit's plastic stress'. Its relation to the rest of Shelley's poetry can be deduced from the incomplete prologue to Hellas. Here, in the name of Plato, Christ calls on the 'Almighty Father', Destiny, to aid Greece, an invocation which duplicates Asia's plea to Demogorgon. Christ asks that the Power send down Fate, arrayed 'In tempest of the omnipotence of God/ Which sweeps

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1. Bloom, Shelley's Mythmaking, p.2-9, 72, 75.

through all things' (103-04). This tempest would be, like the West Wind, the form assumed by Power in Existence. The careless echo of Wordsworth[1] is a clue to how Shelley sought to extend his forebear mythopoetically and mythographically; and how much more ambivalent his own 'natural piety' was than Wordsworth's. When Asia approaches the Power in Prometheus Unbound, she is wrapped in fumes and emanations from him, and these have properties resembling the West Wind's:

> .. a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm
> Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up
> Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
> And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,
> That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
> Like Maenads who cry aloud, Evoe! Evoe!
> The voice which is contagion to the world. (II. iii. 3-10)

The tone is of scepticism and revulsion; and the impression lingers when one turns again to the West Wind, a vapour also able to confer bacchanalian intoxication and oracular power.

Shelley's abiding aspiration is to being, not to power, nor to any force assumed by Power in the plane of becoming, albeit a Demiurge 'That sweeps through all things'. In the ode he certainly desires the power and exaltation, which he has felt in the wind, and which are again offered him. The surrender and augmentation of the self to which the ode's incantation mounts is total. But the poet continues to be repelled by the aspect of mutability in the wind:

> Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
> Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

> Yellow, and black, and pale and hectic red,
> Pestilence-stricken multitudes ...

Revulsion can be detected, not without a certain Gothic fascination. In the West Wind, with its operations limited to becoming, Shelley finds his correlative for 'Desire with loathing strangely mixed/ On wild or hateful objects fixed'.[2] But the wind also carries a promise of rebirth or

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1. Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey", 100-02.
2. Coleridge, "The Pains of Sleep", 23-24.

resurrection after winter's rite de passage. Hence, the controlled hysteria of the poem, reminiscent of Protestant religious conversion. The subject longs for the total security of faith, for natural piety and the insurgence of power; yet he dreads capitulation to the dark and grisly Unknown, that will destroy his self in order to recreate it. The concluding note of the ode is one of rich scepticism and faint funk: the poet fails to commit himself. The ode is a doubly agnostic hymn. It seeks to convince the reader that a communion is possible between self and Nature; and it seeks to convert itself to natural piety with all this might imply, sexually, politically, psychically.

At first Lawrence's understanding of the ode led him into a creative misreading along pantheistic lines. To him it would have been a passionate invocation alone to the energies of Nature, like a Protestant calling upon his God. Nature represented a vast, untapped reservoir of power and vitality, accessible to certain men at certain times. Such a sense of power, near at hand and in Nature, looms in "Renaissance". It animates the character of Annable in The White Peacock, and the meetings of Paul and Clara in Sons and Lovers. Not Wordsworth's gentle, correspondent breezes, Shelley's winds are decent gales, breaking down ontological barriers, like those which drive Tom to Lydia in The Rainbow, or blow through all time in "Song of a Man Who Has Come Through". That to which Shelley, in the face of his perfectibilism, attempts to convert himself, Lawrence already believes; that one must accept and undergo a period of private or general suffering, inherent in the natural order -- 'Must in [one's] transiency pass all through pain'[1] -- if one is to commune with the vitality of Nature, and so restore a golden age of harmony. Therefore, both strive to accept the wildness of the wind, despite the pain and cruelty it entails. Provoked by the same gale in "Dejection: An Ode", Coleridge cries out against the 'devil's yule' of

1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.195.

non-ideal, natural suffering. By the time of writing Look! We Have Come Through! Lawrence had evolved an expanded and sophisticated organic paradigm which allowed for principles of creation and dissolution, a 'Destroyer and preserver'. The model of seasonal recurrence, with its apocalyptic 'Cycles of generation and of ruin', came to inspire in Lawrence as in Shelley a mingled desire and loathing. In the conclusion of the poem-sequence, where the terror of religious conversion and the concept of the Last Days of Revelation are shaping forces in his poetry, the ode is a dominant influence.

The West Wind is a characteristic Shelleyan symbol, an 'unseen presence'. As Richard Fogle argues, Shelley's imagery concentrates on the insubstantial, the invisible or that which is fading to invisibility, in order to suggest the mutability of things on the plane of becoming, and the presence of being beyond this plane.[1] The Lady of The Witch of Atlas discovers that:

> .. her beauty made
> The bright world dim, and everything beside
> Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade:
> No thought of living spirit could abide ...
> But on her form, and in her inmost eyes.
>
> Which when the lady knew, she took her spindle
> And twined three threads of fleecy mist, and three
> Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle
> The clouds and waves and mountains with; and she
> As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle
> In the belated moon, wound skilfully;
> And with these threads a subtle veil she wove --
> A shadow for the splendour of her love. (137-152)

Just as the Demiurge of "Ode to the West Wind" had woven Nature with regenerative life, so the Lady or Witch, as the type of Intellectual Beauty, weaves Nature with momentary visions of being, since the poor denizens of Existence cannot look directly upon her. But her work is also profoundly analogous to the poet's craft, weaving and unweaving his moments of revelation and inspiration to create an image of eternity.

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1. Richard Harter Fogle, "The Abstractness of Shelley", Shelley (Twentieth Century Views), ed. Ridenour, p.16-22.

The web or veil represents a crucial ambiguity in Shelley's poetry, It may connote the interpenetration of Intellectual Beauty through the world, in layer upon layer of ideal being, so as to lead us towards the One. Such is the veiled vision of Emily in Epipsychidion (91-104), and of the transfigured Asia in the 'Life of Life!' lyric from Prometheus Unbound (II, v, 48-71). Conversely, these veils may symbolize the sensory delusions which must be stripped away in the effort to penetrate towards the ideal. So in Adonais (482-83), the poet must journey 'through the web of being blindly wove/ By man and beast and earth and air and sea', pressing onwards to the Eternal. Such an attitude to the 'web of being' in "Dim Recollections" would seem pure profanation. Surely the natural piety of the young Lawrence could have drawn no sustenance from this otherworldly idealism? Yet the significance of a given web or veil in Shelley's poetry is always powerfully ambivalent. There is scope for misinterpretation and reinterpretation. To the youthful Mimosa humilis of "The Sensitive Plant" the aureole which encircles the Lady, tending and nurturing him with her love, may have seemed the radiation of pure being. In the restored golden age of Prometheus Unbound Spirits and Hours yet 'weave the web of the mystic measure' (IV, 129). There are veils upon veils in Shelley's verse -- he is the archetypal apocalyptic poet -- and some may have been originals for Lawrence's 'glinting web'.

Two poems which Lawrence knew from Palgrave -- "To Jane: The Recollection" and "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills" -- may contain the patterns for Lawrence's symbol. "To Jane: The Recollection" describes an outing in early spring. The weather's preternatural calm gave an impression that cast about all things was a 'magic circle', within the compass of which was interfused 'A thrilling, silent life':

And still I felt the centre of
The magic circle there
Was one fair form that filled with love
The lifeless atmosphere.

In finding an intimation of universal Love in this moment of human love, Shelley goes part way towards implying a reciprocity between natural vitality (which is also suffused with Love) and human sexuality. This reciprocity is the theme of "Renaissance"; but it is not Shelley's theme; for him a note of Coleridgian scepticism intrudes. The scene would not have been interfused with life but 'lifeless', had it not been for 'one fair form' and the emotions which she aroused in the poet. Like Lawrence's "Dim Recollections", "The Recollection" does conjoin the image of the web with the idea of reflection. 'The pools that lie/ Under the forest bough' mirrored a more perfect world than this:

.. all was interfused beneath
With an Elysian glow,
An atmosphere without a breath,
A softer day below.
Like one beloved the scene had lent
To the dark water's breast,
Its every leaf and lineament
With more than truth expressed ...

The pools are possibly taken from Plato's cave; they become a symbol for the poet's mind. In his mind, enlightened by love, the poet views in the world of phenomena a truth greater than sensory truth. He sees universal Love interpenetrating the world of becoming with an eternal 'Elysian glow', which our senses only obscure. The purely sensory vision of "Dim Recollections" scintillated more than glowed. Its origin was not in the mind, or in a way of looking at Nature; it was given off by mutable living things, at home in their physical environment. Nonetheless, in "The Wild Common" or "Renaissance" it is implied that it is sexual love which re-unites the adult individual with Nature's 'live web'; and this might be no more than a conversion into sensuous and sensual terms of Shelley's interfused universal Love.

"Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills" deploys the web as a symbol of the One. In this fairly early poem the demon guiding Shelley's boat through life is not the absolute Eros of Adonais: it is a 'Longing with divided will' to find 'a green isle ... / In the deep wide sea of Misery'. This isle is something more than a Wordsworthian spot in time. It is to be a Utopia, or perhaps an isle for Lotos-Eaters; but it is in 'this world, which is the world/ Of all of us'. As Wasserman observes, the poem is placed firmly in the plane of Existence.[1] As a sample of the sea of misery, the poet briefly chronicles the past of Venice, which is now clouded by evil tyranny. The sun is a recurrent motif in the poem, which opens with sunrise and closes with sunset. Able to dispel the cloud and shadow of evil and ignorance, it symbolizes freedom, peace, truth and virtue, natural majesty and the lamp of learning, and two of Apollo's powers, prophecy and poetry. As in Yeats, noon is a purple glow, and it is then, through a pervasive mist, the colour of an 'air-dissolved star', that the poet has his epiphany:

> .. the plains that silent lie
> Underneath, the leaves unsodden
> Where the infant Frost has trodden ...
> And the red and golden vines,
> Piercing with their trellised lines
> The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;
> The dun and bladed grass no less,
> Pointing from this hoary tower
> In the windless air; the flower
> Glimmering at my feet; the line
> Of the olive-sandalled Appenine
> In the south dimly islanded;
> And the Alps, whose snows are spread
> High between the clouds and sun;
> And of living things each one;
> And my spirit which so long
> Darkened this swift stream of song, --
> Interpenetrated lie
> By the glory of the sky ... (294-314)

Fleetingly, he touches on an isle in the sea. But he is driven by a restless scepticism to question the origin of this moment of peace and

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1. Wasserman, Shelley, p.197.

unison. It might lie in the phenomenal world, in 'love, light, harmony,/ Odour' bringing the self into conformity with their natural harmony. Alternatively 'the soul of all/ Which from Heaven like dew doth fall', the Spirit of Beauty passing briefly through Existence, could have brought to pass this revelation. Resorting to a rather solipsistic idealism, 'the mind which feeds this verse/ Peopling the lone universe' might have achieved concord within itself. Shelley has other hints to drop about the bearings of his isle, however. Peter Butter thinks that Shelley and his contemporaries' theories about the relationship of light, heat and electricity with thought would lend an almost scientific plausibility to the phenomenon, in Shelley's eyes.[1] More ancient hypotheses as to the unity of mind and matter, or spirit and energy, might account for the almost religious veneration accorded to the sun. The reverence for its 'radiant springs' has neo-Platonic overtones. "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills" might be seen as deriving from and greatly developing Coleridge's "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison". Finally, the poem's resolute adherence to the plane of Existence might encourage an almost pantheistic interpretation of Shelley's 'soul ... from Heaven' which interpenetrates all things; and, despite the emphasis on spiritual intercession, might incite a young poet to translate into sensuous terms the moment, when 'all things seem only one/ In the universal sun'.[2]

Shelley discourages too limited a view of the philosophical provenance of his web of light, in "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills" and elsewhere. Lawrence does seem to have been aware of the monist and idealist overtones of Shelley's webs and veils; in his essay on Crèvecoeur, writing of the need for a man to retain a sense of his physical individuality, Lawrence returns to the symbolism of Shelley's "Lines":

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1. Butter, Idols of the Cave, p.143-45.
2. "To Jane: The Invitation", 68-69.

> The true self is like a star which must preserve the circumambient darkness which gives to it its distinction and uniqueness. It must keep the splendid, vivid loneliness, Dawn only removes the gulf from between the stars, and makes them as nothing in the great one web of light, the universal sun-consciousness, the selfless spiritual being. 1

But the young Lawrence was concerned to create a symbolic lexicon which would enable him to talk of the relationships from which such vivid individuals drew their vitality. To do this, he subjected Shelley's web of light to a creative reinterpretation, from which it emerged as a non-ideal, slightly more pluralist plasm playing through physical, living things, a web to be apprehended first and last by the sensuous and sensual man:

> I will go out to the night, as a man goes down to the shore
> To draw his net through the surf's thin line, at the dawn before
> The sun warms the sea, little, lonely and sad, sifting the sobbing tide.
> I will sift the surf that edges the night, with my net, the four
> Strands of my eyes and my lips and my hands and my feet, sifting the store
> Of flotsam until my soul is tired or satisfied. 2

So far does the symbol of the web predominate in Lawrence's early poetry, that to unravel its shifting implications is to trace the development of the poetry.

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1. The Symbolic Meaning, p.60.
2. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.180.

iv

> Every human mind has, what Lord Bacon calls its "idola specus", peculiar images which reside in the inner cave of thought. These constitute the essential and distinctive character of every human being ... [1]

Reciting Tennyson's "Locksley Hall", Lawrence was wont to convey to Jessie Chambers 'the impression he was telling me something about himself'.[2] The characters in the poem are still recognizably like Lawrence and Jessie. The protagonist's cousin, Amy, hangs 'on all [his] actions with a mute observance'; but at his declaration of love, she blossoms forth, 'All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes'. She resembles the girl in "Amour":

> * When softly I call at her door, and enter the room
> The gold-brown flowers of her eyes unfold
> And trembling somewhere deep in their [sunken primitive] gloom
> A wild little bubble is loosening hold. * [3]

The lovers are separated by a parent; and the Byronic protagonist, brooding upon his beloved immured in Locksley Hall, gazes at 'great Orion sloping slowly to the West'. This is one possible gloss on the rather cryptic allusion in "Hymn to Priapus", where Orion is described as:

> .. the star of my first beloved
> Love-making.
> The witness of all that bitter-sweet
> Heart-aching.

Bitterly the young man curses 'the social wants that sin against the strength of youth'. He imagines losing himself in London, in the flaring gas-lights and the thriving hum of industry, in the throngs of men: 'Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new'. He is not unlike a young schoolteacher, day-dreaming of his beloved and

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1. Shelley, "Essay on Christianity", Works, ed. Ingpen, Vol. VI, p.241.
2. E.T., p.95.
3. MS 1, 60.

the labourers on the railway-line. Although the prospect does not console either young man completely:

> Yet [they] doubt not thro' the ages one increasing
> purpose runs,
> And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process
> of the suns.
>
> What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youth-
> ful joys,
> Tho' the deep heart of existence beat forever like a boy's?

The poem had more than the obvious biographical significance for the young Lawrence. In some points it can be seen as representative of his nineteenth-century inheritance, a blurring of the keen subjective outlines of Wordsworth's natural piety into a natural pietism. Wordsworth was rationalised into a belief in some universal consciousness or tendency -- 'the deep heart of existence', 'one increasing purpose' or 'the process of the suns' -- sufficiently vague to accommodate Christianity and the scientific revelations of geology, biology and palaeontology. One might compare Browning's 'powers at play' and 'general deed of man' in "By the Fire-Side". Such vague generalities are Lawrence's Victorian heritage when, in an early letter, he embarks on an explanation of the evolutionary, progressive tendency of all life -- the 'eternal progression ... a great purpose, which keeps the menagerie moving onward to better purposes ... the march'.[1]

In his poetry, however, he specifies. Like Wordsworth he returns to particular perceptions and events, and to some extent allows the aura of feeling or mystery around these 'things and happenings'[2] to shape their own configurations of theme and meaning. At least, sensitive observation of external Nature and a respect for the shades of emotion evoked by externals do control much of Lawrence's verse at the time of writing "Dim Recollections" and "Renaissance"; and these qualities go far towards justifying the generalizing symbol of these two

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.11, 13 May 1908.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.47, 20 Jan. 1909.

poems, the 'glinting web' and the humming 'live web'.

"Dog-Tired" illustrates such qualities. As in "The Death of the Baron", the tones of evening mingle with the symbolic overtones of harvest. Details of colouring finely register the transition from late afternoon to night. At first the rows cut by the scythe are 'glittering paths/ To the sun', whose reddening, as it lowers, is tangled in the vetch-clump. The sun passes away, leaving a green 'active sheen', which dies slowly as the sky darkens and the stars multiply. The delicacy of perception is worthy of Coleridge. Descriptive details are enriched by the fruition and fulfilment of harvest and the withering death of autumn. Like over-ripe fruit, bats drop from the trees, their flight mimicked in the swooping dactyls. The heavy, arkward stresses of the previous lines might suggest scythe-strokes. The mown hare-bells are dying, but a new crop springs up silently, of stars. The man has laboured through the hectic effort of the day, and his aching weariness merges with the day's dying into night. But he longs to participate in the fulfilment of harvest, and to lapse into the regenerative death of the life around him. Yet as the urgent 'here' and 'now', and the nagging repetition of conditionals and subjunctives, insist, human feeling is suspended outside the natural cycle, in a limbo of wish-fulfilment and yearning expectation. The ache remains.

In "Dog-Tired" Lawrence carefully discriminates the shades of feeling in things and happenings. As a result he writes a much better poem than if he had fallen into standard use of the pathetic fallacy, and had seen 'one increasing purpose' in all things. The poem relates to "Locksley Hall" in more ways than this, however; for in it, as in "Renaissance", we observe the young writer's determination that he shan't fail to reap 'the harvest of his youthful joys'. "Renaissance" is the more innovatory poem, in that here, for the first time, Lawrence's

determination gives rise to a concept of relationship between the human self and Nature's works that startlingly anticipates much of his later writing, and his search for the elemental substratum in the human psyche.[1] "Renaissance" is organized around the Christian myth, not without Miltonic echoes, of the fall from innocence and Eden and the recovery of a higher state. This it translates into terms of the education of the individual. The basic pattern is obscured because the poem assumes, though it does not mention, two Romantic _données_. The first is that childhood is our Eden; the second is that, as we grow up and the prison-house closes upon us, we are expelled from Eden. Hence, paradise has been lost in "Renaissance", though no apple has been bitten. Despite the horrific glimpses of Nature selecting its fittest in the second section of the poem,[2] the phenomenal world is the scene for the regaining of paradise. Lawrence's is not the alienated vision of "Dejection: An Ode". Innocence may have been lost, but its value was questionable. The new world is 'vivid with feeling' like childhood's, but it is an adult world in which suffering as well as joy must be acknowledged. It is a greater Eden, 'wider than Paradise' as childhood saw it. The beloved has taught the poet to see the new Eden, vivid with pleasure and pain, but the sentimentality of her methods, 'laughter and tears', mars the poem. The human and natural are 'all one', woven together in one great purpose or progression. At least -- and the last stanza does help to rescue the poem from bathos, even in this early version -- the sentimental kisses _might_ make contact with nonhuman life on the level at which it is living, of birth, coition and death -- 'Down where the live web hums'.

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1. _Cf._ _Letters_, ed. Moore, p.281-82, 5 June 1914.

2. _Cf._ _Poems_, ed. Pinto, pp.37-38, 908-09, "Renascence" and "Renaissance". The Pinto transcription of MS 1 still contains inaccuracies, notably the omission of dividing lines between stanzas two and three, and four and five. Lawrence added a foot-note to the version sent to Blanche Jennings (Ferrier, MS 4):

> This is supposed to be a song on the education of love. The first two stanzas a statement -- the next two telling how the world is become full of meaning -- the last a reflection.

Horace Gregory was surprised that Lawrence seemed to discover Georgianism before meeting any of the Georgians.[1] The answer is that Lawrence is not a Georgian at all. Any resemblance to the Georgian out-of-doors is simply Lawrence short-circuiting Victorian poetry to get back to the specifics of Romantic poetry, as they apply to the countryside which he intimately knows. When Lawrence writes a poem intentionally to please the Georgian, Edward Marsh, he turns out "Grey Evening" and "Firelight and Nightfall".[2] The settings in these poems are similar to "Dog-Tired", and need only be compared with the earlier work to show the stiffness and artifice Lawrence was driven to, complying with unaccustomed Georgian canons. In returning to the Romantics, he nonetheless gleaned along the way many of the intellectual issues debated by the Victorian sages, and he selected from Victorian poetry anything pertinent to his own situation and sensibility.

Hence, an important source for both "Renaissance" and "Dog-Tired" -- poems of love in the Erewash Valley -- is George Meredith's Love in the Valley.[3] Comparison with Meredith's poem highlights Lawrence's own views on sexuality and the natural order. As Lawrence's beloved inspires laughter and tears, Meredith's can 'bruise or bless', but this is incidental to her make-up, a foible. Like Tennyson and Lawrence, Meredith broods on his youthful harvest, and the seasonal

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1. See Horace Gregory, "The Poetry of D.H.Lawrence", The Achievement of D.H.Lawrence, eds.F.J.Hoffman and H.T.Moore, (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1953), p.235-52.

2. Lawrence sent a poem, "Grief", to Marsh on 17 Dec. 1913. This contains stanzas from both "Grey Evening" and "Firelight and Nightfall". Included was an inscription:

   > To Eddie Marsh, with much affection, this poem for a Christmas card, which, albeit a trifle lugubrious, pray God may go daintily with his ear.

   See Robert H.Ross, The Georgian Revolt, (London: Faber, 1967), p.111-12.

3. E.T., p.100: 'Love in the Valley had a special significance for him'. All references are to the second version of Meredith's poem.

wheatsheaf, a 'rustling treasure armful', takes on definite sexual connotations:

> .. around about the waist
> Gathered, see these brides of Earth one blush of ripeness!

Comparable is the improbably pastoral 'country lass' of Lawrence's "Hymn to Priapus":

> The warm, soft country lass,
> Like a loose sheaf of wheat
> At threshing-time broken, was broken
> For me, and ah, it was sweet!

But placing more value than Lawrence on the innocence of childhood, the older poet half believes that his love would be 'sweeter unpossessed'; for while she is free and innocent, she reminds him of his youth:

> .. she is what my heart first waking
> Whispered the world was; morning light is she.

For Lawrence sexual love is valuable for the very reason that it extends childhood innocence and ignorance. Experience is a fall, but a progression from innocence; paradise is regained through sexuality. Meredith recreates his ideal of love by two borrowings from Shelley. His beloved is like the Lady in "The Sensitive Plant", or like Eve in the undisturbed Eden, which he wishes to preserve; and she reminds him as well of the singing, in the dawn twilight, of a 'dew-delighted skylark/ Clear as though the dew-drops had their voice in him'. Like the song of the bird in "To a Skylark", she seems to transcend physical constrictions, and the poet 'would have her ever/ Cool as dew in twilight, the lark above the flowers'. Although the consummation of his love approaches, the lover is torn within himself, unwilling to give expression to the maturity of passion suggested by evening and sunset:

> Soon she will lie like a white-frost sunrise.
> Yellow oats and brown wheat, barley pale as rye,
> Long since your sheaves have yielded to the thresher,
> Felt the girdle loosened, seen the tresses fly.
> Soon she will lie like a blood-red sunset.

His inner conflict finds resolution in the perfervidly spiritual symbol of the moonlit, springtime beech. 'Heaven is my need', the poet

complains. In the beech and the other trees of spring, he seems to find an assurance that sexual love, though corresponding to the dispensation of Nature, can yet preserve his dream-image of a 'seraph love'; that it can unite the spiritual purity of dawn and spring with the physical passion of autumn and sunset.

Lawrence is plainly indebted to Love in the Valley for the framework of "Dog-Tired" and "Renaissance", but thematically he strikes out on his own. No spiritualization of physical life is tolerated; and there is a willingness to accept the darker implications of the natural paradigm as this applies to sex. Human sexuality does not automatically correspond to the natural order, but it is worth an effort to ensure that it does; for vitality and joy are there, waiting to be drawn from the 'living web'. Meredith has little taste for tapping sources of energy. His mentor Shelley has, but he shies away from the mutability and suffering of Existence, aspiring to a finer, calmer realm. In this lower sphere:

> Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind
> Than in calm waters seen. [1]

Peace, harmony, recollection in tranquillity, a 'wise passiveness' were qualities that Wordsworth and Coleridge, as well as Shelley, believed indispensable to the psychology of creativity. Lawrence's admiration for George Herbert's "The Pulley" is relevant here:[2] God gave all His gifts to man save that of Rest, thereby inculcating his endless 're-pining restlessness', and craving for an absolute. Lawrence turns the Romantic prerequisite of inner harmony and the counsel of a 'wise passiveness' on its head. Conflict is the source of creativity in the poet's make-up; it is the principle of education in love and of production in Nature. Accordingly, Lawrence pledges himself to an active

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1. "To Jane: The Recollection", 67-68.
2. E.T., p.100. Palgrave's title for the poem was "The Gifts of God".

seeking after the turbulence and conflict of human relationships, as the only possible career for the individual and the artist. He commits himself to a sexual quest. Just as Lawrence read his own life into novels like Tono-Bungay or poems like "Locksley Hall", so he determined that his life must be written into, it must provide the raw material for, his art.

"Renaissance" is the manifesto of such an autobiographical commitment. It signals the beginning of a sexual quest, a searching out of a relationship that will, in the pain and ecstasy of its fulfilment, reconnect the individual with the forces governing life and Nature, and so open the way for a new relationship with Nature and a new Nature poetry. It is a curious biographical question, which came first, the drive to sexual filfilment or the aesthetic which conceived of this as a poetic career. The question can hardly be answered, but one can speculate, biographically, as to the stress such an aesthetic might place on personal relationships. Sex could hardly be fun for Lawrence, as Dilys Powell observed.[1] It was too serious, too much of an evangelical mission, a search for revelation and salvation. The autobiographical content of the verse is more than a matter of the 'egotistical sublime', of the poet stepping into the centre of his own poem. Lawrence does not create a poetic world in which he appears; he genuinely attempts to live in the world he creates. The art is generated by the friction between living in an artistically realized world, and realizing the world in which one lives. The Nature of Lawrence's poetry could not provide an escape from personal conflicts: it was the world in which those conflicts materialized. Lawrence's use of his life in his poetry, and the extent to which this imitates or alters trends in nineteenth-century literature, will be discussed in Chapter IV. For the present, it should be noted that his autobiographical pre-occupation does save him from some of the pitfalls of nineteenth-century Nature poetry, as seen by Graham Hough:

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1. Dilys Powell, Descent from Parnassus, (London: Cresset Press, 1934), p.45.

> There has probably been too much nature poetry in English since Wordsworth. A merely passive sense of natural beauty as a comforting, sustaining, more rarely an exciting influence became too easy an indulgence for poets and poetically minded persons. Lawrence's nature poetry breaks sharply with the tradition. It is not passive appreciation; it has not much to do with beauty as such; it does not use natural objects as stimulants to generalised and habitual emotions. [1]

Despite its slight, lyrical form, the overweening earnestness of "Renaissance" is an indication that Lawrence, for one, is not writing about love and Nature because they seem to him poetical. In these themes he sees the possibility of resolving the subject/object dilemma of the Romantics, and of gaining Romantic access to the depths of the self and of extra-human life. There is something programmatic in his very imperatives:

> * .. let yourself listen to the cries
> Of the new-born, and the unborn; and the old owl, and the bats as they flitter
>
> And wake to the sound of the woodpigeons, and lie and listen
> Till you can borrow
> A few quick beats of a woodpigeon's heart ... * [2]

Coming indoors again after all this Nature study, one is a little suspicious. What kind of communion has one been asked to practise? How does Lawrence view the relationship of mind with Nature? Fortunately, in the year in which Lawrence wrote this poem, he drafted a paper on aesthetics for an Eastwood study group, which partly answers these questions.[3]

"Art and the Individual" scrambles together three radically different aesthetic theories. The first is of man as homo ludens, a pseudo-scientific humanist view that art is linked with fundamental human drives like sexuality and the instinct for play activity. The second approaches Wordsworth's definition of self-expression, claiming that art 'is the medium by which men express their deep, real feelings'.

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1. Hough, The Dark Sun, p.201.
2. MS 1, 23.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.12, 13 May 1908.

The third is the neo-Platonic theory, that an artist perceives and expresses beauty, which 'is the shining of the Idea through matter'. In joining these three definitions, Lawrence is attempting to unite a trinity of the sensory, emotional and religious man. Roughly and by main force he is able to do so. He assumes the key article of Romantic faith and the Romantic imagination, that there can be recognized and discovered 'something of intelligibility and consistent purpose working through the whole natural world and human consciousness'.[1]

The nineteenth-century diction is significant. Like many Victorian poets, Lawrence is attempting to broach, for the benefit of the Eastwood socialists, a formulation of the 'one Life within us and abroad' sufficiently rationalized to be acceptable. If one can accept the 'one Life' as a 'consistent purpose' open to the intellect, there follows a right ordering of the human faculties and a justification for art. For all men, in all their intercourse, sensory, emotional and religious, within themselves, with each other and with the world, contribute to this ongoing 'purpose'. Art itself is deeply analogous to the 'purpose', enabling us 'to consciously recognize that power working out in things, beyond and apart from us'. Art helps:

> To bring us into sympathy with as many men, as many objects, as many phenomena as possible. To be in sympathy with things is to some extent to acquiesce in their purpose. We want, we are forever trying to unite ourselves with the whole universe, to carry out some ultimate purpose -- evolution, we call one phase of this carrying out. [2]

The laxness of that word 'sympathy', and the monist impulse acknowledged in it, is intensively glossed by Coleridge's explorations of the action of the imagination. The social emphasis, untypical of Lawrence, recalls Shelley's "Defence of Poetry". But Coleridge, the diversitarian monist, went on to stress the value of the all in each; and Lawrence, too,

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1. Phoenix II, p.222. My italics.
2. Phoenix II, p.226.

believes that an artist must pay attention to particularities 'to understand the host of human qualities which go to make up the human character and are influences in the progress of things'. Hence, 'though art is general, it is also particular'. These ideas on art can be re-applied to "Renaissance". The particularities of the external world need to be seen with awakened senses and coloured with vivid emotion before they become Paradise, of religious worth. Our whole nature needs to be and can be united. But a 'delicate sympathy' and an emotional commitment must be developed before we can join in the 'ultimate purpose' or the 'one Life'. It is the sexual emphasis in this emotional commitment which is comparatively new.

In "Dreams Old and Nascent" Lawrence continues to mull over the conflicting claims felt by the individual artist from his personal life, his work, his art and society. In Chapter II an earlier draft of this poem was analysed for its biographical content. The strain of personal feeling is essential to Lawrence's enunciation of his poetic. The writing of poetry proceeds, not according to an abstract principle, but in response to urgent emotions, surfacing from the past and erupting into the present. These do not, in a Coleridgian sense, unify the poem. They are a necessary part of the world of the poem, a world in which the poet is plunging, however guiltily, into a course of actively sought sensual experience. In any version[1] "Dreams Old and Nascent" is a fearful jumble of influences. The jumble is relevant to its function, of sorting out from the literary heritage what is relevant to the modern situation. Allusions and echoes are eclectic, from Coleridge, Shelley or Shakespeare, Villon as translated by Rossetti, the Lord's Prayer when it appeals to the kingdom, the power and the glory, Whitman, Swinburne and perhaps Tolstoy. It is not difficult to think that Lawrence's

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1. Quotations taken from CP and A versions for "Old" and "Nascent" respectively. See Poems, ed. Pinto, pp.52-53, 925-26.

extensive reading in the nineteenth-century novel, with its successive generations imparting an ongoing, cyclical rhythm to social life, could have impinged on his theme, the regenerative life which plays through the everyday, working existence. What Pierre Bezuhov sees in Platon Karatayev, and his eventual epiphany of a humanly 'living globe', have affiliations with what the schoolteacher sees in the railway workers, and with the symbolism in which his vision is recorded.[1]

The poem moves from definite perceptions to indefinite, miscible symbols, from specific observation to generalization, that still retains the element of individual feeling. The socialist sympathy and the widely gesticulating generalizations, liberally doused with sexual overtones, may seem pure Whitmanese. Whitman's 'Always the procreant urge of the world ... always substance and increase, always sex' sets the tone, and the discovery of a divine principle in the 'brawny limbs' of workers is characteristic of many of his chants.[2] But it should be contended that the poem can be equally well understood in terms of the Romantic tradition, as it developed in Victorian England. In particular, Lawrence's willingness, in this early poem, to generalize about a somewhat idealized mankind, while at the same time retaining an acute feeling for the living flesh, allies him with Swinburne's hymns as much as Whitman's chants. In Swinburne's "Hymn of Man", for instance, the whole of mankind is envisaged as a great body, of Man and God, in which each individual man is a pulse. Lawrence's poem differs in starting with some few individuals. God is the activity of all members of the human race, 'the stir which is rhythmic and moves through them all as a heart-beat moves the blood'. This half-physical, half-abstract 'great Thing labouring through the whole round flesh of the world', from the past through the present to the future, may be partly modelled on Swinburne's 'wave of the world', which embraces all the ages of mankind in "Hymn to Proserpine". In "Hertha" Swinburne's Ygdrasil buds and blossoms like Lawrence's humanity 'Swelling ... like one

1. Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace, tr. Rosemary Edmonds, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1957), pp.1152-53, 1261-62; and cf. Phoenix II, p.223f.
2. Whitman, "Song of Myself", III, XLI.

bud to bring forth the fruit of a dream'. But the image may directly allude to Atalanta in Calydon.[1] Compare the penultimate stanza of "Dreams Nascent" --

> Oh the great mystery and fascination of the unseen Shaper,
> The power of the melting, fusing Force -- heat, light, all
> in one,
> Everything great and mysterious in one, swelling
> and shaping the dream in the flesh,
> As it swells and shapes a bud into blossom.

-- with the description, in the second chorus of the drama, of Aphrodite rising from the waves:

> The weft of the world was untorn
> That is woven of the day on the night,
> The hair of the hours was not white
> Nor the raiment of time overworn,
> When a wonder, a world's delight,
> A perilous goddess was born;
> And the waves of the sea as she came
> Clove, and the foam at her feet,
> Fawning, rejoiced to bring forth
> A fleshly blossom, a flame
> Filling the heavens with heat
> To the cold white ends of the north.

The special activity in mankind's body on which the symbolism focuses, directing the attention with some degree of subtlety, is sexuality -- the activity of Aphrodite stirring in and rising through the woof of the flesh. It is regeneration that stirs, activates and brings forth the fruit of generations. In the phallic symbol of the bud, towards which the whole of mankind resolves, the poem coordinates its strain of autobiographical feeling, the demands of the sexual quest and the large gestures towards human destiny.

The fact that Lawrence was aware of his literary past, and capable of modifying it to his own ends, bringing it to bear on contemporary life and transfusing it with his own feeling, will fail to convince the modern reader that "Dreams Old and Nascent" is a good poem. He will continue to be repelled by the gush of extemporized language and the apparent slovenliness of diction. When Ezra Pound reviewed Love Poems,

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1. E.T., p.119.

it was this defect that he singled out for criticism. He berated Lawrence's 'ornaments and block phrases' and 'offensive manners of rhyming and of inverting and of choosing half his words'. He deplored the 'loaded ornate style, heavy with sex, fruity with a certain sort of emotion'.[1] Leaving aside the question of Lawrence's supposed technical incompetence, it must be conceded that, since the salutary revolution effected by Pound and Eliot in diction, the verbiage of the Rhyming Poems, made even more of a pot-pourri by Lawrence's successive revisions, has become repellent to the modern reader. He has justice on his side, but over-reaction may distract him unnecessarily from appreciation of other aspects of the poems, The mixed bag of Lawrence's diction is no worse than many other Georgian's. What should be dug for in that bag is the startling quality of contemporary, literate thought, just beneath the surface. To penetrate this quality of thought one need only elucidate the web in "Dreams Old and Nascent".

The 'ship of the soul' voyaging over the seas of life[2] is a common enough literary property, although Shelley perhaps did most to make it his, in Alastor, for instance, or the "Euganean Hills". But Lawrence's 'silk sails' call to mind as well the 'shallop ... silken-sail'd' of Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott". This poem was one of Lawrence's youthful favourites,[3] and remained a permanent point of reference for him. The short novel, The Virgin and the Gipsy, is structured at many points on this tale of an imprisoned lady, and there are other references to this poem, or to Tennyson's reworking of the story in "Lancelot and Elaine" from the Idylls of the King, in

1. Ezra Pound, Review, New Freewoman, I (1 Sept. 1913), 113, in D.H.Lawrence: The Critical Heritage, ed. R.P.Draper, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p.53-54; and Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce, with Pound's Essays on Joyce, ed. Forrest Read, (London: Faber, 1968), p.32.
2. "Dreams Old and Nascent/ Old", 16.
3. E.T., p.95: '.. which he somehow hinted applied to me'.

Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow and Aaron's Rod.[1] Lawrence's interpretation of the poem can readily be inferred: the lady is immured in a dreary castle and distressed by the wooing of unimprisoned lovers; moreover, she is only able to live through 'shadows', the reflected worlds of art and artifice, because of the curse upon her. A possible allusion to the 'magic web with colours gay' which the lady weaves occurs in "Dreams Old and Nascent":

> .. where the storm
> Of living has passed, ebbing on
> Through the coloured iridescence that swims in the warm
> Wake of a tumult now spent and gone ...

The nostalgic 'lapsing after/ The mists of vanishing tears, and the echo of laughter' is thus not, in "Dreams", a direct participation in 'the storm/ Of living' with its vital interaction of pain and joy. It is instead a search for artificial calm in the unchanging past. The sentimental laughter and tears of "Renaissance" have turned to 'old, sweet, soothing tears, and laughter': they are seen to be sentimental, not quite real.

In "Dreams Nascent" the allusion is repeated, and its overtones reaffirmed, in the first stanza:

> My world is a painted fresco, where coloured shapes
> Of old, ineffectual lives linger blurred and warm;
> An endless tapestry the past has woven drapes
> The halls of my life, compelling my soul to conform.

The previously fluid symbols designating nostalgia have grown petrified, imprisoning, although they still afford a certain cosiness and security. But for the poet 'the surface of dreams' or 'the picture of the past' is suddenly shattered, not by the passing of Sir Lancelot, but by the 'fluent, active figures of men pass[ing] along the railway'. The physical presence of these men renews his awareness of life in the present, which must be active, 'the active ecstasy'. As in Wordsworth and Coleridge, the

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1. Sons and Lovers, p.39; The Rainbow, p.265; Aaron's Rod, p.271; The Virgin and the Gipsy, p.199-202. Some guide to Lawrence's feeling about Tennyson can be gleaned from Siegmund's criticisms of the poet in The Trespasser, p.44-45.

perception of this ecstasy is active, too, a 'sudden lifting my eyes', rather than a passive perception of random sense-impressions. The revelation -- found in Nature in "Dim Recollections" or in sex in "Renaissance" -- is located in the bodies of 'Men, my brothers, men the workers',[1] and of:

> .. the quick, restless Creator moving through the mesh
> Of men, vibrating in ecstasy through the rounded flesh.

Though each man is individually active, and each boy as he bends over his book, in their group activity can be divined the motions of a 'quick restless Creator', an embodied Demiurge in whom resides the paradigmatic power behind all movement. Lawrence's 'great yearning' is, like Coleridge's, monist. Unlike Coleridge's, his 'everything great and mysterious in One swelling and shaping' is sexual, revealing itself pre-eminently in the phallic flesh. As such, it descends from Whitman rather than Coleridge, or from Shelley with his rather obscene phallic inspiration in Alastor.[2] In his class he finds another answer for his monist yearning; for through the boys he can understand his own past, open his senses to the active, physical present, and catch a glimpse of the already quickening future. In 'the great mystery and fascination of the unseen Shaper' individuality and time, past, present and future, are fused 'all in one', though this One is of the flesh.

As in "Renaissance" Lawrence's response to the One involves a more active commitment than would be involved in the mere active perception of it:

> .. the dream-stuff is molten and moving mysteriously,
> Alluring my eyes; for I, am I not also dream-stuff,
> Am I not quickening, diffusing myself in the pattern,
> shaping and shapen?

The language ('diffusing') and the act of identification with its ambivalence ('shaping and shapen') is Coleridgian, differing from Coleridge's imagination in its unmetaphysical and facile acceptance of a greater

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1. Tennyson, "Locksley Hall".
2. Alastor, 151-91. The capitalization of 'One' in the quotation is from MS 1, 41.

unitary reality. In addition, Lawrence's monist urge does seem to involve diffusing the subject rather than the object, or the obliteration of some aspect of the self, the self as detached spectator. There is a last difference: in the context of the poem's theme, identification with 'the mesh/ Of men, vibrating in ecstasy' is an identification with the regenerative flesh. Lawrence's 'diffusing' power -- his means of identification with Nature and with men -- is not the Romantic imagination but sexuality. His 'melting, fusing Force' is not Romantic joy but the empathy of intense sexual sensation. It is a definitive step in Lawrence's extension of Romanticism, and seems to have been taken with a remarkable awareness of historical perspectives.

The web is somewhat idealized: only seen at certain moments, it does not extend over all human activity. Lawrence had difficulties accommodating the world of London within his web of vital interaction. In "The Review of the Scots Guards" the body of men engaged in synchronized physical movement reproduced the mesh of "Dreams Old and Nascent" with equally explicit sexual connotations:

> * Suddenly as the blood stirs awake at the sight of a woman
> The soldiers stir, and the mass breaks into the ruddy rhythm
> of marches,
> Softly swaying, moving, breaking the still red line
> Changing and flowing apart and coming together like waters ... * [1]

In "Letter from Town/ The City" the life of the "Renaissance" countryside with its calves and lambs is weighed against the life of 'a hundred navvies working in the road' or a regiment of soldiers passing by. There is a tentative web of sound, approximating to the Romantic Aeolian harp, but the young man has to strain to hear what harmony there is, to the discomfort of his Romantic sensibility:

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1. MS 1, 48.

* Like the sough of a wind caught in a high mesh of trees
Goes a sudden car sweeping past, and I stand to hear
The harmony of the traffic, more subtle than the long surf,
or the breeze
Wandering northward to you where all harmonies veer. * [1]

At night the trains on the railway bridge pass and repass like gleaming shuttles through the quivering light reflected from the Thames. But the mystery of the social fabric offers no consolation to the outcasts forced to seek shelter along the Embankment. Puzzled by this evident failure in the network of society, the poet travels home in one of the trains, after visiting the theatre:

* .. twining the threads of perplexity and sorrow, and
catching
The [rain] drops that fly in above the window pane.

[And t] The raindrops fall with a kiss on all
The faces aflower in the same black night,
And the tear drops that lie in the blood reply
With a sorrowful kiss to their call ... * [2]

Even this detached window of observation cannot fully shield the young man from a quasi-sexual, sympathetic response to pain. The response seems inadequate: the outcasts would no doubt prefer a raincoat.

Davidson Road School, earlier in 1909, had provided the setting for a more adequate unravelling of the strands of sympathy and pain. "Discipline" occurs in no one satisfactory text, mainly because later versions added to the poem. These graftings were alien to the stock, grew poorly and obscured from sight the pith of the initial poetic intuition. For all its clumsy utterance, the original version best preserves the original conception:

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1. MS 1, 39.
2. MS 1, 53.

* It is stormy, and rain drops cling like silver bees to
the panes
The thin sycamore in the garden is swinging with flattened
leaves
The heads of my boys move dimly through the yellow gloom
that stains
The class: over them all the darkness of my discipline
weaves.

It is no good my dear, [gentleness and forebearance] --
I endured too long.
I have pushed my hands [in under] the dark soil under the
the flowers of my soul
Under the caress of leaves, and felt where the roots were
strong
Fixed and grappling in the darkness for the deep-soil's
little control.

It is no good, my darling, Life does not lead us with a
daisy chain
We are schooled in pain, and only in suffering are we
brothers
So I've torn some roots from my soul, and twisted them,
good or bane
Into thongs of discipline: from my anguished submission
weaving another's

And, quivering with the contest, I have bound and beaten
my fifty boys:
The fight was so cruel, my love; I have torn the deep
strings from my soul
And fought with the blood in my eyes, and established the
equipoise
Of law and obedience -- my class is a cosmos, a whole.

Greatest of all is Jehovah, the Father, the Law-Giver, the
Stern
Punisher: Forgiveness is only a flower from the Almighty
trees.
I am a son of Jehovah -- out of suffering I must learn
To judge and punish like a God, though I yearn to put
forth mercy, and ease. * 1

Looking out from his classroom, Lawrence sees a tree in storm, the brother of the storm-racked ash-tree of "Discord in Childhood". This association with his troubled childhood and with his father is confirmed by the later mention of thongs as whips. To understand the methodology of discipline Lawrence delves painfully into his own childhood. In some later versions he changed 'sycamore' to the plural; each tree could thus symbolize one boy, growing as he had through pain and conflict. The concept and symbol of the mind as the product of organic growth have their roots in Coleridge's

1. MS 1, 40.

thought. It is used again, more woodenly, in the sequence "The Schoolmaster". But in "Discipline" it is a truly Coleridgian symbol, capable of growth in itself and in the reader's mind.

Another aspect of the boys is present in another correlative, in 'the rain drops cling[ing] like silver bees to the pane'. Elsewhere Lawrence employs the image as a direct simile for the boys' pitiful dependence:

> * Clinging to the radiators, like numbed bees to the drenched grass,
> The boys from the Home, blue and inanimate. * [1]

Sensibly Lawrence keeps the window shut. He wants not to be touched, as he had been in "Outcasts", nor to expose himself wholly, as he had done opening the window in "Dreams Old and Nascent", but only to perceive. He is already deeply involved because of his own childhood, and he needs that much detachment. The writing of the poem is a kind of window -- an opening of perception, yet with a minimal effort of detachment. Through this window Lawrence sees a new variety or aspect of the web: 'over them all the dark net of my discipline weaves'.[2] It is an interrelationship of cruelty and pain, power and submission, the weak and the strong. A definite tang of Darwinian natural selection intrudes in this first draft -- '<u>only</u> in suffering are we brothers' -- but Lawrence did away with this in later versions. Nonetheless, pain is intrinsic to learning as to life. Lawrence's views on education may not be worth extrapolating beyond their context, but for class-sizes of fifty or more they are probably indispensable for the teacher's survival. The web has psychological rather than social implications: the interlocked struggle is markedly internalized, as the teacher himself complains -- 'from my anguished submission weaving another's'. The battle degrades intellectually and emotionally, and

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1. MS 1, 37, "A Snowy Day at School"; and <u>cf</u>. <u>Poems</u>, ed. Pinto, p.73, "A Baby Asleep After Pain".
2. After MS 1, 37, all versions have 'dark net', not 'darkness', in this line. Ferrier, MS 9, has 'dark [net mesh]'.

the infliction of punishment is painful to both parties. There can be detected in the poem a hypersensitivity to the exchange of pain. Although the poet yearns 'to put forth mercy, and ease', he betrays a hatred for the intensity of his own sympathy, cultivating a wilful callousness.

The dark net has other psychological resonances. It underlies the bright web of leaves and flowers on which Lawrence's symbolism had concentrated prior to this poem. In "Discipline" the caressing leaves and 'the flowers of [the] soul' are reduced to the significance of 'a daisy chain' -- a superficial make-believe of the conscious Christian virtues of meekness, gentleness and forgiveness. The psychological reality resides in the deep, underground roots, hidden from our accustomed social outlook, and possibly from the conscious mind. Yet these unseen and unkindly depths are the true source of all being and strength and relationship with others. Inappositely, the mythic figure Lawrence uses to represent this world-view is a sky-god, Jehovah. As in Swinburne's Atalanta in Calydon he is a 'Stern/ Punisher', but Lawrence believes his dominance to be the attribute of a 'Law-Giver', not a tyrant. He stresses Jove as a patriarchal god, considering himself 'a son of Jehovah'. Lawrence has torn up the roots of his own soul; he has returned to his childhood; and thence he has drawn his understanding of, and emotional courage for, discipline. He has made himself into the hated father-figure. But he acknowledges the justice of this new power, and the glamour of the dark, chthonic struggle; for 'Greatest of all is Jehovah, the Father', whereas 'Forgiveness is only a flower'.

Like the other Romantics, Lawrence found his insights into his own motivations and into Nature impelling him to extend his cosmology downwards. Revelations not only descended from the web of light; they ascended from a dark underworld. Like the uncontrollable 'ceaseless turmoil' of which Coleridge was aware, but unlike the amorphous 'mighty

forms' of Wordsworth and Shelley, Lawrence's 'dark net' underlying the bright leaves is the source of unmitigated material and psychic power. Lawrence at once essays to integrate this power within his psyche, regardless of the pain, disruption or disharmony which this introduces into his world. The power is that of a source, of roots and origins, a realm where large parental figures loom. The lashing branches of "Discord in Childhood" embed themselves as roots in "Discipline". This extension of Coleridge's organic symbol downwards, already suggested by his own accentuation of the subconscious, is carried forward by later nineteenth-century writers, by Swinburne in "Hertha", or by Carlyle, making explicit what was implicit in much Romantic poetry:

> Boundless as is the domain of man, it is but a small fractional proportion of it that he rules with Consciousness and by Forethought: what he can contrive, nay, what he can altogether know and comprehend, is essentially the mechanical, small; the great is ever, in one sense or other, the vital; it is essentially the mysterious, and only the surface of it can be understood. But Nature, it might seem, strives, like a kind mother, to hide from us even this, that she is a mystery ... Under all [Nature's] works, chiefly under her noblest work, Life, lies a basis of Darkness, which she benignantly conceals; in Life, too, the roots and inward circulations which stretch down fearfully to the regions of Death and Night, shall not hint of their existence, and only the fair stem with its leaves and flowers, shone on by the fair sun, shall disclose itself and joyfully grow. [1]

As darkness encroaches, the symbol of the glinting web in Lawrence's verse dwindles and changes. The web of sunlight and fertilizing pollen in "Amour" was already fragile and idyllic. It is torn in pieces by the sexual crises and the trauma of the mother's illness and death, in 1910 and 1911. The underworld of power, parental archetypes, subconscious motivation and death engulfs the poet's attention. In the original, complete version of "Troth with the Dead" there is a description of leafing and blossoming trees, such as would previously have suggested to Lawrence a glimmering play of interacting, protoplasmic life. Now the trees appear as perfervid snatches of flame, reminiscent of Meredith's

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1. Carlyle, "Characteristics", Romantic Criticism, ed. Foakes, p.143-44.

beech in Love in the Valley:

* This spring [that has] come/ bursts up in bon-fires green
Of wild, of puffing emerald trees [like fires];
Pear-blossom lifts in [wreaths] of smoke between,
[And] fire of musical birds out quivers and gushes.
[And pointed flames lick out from the]

I am amazed at this spring, this conflagration
Of green inflaming the soil of this earth, this blaze
Of blossom, [and] puffing [of] sparks in wild gyration ... * [1]

The web of interrelationship between man and Nature has been torn and scattered into 'puffing sparks'. These fires and jetting sparks represent a new pattern of symbolism and feeling, the driving force of the elegies of 1911.

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1. MS 5, 81.

v

> Really, the one beautiful and generous adventure left seemed to be death. [1]

"Transformations" is a sequence which, like the long poems "The Crow" and "Troth with the Dead" or like another sequence "A Life History", Lawrence saw fit to disintegrate, when publishing, into shorter, supposedly discrete lyrics. The distribution of the dismembered parts and their revision was so extensive as to warrant the reprinting of the whole of "Transformations" in an Appendix. It is not a completely mature or coherent poem, but it does represent a remarkable stage in the development of Lawrence's thinking. Helen Corke recalled Lawrence's new taste for philosophical argument early in 1911. In "Transformations" Lawrence extends and recasts his old philosophy, in order to cope with the psychological trauma of his mother's death. Perhaps for this reason, the sequence is a show-case for the influence of Shelley on his work.

The poem opens in the London evening smog, and continues to be very much concerned with the city. London is steeped in images of corruption, yet it resists the apocalypse that must precede redemption, the fiery Dies irae of 'God's cleansing care'. For the first time Lawrence identifies London with Sodom, a comparison that will bear fruit in the closely bound typology of Women in Love. The air of dissolution is in part a projection of the poet's own psyche; for death has invaded his soul with its corrosion of despair. A voice within the poet urges him to undergo the rite of passage, the personal apocalypse suggested by the sunset, that purifies 'With a crimson of anguish', but leads only to death. Yet in the miasmal evening he finds an image of faith, the lemon-coloured street-lamps, which remind him of evening-stars.

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.74.

The evening star is, as Yeats pointed out, one of Shelley's favourite, positive symbols for the reconciliation of seemingly implacable contraries -- night and day, evil and good, death and life. One interpretation of "/1. Evening" would be, then, that creation and decay can be reconciled in this life, avoiding the Eros-like urge towards the purity of death. An alternative exegesis of the street-lamps, which are evening-stars rather than the evening star, is proffered by John's Revelation. In this book with which, by his own testimony, Lawrence's chapel upbringing was saturated,[1] the appearance of stars on the earth coincides with the opening of the sixth seal:

> And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;
> And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. [2]

This allusion seems to be confirmed by the morning after, when 'the street-lamps stand ... meaningless twigs'. Without Revelation the meaning of Lawrence's ripening figs would be obscure; and it can be observed that the deeds of his great city, like the fornications of the Whore of Babylon, are performed 'deliciously'.[3] The fires and tribulations of the last days may impend on London, which is typologically Sodom and Babylon. Equally imminent, it seems, is the opening of the seventh seal of the individual psyche.

The conclusion of the sequence, "Raphael", extends some hope that London might instead be converted into 'the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven', where shape and spirit are married. "Raphael"'s account of the creation combines both Genesis and Revelation. Like John's Elect, who have 'the seal of the living God ... in their

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1. Apocalypse, (London: Secker, 1932), p.1-2; and see Frank Kermode, "D.H.Lawrence and Apocalyptic Types", Modern Essays, (London: Collins Fontana, 1971), p.153-81.

2. Revelation iv, 12-13.

3. Revelation xvii, 3-5, 18; xviii, 1-9.

foreheads',[1] Lawrence's men carry 'His blessing bright on [their] mouth and [their] brow'. Characteristically, Christian myth is twisted in new directions: whereas John exhorted the Christian churches to pay heed to original sin, walk in righteousness and avoid the Whore of Babylon, Lawrence considers this 'blessing' of God as a birthright, needing only to be kept 'from the adultress' theft'. The adultress must be London-Sodom-Babylon with her defiling and corruptive despair. Avoiding such defilement, one will, like the Elect, come through the terrors of the last days, and enter the new Jerusalem. One should perhaps read this poem more as an attempt at personal redemption than as a prediction of grand social cataclysm. Even then, "Transformations" is not wholly coherent, and this pattern of allusion to Revelation is not consistent with other symbolic implications in the poem. But it is remarkable for showing how Lawrence combined a critical stance towards Christianity with a readiness to adopt many of its models and precepts into his own thinking.

One of the conflicting patterns of symbolism within the sequence is introduced by the images of corrosion and dissolution in "Morning". "Morning" and "Evening" represent attempts, not unlike those of Baudelaire and Eliot, to produce an imagery of the city. Lawrence's images are redolent with corruption or have some touch of the fabulous -- submarine cities[2] or abrupt clusters of toadstools. The city alters its aspect rapidly, in unnatural, unseasonal permutations, --

> Oh you stiff shapes, swift transformation seethes
> Throughout your substance ...

-- as if it had its own Demiurge, a kind of arch-magician, whose creative act, of moulding and breathing life, was a paradoxical dissolution. "The Inanimate" refers to "Raphael", quietly hinting that the creative

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1. Revelation xxi, 1-2; vii, 2-3.
2. Lawrence's 'fabulous weeded cities [that] sway in the sea' are based on Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind", III.

artist must imitate this Creator of the city. He must contain this spirit of corruptive creation. He must throw a 'conjuror's cloth' over the 'stiffly shapen houses' to transform them with the magic of his art, and make them beautiful. This artistic hubris, the idea of the artist as a magician or god transforming reality, reflects Lawrence's reading of the French symbolistes. The hubris is untypical of Lawrence's usual aesthetic or stance towards the external world. It reflects his disturbed religious feelings and his need at this time to establish his personal identity as an artist. Even within "Transformations" the myth of God's creation of man and his senses allows one to infer his more characteristic aesthetic, a reverence for reality and the wonder to be found in it:

> * He took a handful of light and, rolled in a ball
> Compressed it till its beam grew wondrous dark
> And then he gave thee thine eyes, Oh Man, that all
> Thou seest should be kindled at His Spark. *

In the sequence's fourth section Lawrence finds a role for the corrupt, ugly city in his organic model. The earth, like a lamp in its 'lemon coloured beauty', contains and reconciles the contraries of dissolution and creation. The 'rotten apple rolling downward' is engaged in the very process that issues the burr or the 'jewel-brown horsechestnut' for fresh germination. Therefore, it is the poet's duty to accept the earth sordid or radiant tissued', and to internalize the subjective correlatives of the death- and life-flow. This embracing of creative and destructive principles in the days of uncertainty and terror preceding apocalypse -- what Kermode dubs as Joachitism[1] -- is a surprising anticipation of symbolic patterns in The Rainbow and Women in Love, in the years preceding the war. Lawrence's measured acceptance of the city, in which 'swift transformation seethes', also looks forward to the end of Sons and Lovers, where Paul Morel turns back towards 'the

1. Kermode, Modern Essays, p.156-58.

city's gold phosphorescence'.

As if to compensate for the sensitivity to decadence, a new, somewhat specious spirituality colours Lawrence's descriptions, of labourers, for example. In "Men in the Morning" as in "Dreams Old and Nascent", the labourers conjure up the metaphor of weaving, but here the figure pertains to what they make rather than what they are. The bright shuttling globes of their hands may derive from Shelley's "Ode to Heaven". The labourers, mining and weaving, seem to unite earth and crystalline heaven. In what may be Lawrence's first use of the symbol, they are the 'feet of rainbow balancing the sky!' But again the technique, in "The Earth" and "The Changeful Animate", recalls Shelley. Like the opening of Epipsychidion, it is a montage of rapidly changing symbols designed to evoke by their multitude what cannot be stated -- in this case, the manifold life of man. Lawrence seems to be engaged here in healing a dichotomy, but it is only by looking at the men through this further Shelleyan stage of abstraction that the division has arisen between earth-bound flesh and sky-aspiring spirit. Lawrence saw no such division in "Dreams Old and Nascent". It is bereavement that has made him see the division, and has led him to this spiritualization. The men 'stand alone in pride like waiting lamps' -- waiting to glow star-like with the Shelleyan reconciliation of the Shelleyan dichotomy.

A Demiurge, pushing the city towards its Dies irae, and a correspondent inward Eros, urging the soul towards death, haunted "Evening". The vision of the city as dead matter animated by a detached godhead is even clearer in "The Inanimate". The source for this Platonic machinery (since there is no evidence that Lawrence had read Plato at this stage) is probably Shelley's Adonais, where the fiery 'one Spirit' smelts and informs drossy matter, and the individual soul aspires towards the symbol of the evening star:

He [the dead Keats] is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing th'unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light. (379-387)

Plainly such a philosophy offers some consolation in bereavement. Terms like 'form', 'dross', 'shape' and 'frame' proliferate in Lawrence's poetry at this time, especially in "Corot".

"Corot" also witnesses the resurgence of the nineteenth-century terminology of the 'purpose of God', 'God's progress' and 'His great direction'; but these terms are Platonized to a degree that Lawrence's nineteenth-century scepticism and materialism would not previously have tolerated. In "Dreams Old and Nascent" the physical activity of men combined to form a 'great, mysterious One', an 'Unseen Shaper'; but the bodies of the men shaped the One as much as the One the bodies. Here 'The subtle steady rush of the whole/ Grey foam-fringe of advancing God' sifts the spirit from each individual. The godhead is externalized, autonomous. It alternatively abstracts spirit from matter and reinforms matter from its One life. Individuality is God seen in every face. Even greater, admirable selves, like the trees, only serve to 'Shake flakes of [God's] meaning about':

For what can all sharp-rimmed substance but catch
In a backward ripple God's progress,

— or, in Shelley's words, check the flight of the one Spirit? The foam-fringe may be drawn from Swinburne's 'wave of the world'. But Lawrence's spirit of dawn is actually closest in its temper to the 'one intellectual breeze' that sweeps through the quiet evening of "The Eolian Harp". For all the rush, "Corot" has a static quality that registers the painting, a suspense of listening. The response, a most unusual one in Lawrence, to the 'Luminous breeze', is one of Romantic

passiveness, a silent, waiting receptivity. Abetting the monist abstraction of "Corot" is the poem's subject, an already idealized work of art. The poem is recognizably about Corot's paintings, dwelling on the trees, leaves and birds, which are however subsumed in the grey wash, and picking out the labourers, perhaps for their red caps. Lawrence's Platonism may not be as extreme as that which he interprets in the paintings. Talking about another man's art, he is free to explore a sensibility and an aesthetic that he may not fully endorse. This use of painters as personae he could have learnt from Browning; and there is a touch of Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra" in the idea of God's progress as a wheel, from which substance snatches sparks.

"Raphael" is Lawrence's "Rabbi Ben Ezra". It melds in its creation myth the same elements of fire and clay, clod and spark, apprentice and master, though God is more of a general handyman in Lawrence's poem. He does, however, work at making a cup of man, as does Browning's Potter-God in the prolonged figure, borrowed from Timaeus, in "Rabbi Ben Ezra". Despite the echo of Shelley's Epipsychidion, 'Delighted as a bride's',[1] the Platonism of "Raphael" is Browning's rather than Shelley's. It urges a healthy, no-nonsense coexistence of spirit with flesh, a productive cooperation that will make of man 'a god though in the germ'. The myth of "Raphael" blends Platonic and Christian elements in much the same way as "Art and the Individual" reconciled conflicting aesthetics. In the creation man's senses are so animated that he can respond to the 'Spark' informing God's other creatures -- a myth explaining Platonic epistemology. The artist has a god-like mission to 'Shapen the formless things'. Yet another part of his inheritance is 'the joy of the Moulder' and the 'passion of love'. God's apprentice

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1. CP version; cf. Epipsychidion, 393.

must seek to imitate his Master's expression of sexual joy.[1] The accentuation of the god-like artist in man is exceptional; and, as in "Art and the Individual", the artist has an unusually conservative social function, to 'gently touch/ The souls of men into the lovely curve/ Of harmony'. But Lawrence's characteristic theme, of the artist's life as a quest for fulfilment in the sexual flesh, is paramount. In serving his apprenticeship, man will institute something like the new Jerusalem,[2] although the future envisaged bears a secondary resemblance to the golden age of Prometheus Unbound. "Raphael" shares with the millennium of that drama the measures and choruses, the brotherly political harmony of 'linked hands' and, an unusual bonus in Lawrence's conception of apocalypse, a Utopian political freedom of 'angels free of all command'. As for Lawrence's 'flowers that praise and burn', they find an equivalent in Shelley's 'flowers of vegetable fire'.[3]

Remembering how in "Evening" Lawrence had weighed the advantages of Eros and the cleansing fires of death; in "Corot" had contemplated a life of passive receptiveness to the grey one Spirit; and in "Raphael" imagined the reconstruction of an earthly paradise with 'no defect/ Of form or movement or of harmony'; "Transformations" might be considered as a shrewd assessment of the possibilities open to a Platonic, chiliastic poet like Shelley. His own preferences at the time of writing might be deduced from the fact that "Raphael", with its upbeat,

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1. Lawrence's 'joy' might be related to the staple Romantic emotion, enabling intercourse between man and Nature. The simile of the daisies in the last lines of "Raphael" is a Wordsworthian attempt to compress eternity in an individual, living thing. Wordsworth himself wrote three poems about daisies.

2. Cf. the concluding stanzas with Lawrence's account of Christian expectations of the millennium in Movements in European History, p.27.

3. Prometheus Unbound, I, 571, 'A legioned band of linked brothers'; II, i, 60; II, i, 207; IV, 394; for burning flowers see III, iv, 110, and the "Sensitive Plant", I, 87. Burning flowers are common as well in Swinburne's heated universe, e.g., "Felise", 'A fire of flowers and glowing grass'.

finishes the sequence. Like Shelley, he longs for 'some calm and blooming cove'. But he chooses 'the world/ Of all of us'.[1] The overall pattern of "Transformations" is a progression from the corrupt atmosphere of "Evening", with its portents of apocalypse, to the shining morning of the new Jerusalem, yet without any apparent passage through the tribulations of the last days. A rite of passage may be open to the 'travelling apprentice' other than that of death.

Although Lawrence's disintegration of "Transformations" in revision did not represent a major loss to literature, ignorance of the sequence's existence has impeded Lawrence scholarship. It provides valuable insights into the development of his characteristic themes and into the new philosophical and formal interests to which Helen Corke referred. Moreover, the sum of the sequence is worth more than the bits and pieces to which it was eventually reduced. The aim of revision may have been to extirpate the element of Platonism in the sequence. "Raphael" illustrates how such revision denatures an entire poem. Its original draft showed signs of an appreciation of the painter's _oeuvre_, of an understanding of the religious value with which light, form and harmony are invested. The change of title may have been part of the struggle to accommodate the poem within the materialism of the earlier and later verse. Lawrence came to object to Raphael, preferring Michael Angelo, for much the same reasons as he revolted against Plato. They pursued religious Eros, or maleness, but they detached it from femaleness; they abstracted:

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1. Shelley, "Euganean Hills", 342; Wordsworth, _The Prelude_, II, 231-32.

> So Raphael, knowing that his desire reaches out beyond the range of possible experience, sensible that he will not find satisfaction in any one woman, sensible that the female impulse does not, or cannot unite in him with the male impulse sufficiently to create a stability, an eternal moment of truth for him, of realization, closes his eyes and his mind upon experience, and abstracting himself, reacting upon himself, produces the geometric conception of the fundamental truth, departs from religion, from any God idea, and becomes philosophic.
>
> Raphael is the real end of Renaissance in Italy; almost he is the real end of Italy, as Plato was the real end of Greece ...
>
> Michelangelo, however, too physically passionate, containing too much of the female in his body ever to reach the geometric abstraction, unable to abstract himself ... strives to obtain his own physical satisfaction from his art.
>
> Michelangelo would have created the bridal flesh to satisfy himself. [1]

But Lawrence himself erred in detaching his poem from the art-works which had inspired them. The point of "Raphael" had been to apply the creation myth of the first half of the poem to the craft and the life of the apprentice in the second half. Cutting the poem in two eradicated its original meaning, and left the truncated segment obscure and indefinite in its reference. Other sections of the sequence suffered in like manner, fragmented into slivers of bloodless Imagist description. Lawrence's revulsion from the abstraction of "Transformations" is evident, two years later, in a discussion of how Whitman, the Greeks and 'Michael Angelo -- but not Rembrandt' -- misled by their vision of an abstract humanity, had produced art that was 'largely wrong: too much intellect, too much generalization in it'.[2]

A more contemporary gloss on "Transformations" is supplied by Lawrence's letters to his sister Ada in 1911:

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1. Phoenix, pp.458; and cf. p.306-07, 473.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.258-59, 22 Dec. 1913.

> I am sorry more than I can tell to find you going through the torment of religious unbelief: it is so hard to bear, especially now. However, it seems to me like this: Jehovah is the Jew's idea of God, not ours. Christ was infinitely good, but mortal as we. There still remains a God, but not a personal God: a vast, shimmering impulse which waves onwards towards some end, I don't know what -- taking no regard for the little individual, but taking regard for humanity. When we die, like raindrops falling back again into the sea, we fall back again into the big shimmering sea of unorganised life which we call God. We are lost as individuals, yet we count in the whole ... Life will seem to you, later, not a lesser but a greater thing. That which is a great torment now, will be a noble thing to you later on. [1]

The 'vast, shimmering impulse' described here is often taken to be definitive of Lawrence's early religious feelings. One of the reasons for analysing "Transformations" has been to show that Lawrence's belief in anything quite as detached and spiritualized as this impulse is restricted to 1911. His earliest religious and philosophical pronouncements are a blend of Romantic monism and nineteenth-century positivism: he is one for whom the material world is the real world, though a purpose or direction is revealed in it. His materialism is supplemented by a Keatsian sensuousness, that has shades of mysticism in it: 'Somehow, I think we come into knowledge (unconscious) of the most vital parts of the cosmos through touching things'. Elsewhere he sounds like Coleridge separating the principles of poetic genius from Wordsworth's poetry: 'all mysteries lie in things and happenings, so give us things and happenings, and try to show the flush of mystery in them'. Even late in 1910, with his mother dying, he could still write to Rachel Annand Taylor, 'But why do you persist in separating soul from body? I can't tell, in myself, or in anybody, one from the other.'[2] -- Or to Grace Lovat Fraser, 'I like corporeality. You have a weakness for spirits -- not bottled, but <u>booked</u>.'[3] Only in the last letter written before his mother's death in 1910, can

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1. <u>Letters</u>, ed. Moore, p.76, 9 April 1911.
2. <u>Letters</u>, ed. Moore, p.40, 15 Dec. 1908; p.47, 20 Jan. 1909; p.67, 28 Oct. 1910.
3. Grace Lovat Fraser, <u>In the Days of My Youth</u>, (London: Cassell, 1970), p.150, 17 Nov. 1910.

Lawrence's conviction of the material world's reality be seen to waver, undermined by the intense sympathy for and the vicarious suffering of his mother's long dying:

> Mother is very bad indeed. It is a continuous "We watched her breathing through the night --," ay, and the mornings come, snowy, and gloomy, and like this "chill with early showers", and still she is here, and it is the old slow horror. I think Tom Hood's woman looked sad but beautiful: but my mother is a sight to see and be silent about for ever. She has had a bloody hard life, and has always been bright: but now her face has fallen like a mask of bitter cruel suffering. She was, when well, incredibly bright, with more smile wrinkles than anything: you'd never know that this was the permanent structure on which the other floated. I sit hour after hour in the bedroom, for I am chief nurse, watching her -- and sometimes I turn to look out of the window at the bright wet cabbages in the garden, and the horses in the field beyond, and the church-tower small as a black dice on the hill at the back a long way off, and I find myself apostrophising the landscape "So that's what you mean, is it?" -- and under the mobile shadowy change of expression, like smiles, on the countryside, there seems to be the cast of eternal suffering. Banal! [1]

This crisis has generated the dominant symbol by which Lawrence was to express his bereavement -- a dark void, either utter vacancy or 'the cast of eternal suffering', on which the lesser reality of cabbages, church-towers and the landscape insubstantially floats. This may not be Lawrence's first appeal to some such underlying or all-embracing, negative darkness as an ultimate reality. But probably the earliest attempt to organize this void into a pattern of symbolism, a kind of myth, does originate about this time, in an incomplete draft poem among the Louie Burrows' Papers. Written about the end of 1910, its first line runs 'Ah life, God, Law, whatever name you have'.[2]

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1. Nehls, I, p.138, 5 Dec. 1910. The quotation is from Thomas Hood's "The Death-Bed".

2. See Poems, ed. Pinto, p.194-96, "Martyr a la Mode"; p.879-81, "[Two Fragments on Sleep]". The title is inapposite. Accurate transcription of MS 4 would show the two fragments to be the draft of a single poem; and the theme is life and death, not sleep. The MS is in pencil and extremely difficult to decipher in some places.

The poem is something of a trial run, a mock-up, and the first line betrays the materials of its fabrication -- Hamlet's soliloquy translated into the roughened, exclamatory style of Browning's verse. Lawrence's loosening of the pentameter should not be visited on Browning, however; the halting rhythms are his own unmitigated disaster, which have to be overlooked in approaching the thought and symbolism. Human life is not a falling out of the sea of unorganized life, but a falling out of the sleeping body of the cosmos; and death is a recession into that sleep. Lawrence's cosmology follows the Hermetic conception of the universe: man is not a microcosmos, the universe is a macroanthropos, 'in whose body we/ Are bidden up as dreams'. Thus, the 'dream-stuff' of "Dreams Old and Nascent", which shaped the past, present and future, now gives rise to the notion of an almighty, half-physical Dreamer, whose dream is our bodily life. The original of the 'dream-stuff' is Prospero's troubled vision of apocalypse --

> .. like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on; and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep. [1]

-- though another possible source is the conclusion of "The Sensitive Plant", in which Shelley states his idealist creed that the senses can lead us to delusion:

> .. in this life
> Of error, ignorance, and strife,
> Where nothing is, but all things seem,
> And we the shadows of a dream,
>
> It is a modest creed, and yet
> Pleasant if one considers it,
> To own that death itself must be,
> Like all the rest, a mockery.

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1. Shakespeare, The Tempest, IV, i, 15-58.

Both philosophies offer some consolation in bereavement. Death is the great reality of "'Ah life'". Darkness dominates the symbolic scenario, and the dream of life is like a meteor, a spark in the void going out. The hold on life and on the 'insubstantial pageant' of the material world, is very tenuous. Yet the attitude to suffering and evil, if not wholly convincing, is one of stoic, even grateful acceptance. The cosmos is a 'dream' also in the sense of inspiring wonder. Death's falling back into the cosmic body enriches its sleep, which forever pours forth new dreams; and a hint of sexuality glimmers in the idea of life as a jetting spark. These themes are developed more adequately in "Blue".

The original version of "Blue" (MS 5, 71) underwent parturition into both "The Shadow of Death" and "Blueness".[1] "Blue" has a complex textual history, and much of the text is of considerable interest. Unfortunately, none but the final versions are printed in The Complete Poems. The second version (MS 5, 74) is reproduced in the Appendix to this thesis.

The sea of unorganized life and the blackness of void space are united in 'the black sea', from which the ship of the world steams, gaining the sea of daylight life. In some ways "Blue" is a sequel to "'Ah life'": it is the day following on from that night, with 'the dew distilled from a night of dreaming, dried'. One poem partakes of a strange communion with the body of death after life; the other emerges, frightened and wondering, into life after an experience of death. The poet is thrust again into the garishness, bustle and conflict of life, where 'the sky is clashing with light'. He has become aware of an analogous struggle in the realm of death. He feels out of place, as if all Nature scoffed at him for his unreality; for his allegiance belongs now to the reality of death. Yet he has a deeper empathy with living

1. See Poems, ed. Pinto, pp.132-33, 136, CP versions; and cf. Lawrence, Selected Poems, ed. Keith Sagar, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p.57-59, "Blue" and "The Mystic Blue", A versions. The discussion of "Blue" below quotes freely from different versions and manuscripts.

things, since he understands their share in death. The poet keeps 'intact' within him 'the shadow my love has left in dying', a sacred relic which contact with the daily world would profane. Like the ark of the covenant that is the presence of God among the people,[1] this shadow -- "The Shadow of Death" -- is the presence of death and love within him. The shadow is sacred because it allows communion with a great and potent mystery, the mystery of the diurnal recreation of life. It may be deadly as well. But it allows him to know:

> * .. the host, the minute sparkling of darkness which
> Vibrates untouched and virile during the grandeur of night,
> And which when day crows challenge, scattering the vivid
> black motes
> Of living darkness, bursts by fretfulness into light ... *

"Blue" combines themes and images from other of the death poems. The symbolism of sparks jetting in a void is externalized in the exact imagery of "Silence" and "Listening". In "The Inheritance" the new wonder of death is stated more directly when the poet, suddenly feeling that the passers-by in the street are no more than shadows, exclaims:

> I see each shadow start
> With recognition, and I
> Am wonder-ridden.

The 'darkness intact within' recurs in many of the 1911 poems. In Lawrence's 1928 revision of "Troth with the Dead" this darkness becomes 'a half-moon ... weird and blue', forging a link between early death poems like "Blue" and the later meditations like "Bavarian Gentians".[2] The invitation is to think of Lawrence's early symbols -- such as the ship in this poem, steaming from night into day -- as related to those of Last Poems -- such as "The Ship of Death". In early drafts of "Blue",[3] the virile vibration of the black sea gives rise to leaping dolphins, Lawrence's first use of this ancient symbol for the mating of opposites, and an anticipation

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1. Exodus xxv; I Samuel iv-vii; II Samuel vi; I Chronicles xiii.
2. See Tom Marshall, The Psychic Mariner: A Reading of the Poems of D.H.Lawrence, (London: Heinemann, 1970), p.51-52.
3. MS 1, 74, and Ferrier, MS 19.

of "Whales Weep Not!" and "They Say the Sea Is Loveless".

In "Blue" Lawrence's sphere of poetic attention undergoes a lyric contraction and intensification. It focuses on the deathly darkness of preexistence and the after-life, finding in this, and not in life, the centre of religious value:

> * I have a tent of darkness by day that nothing can stale
> or profane
> I have a knowledge of lovely night, and scarcely can refrain
> From seeking the utter drowning, to share the rhythm of
> the deathless wave
> Of Death; but I wait awhile in this tabernacle, singing
> my stave.
>
> What do I care though from the day's white envelope
> I tear but news of sorrow and pain;-- I bear the hope
> Of sharing the Night with God, of mingling up again
> With all the unquenchable darkness that nothing not life
> can stain. * [1]

The stanzas exhibit the Eros-aspirant's disgust for life and suffering as contaminations of the pure religious impulse in which he lives. Lawrence's exaltation of the darkness is a symbolic inversion of Shelley's complaint that 'Life ... / Stains the white radiance of Eternity'. But even in these lines, where the poet 'scarcely can refrain/ From seeking the utter drowning', he is but 'half in love with easeful Death'. The plastic force of Lawrence's poem is not Shelley's bright Eternity, but Keats's 'midnight with no pain'.[2] Lawrence, like Keats, is seeking for that communion with and knowledge of death which seems to enhance and intensify life. Life becomes keener the closer each draws to death. From this hyper-consciousness of death and life, Lawrence fashions a cosmogony. It was the interaction of death and life that brought the world's dream-stuff into being out of the original chaos:

> Virile swinging in one great prayer, death and life
> Together praying itself into a dream ... [3]

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1. Ferrier, MS 53; or Fire and Other Poems.
2. Shelley, Adonais, 462-63; Keats, "Ode to a Nightingale", 52, 56.
3. MS 5, 71.

"Blue" is a creation myth, devoted to eliciting that conjunction of death and life which is the mystery of creation. It generalizes wildly, yet is not in Lawrence's sense abstract. It retains traces of religious feeling, and elements of the emotional crisis underlying its own genesis.

The probable forebear for the overreaching mythopoeia attempted in "Blue" is Swinburne. In Swinburne's "Genesis" the 'heaving night' brought forth 'the strength of life and death', and this dualistic universe was in turn:

> .. cloven in several shapes; above
> Light, and night under, and fire, earth, water, and air.
>
> Sunbeams and starbeams, and all coloured things,
> All forms and all similitudes began ...

Swinburne's large-scale mythographies in "The Hymn of Man" and "Hertha" have already been cited as precedents for "Dreams Old and Nascent". They may have conditioned Lawrence's search for the eidolons of his experience in such meditations as "Transformations" and "'Ah life'".[1] Similarly, "Genesis" may have been one of the sources for the dualism that governs Lawrence's universe in "Blue" and subsequently. Here he could have read of 'The immortal war of mortal things' and 'The divine contraries of life'. But dualism is ingrained in Western mystical and philosophical traditions. Coleridge's SUM was based on polarity, and the notion of an internal schism within chaos generating from its interaction a multiform creation, which yet inherits a dualism from its parental darkness, can be traced back as

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1, "Transformations/ 5. ... Men: Whose Shape Is Multiform" contains echoes of a passage in the "Hymn of Man", beginning 'Therefore the God that ye make you is grievous'.

far as Jacob Boehme.[1] But Lawrence's Epicurean atoms or 'motes', the traces of Hermeticism and the sophisticated dialectic are of more biographical than poetic interest. They tell us something of his taste for philosophy at this time; yet what raises "Blue" above the level of the dull, expository passages in Swinburne's "Genesis" is the strain of autobiographical feeling, the relativity of these philosophical paradigms to the facts of sexuality and bereavement. The symbols should be scrutinized for their emotional, not their metaphysical significance.

The poet emerges from the darkness of his death-experience vulnerable, wondering and morbid. He is issued 'uncovered with drowned eyes from the night', like the 'horsechestnut newly issued' of "Transformations". Just as the darkness by its internal abrasion gives birth to the world of daylight, so it reissues the poet, entering the world afresh, like a seed after the pain and darkness of winter. The jetting sparks and seeds of the 1911 elegies, cast into the darkness to be buried and resurrected, are the scion of Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind". The production of the world and the self out of self-conflict is also symbolized as an electric discharge. Lightning is one form taken by this discharge, and another is the arc-lamp, whose twin poles and high voltage intrigued Lawrence, as correlates for human tension. In 1910 he had

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1. See Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.161-162:

> Boehme poses as the primal source an eternal unity which, in its absolute lack of determinateness or distinctions, is literally a Nothing, ein ewig Nichts, the Ungrund. But this Ungrund possesses an inner nisus, eine Sucht, which in its striving for self-realization effects within itself an opposing force, den Willen, thus establishing the contraries of impulsion and opposition which set the otherwise static unity into a motion like that of a turning wheel, and so transform the Nothing into a Something -- indeed into the source of all existing things.
>
> Boehme left to philosophy ... a fallen universe which is constituted throughout by an opposition of quasi-sexual contraries, at once mutually attractive and repulsive, whose momentary conciliations give way to renewed attempts at mastery by the opponent powers, in a tragic conflict which is at the same time the very essence of life and creativity as well as the necessary condition of sustaining the possibility of progression back to the strenuous peace of the primal equilibrium.

prayed in "Unwitting" that his 'Emotions in internecine conflict locked':

.. might burst as an arc-lamp [leaps / bursts]
With stress of self-conflict into lovely incandescence. 1

By the time of writing "Blue" the sexual connotations are much more explicitly realized, as the lightning or arc-lamp:

* Breaks into beauty ... thrusten white
Against what dark opponent we cannot know
Being that moment bereft of sight

Leaps like a fountain of blue sparks leaping
In a jet from out of obscurity
Which ere was Darkness sleeping ... *

Lawrence's model for his cosmogony is male orgasm. His sexual quest must recreate the physical world for him. Yet it is not only the poet's sexuality that creates the world. His own consciousness is created from the virile darkness, which is therefore paternal, and tense with the conflicts of fatherly power. Inevitably, to symbolize male orgasm as a shower of high-voltage sparks projected into a void, as an intense, purely male activity, adds a darkening dimension of personal feeling. "Blue" is a quest after, rather than a finding of, the mystic union of life with death; and the quality of sexual feeling drawn on to give expression to the quest is self-lacerating in its assertive will and desperation. Although the showers of sparks converge at the close into 'lovely hosts of ripples' at play, so that they approach the condition of the glinting web and imply a renewed communion with the living world, nevertheless, trusting the poem not the poet, one detects a certain falsity in this reconciliation with the Darkness. The darkness remains antipathetic, a void, dead space, and the poem is torn by sexual compulsion and existential despair.

Kenneth Rexroth observes of the Helen poems, 'They all have a weird, dark atmosphere shot through with spurts of flame, a setting which remained a basic situation with Lawrence'.[2] Ascending or descending from

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1. MS 5, 43.
2. Lawrence, Selected Poems, ed. Kenneth Rexroth, (New York: Viking Press, 1969), p.6.

preexistence or the after-life into Existence, from the world of myth into that of realism, Lawrence enters a sphere of suffering and nausea. We have come full circle to the beginning of "Transformations/ 1. Evening", where the material world is a Sodom, a gamut of pain, whose frictional resistance to our passage tears from us that orgasmic brightness which momentarily sunders the two great darknesses. The world floats on these voids, the further reality forever darkening through its veil. In Sons and Lovers Paul and Clara walk along the battlements of Nottingham Castle, and look out over the city's industrial wasteland. Turning to Clara, Paul is reminded of 'one of the bitter, remorseful angels' who visited Lot. The city changes before his eyes:

> The little interesting diversity of shapes had vanished from the scene; all that remained was a vast, dark matrix of sorrow and tragedy, the same in all the houses and the river-flats and the people and the birds; they were only shapen differently. And now that the forms seemed to have melted away, there remained the mass from which all the landscape was composed, a dark mass of struggle and pain. 1

The dark parental web of unending struggle, of discipline, pain and sympathy, has become unbearable. The paternal darkness of Before is a realm of intense inner conflict; and in poems such as "Brother and Sister" one knows the strength of the temptation to flee into the calm, maternal limbo of the After. Lawrence's mythic worlds in 1911 expanded so as to eclipse the sunlit, sensuous worlds of the early poems. The parental archetypes reach out to occlude the poet's identity. The symbolic darknesses again prevail in Look! We Have Come Through!, in "All Souls" for instance. But gradually they are pushed back, the flame of the self burning more brightly in the Now. The death, potential in the darkness, is transformed, subtly and perhaps confusedly, into a source of life-potency. These are the first stirrings of the dark gods. Curiously,

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1. Sons and Lovers, p.331-33.

some critics have hypothesized that the dark underpresence of Wordsworth's Nature and the 'mighty forms' of his subconscious might have had a similar origin, in the traumatic death of a parent.[1]

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1. William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p.39-41; Prickett, Poetry of Growth, pp.123, 137-38.

vi

Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity ... 1

"Brother and Sister" is one poem in which the wide-reaching and often diffuse mythopoeia of the elegies movingly re-enters the plane of circumstantial experience. The more defined situation demands a sharper imagery. The dark void of "Blue" is confined within a precise pattern of symbolism, extrapolated from "End of Another Home Holiday". The first two stanzas of "To Lettice, My Sister" (MS 5, 53), the earliest version of "Brother and Sister", contain the symbolic and emotional core of the poem:

* The shorn moon trembling indistinct on her path,
Frail as a scar upon the pale blue sky
Draws [down the / towards] the down[wards / stairs] slope: some [keen pain / sickness]

Worn her away to the quick, [and / hath / so] she faintly fares
Along her [blindfold / foot-searched] way, [not knowing / her sorrow closed eye] why;
[in her sleep / unquesting]

[She creeps her way / Finding] down the skys steep stairs.
[Charting no track for her / unconscious]

Some say they see, though I have never seen
The dead moon heaped within the young moon's arms
[And / For] surely the fragile fine young thing had been
Too heavily burdened to mount the heavens so.
My heart, disturbed in its dream slow-stepping, alarms
Me lest you, my sister should go heaped with such shadow
of woe. *

The moon might be reductively considered to symbolize the self,[2] worn

1. Shelley, Adonais, 462-63.
2. See R.E.Pritchard, D.H.Lawrence: Body of Darkness, (London: Hutchinson, 1971), p.22-23.

away by the darkness of disease, until it seems insubstantial, 'Frail as a scar upon the pale blue sky'. But whose self? -- It is obviously the mother in her illness, as she creeps downstairs, timidly moving towards the utter darkness beneath the earth's horizon. Yet it is also a composite symbol for the mother and her child, as he or she carries her upstairs, a dark 'shadow of woe' 'heaped within the young moon's arms'.[1] The waning of the moon suggests not only the mother's death, but the relationship between mother and child, which threatens to extinguish the child's identity by its burden of care. The poet fears lest this waning of the old life should overtake the waxing, young life of his sister. This deflection from egotistic self-concern to sympathetic and empathetic consideration of another is a characteristic of many Romantic poems. Wordsworth in "Tintern Abbey" looks for his own youthful joys in his sister; Coleridge in "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" hopes that his friend, Charles Lamb, will share his moment of enlightenment. In particular, "Brother and Sister" is closely akin to "Dejection : An Ode", or to the earlier version of the ode, "Letter to _____ [Asra]", in this technique of autobiographical projection. Both poets attribute to a loved one a grief which is peculiarly their own,and both express fear lest the emotional and spiritual crisis, under which they themselves are labouring, should befall the loved one as well. In both poems the poets find a portent for their crisis in the peculiar aspect of the moon:

> Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,
> With the old Moon in her arms;
> And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
> We shall have a deadly storm.

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1. See Sons and Lovers, p.457; and T.A.Smailes, Some Comments on the Verse of D.H.Lawrence, (Port Elizabeth: Port Elizabeth University Press, 1970), p.6-7.

Besides "Dejection: An Ode", Lawrence also knew the "Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence", from which Coleridge's epigraph had been taken. Some of the atmosphere of the ballad, the sense of the frailty of life and the long sorrow of death, is incorporated in "Brother and Sister" --

> O lang, lang may the ladies stand
> Wi' thair gold kems in their hair,
> Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
> For they'll se thame na mair. [1]

-- and this simple strain of elegiac balladry can be heard in other poems of this period, notably "The Bride". Lawrence may have counted other poets among the 'some' of:

> * Some say they see, though I have never seen
> The dead moon heaped within the young moon's arms ... * [2]

Shelley in The Triumph of Life (80-93) described a moon, reduced to a 'white shell' and carrying within 'a Shape/ ... as one whom years deform'. It is 'the young moon' bearing 'The ghost of its dead mother', and it conveys a cold, eerie alienation, not unlike the accidie of Coleridge's "Dejection", to the watching poet. Later D.G.Rossetti in "My Sister's Sleep" prognosticates death by a similar configuration of the moon; and a modern Romantic application of the symbol occurs in W.B.Yeats's "Adam's Curse", from a volume which Lawrence might have known.[3] Like Yeats, Lawrence does not read the moon as an omen of impending storm, but as a correlative for human weariness, exacerbation and despair.

These are the emotional reverberations of "To Lettice, My

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1. The Oxford Book of Ballads, ed. James Kinsley, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p.311-12.

2. Later in life Lawrence evidently did see the phenomenon:
> The "eclipse" you mention is the old phenomenon of the old moon in the new moon's arms. You often see it at this period of the year. I saw it myself, here, a fortnight ago. But not so well as in Italy. It is caused, I believe, by the earth reflecting a faint light on to the shadowed, invisible part of the moon. But it is rather lovely, and you don't see it often -- practically never in England.

(Ferrier, "The Earlier Poetry", Appendix II, Unpublished Correspondence, No. 35, 2 Feb. 1916.)

3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.47, 20 Jan. 1909; p.168, 17 Dec. 1912.

Sister", but the poem was designed to be consolatory, after the manner of Lawrence's letters to his sister in 1911. In MS 5 the poem concluded on a note of sentimental religious hope: 'Let us seek to win her back unto us'. Later the poem was revised so as to dispel the grief of bereavement, though the mother's tacit consent, hardly likely to have been forthcoming, was sought: 'Let us turn away from her now, she would have it so'.[1] The final version offers the finest insight into the psychology of bereavement: 'Let us rise and leave her now, she will never know'. The tough but guiltily sensitive reasonableness, the combined relief and despair, recall Hardy's elegiac love poems. It is in the original, consolatory version that Lawrence attempted to extend the symbolism of the moon into a religious myth, to assuage his own and his sister's grief. The myth relates to the 'vast shimmering impulse' of the letters, of "'Ah life'" and "Blue". In death the individual falls back into the 'sea of unorganized life which we call God'; it 'commingles in God's mighty gloom'. But from this gloom issue 'the atoms' which reconstitute life. Hence, the individual love of the mother still 'plies' for her children:

* .. straining our way
Wise, wonderful strands of winds that are laden with rare
Effluence from suffering folk-stuff which death has laid bare
On the air for our nourishment, who from these weave fair on fair. *

Lawrence strains to believe that his mother's suffering and death has a place in the universal purpose; that it creates life, and that in its act of creating life from death the epiphany of the web is revealed. As a religious myth this lacks the potency of the frightening darknesses of "Blue" and "Troth with the Dead". It veils and obscures the fundamental psychological truths tapped in these poems. Yet, though this mythic web, connecting death and life, is a side-line in the development of Lawrence's poetry, it is linked with the Shelleyan Eros of the other 1911 poetry, and

1. Ferrier, MS 26.

it foreshadows the difficulties which Lawrence's later twentieth-century mythopoeia encountered.

Lawrence's effluences are probably derived from Shelley's Adonais and Prometheus Unbound, and thus ultimately from the neo-Platonic One. In Adonais those who die before their time, without due renown, yet uplifted by the loftiness of their minds, 'live ... /And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air' (395-396). They become stars in the 'firmament of time' (388); for Shelley equates the intelligences governing the spheres of the Ptolemaic system with human souls. Keats, the paragon of such souls, becomes the Evening Star; but there are many more:

> .. whose transmitted effluence cannot die
> So long as fire outlives the parent spark ... (407-408)

In Prometheus Unbound quasi-sexual emanations are emitted by the earth, and pass through space to the moon, thus travelling in the opposite direction to Lawrence's. As the earth exults, the moon gratefully confesses:

> Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,
> Which penetrates my frozen frame,
> And passes with the warmth of flame,
> With love, and odour, and deep melody
> Through me, through me! (IV, 327-331)

The beams fertilize the moon, which bursts forth in vegetation and 'bright flowers' (IV, 364). The earth's emanations are not from himself alone, but are part of the circuit of universal Love. Like Lawrence's effluences, they are carried upon winds, though these must be the impalpable winds of magnetism and electricity. By comparison, Lawrence's 'atoms', which are part of 'God's mighty gloom', yet part, too, of the mother's love, 'Settle upon us magnetic, so we wax and bloom'.

Shelley's equation of the emanations of universal Love with magnetism, electricity and light was perhaps not wholly implausible in the early nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, however, such

ambitious cosmologies have been relegated to the realm of psychological myth, not of scientific speculation. Lawrence himself would not have disputed in 1911 that the symbolizing of his dead mother as part of the lunar darkness and of his feelings for her as effluences passing from the moon to the earth was no more than a symbol. Later he felt a deficiency in such symbolism:

> We see only the symbol as a subjective expression: as an expression of ourselves. That makes us so sickly when we deal with the old symbols: like Yeats. [1]

But for the present, like Wordsworth's adoption of the Platonic axiom of preexistence in the "Immortality Ode", Lawrence's after-life in the cosmos was restricted to being an adventure 'into the twilight realms of consciousness', in which 'the attributes of time and space are inapplicable, but which yet cannot be conveyed save in symbols of time and space'.[2] When he came to polemicize the need for the human psyche to regain connection with the physical universe, Lawrence grew more combative and dogmatic as to the reality of the cosmos perceived by the senses and the intuition. 'Strange fine threads', he averred, 'hold us to the moon and stars' and 'have a psychic pull upon us'.[3] The 'strange beams' which unite the worlds of the living and the dead in Lawrence's final revision of "Troth with the Dead" are affirmed to have as much psychological validity for the individual, and hence as much ultimate reality, as has his knowledge of the phenomenal world:

> [The half-moon] lies on the sky for a general sign
> Of the troth with the dead that we are pledged to keep;
> Turning its broken edge to the dark, its shine
> Ends like a broken love, that turns to the dark of
> sleep.
>
> And half lies there in the dark where the dead all lie
> Lost and yet still connected; and between the two
> Strange beams must travel still, for I feel that I
> Am lit beneath my heart with a half-moon, weird and blue.

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.302, [?19 Dec. 1914].
2. Coleridge, Biographia, p.268.
3. Apocalypse, p.103.

In "To Lettice, My Sister", however, the heart and the solar plexus are not so certain of their facts. Part of the pathos of these little myths is that, whereas science and positivism do nothing to lighten the void of existential despair in "Blue", they do sweep away utterly the frail effluences that connect the living with their loved dead. As with Yeats, Lawrence's attempt to make a religion out of Prometheus Unbound fails, but the failure modulates into the emotion of these elegies.

The earth's wooing of the moon in Prometheus Unbound was drawn on a second time by Lawrence in the lover's debate, "Come Spring, Come Sorrow". All things, hazels, beeches, anemones, toads, ducks and stallions, are caught up in the natural web of fertility, in 'Dim spring that interweaves/ The hidden bodies mating everywhere'. The earth itself 'rolls like a germ in the sky'. Why should the girl resist this universal love? Even the sun impregnates the earth. (The alignment of male sexuality with the sun, air and fire is a key to much of Lawrence's symbolism.) The earth in turn sends forth his emanations, to quicken not dead, but virgin worlds:

> Why, I should think that from the earth there fly
> Fine thrills to the neighbour stars, fine hidden beams
> Thrown lustily off from our full-sappy, high
> And fecund globe of dreams,
> To quicken the spheres spring-virgin in the sky. 1

Love is all-embracing, but the girl, probably wisely, avoids it. "Come Spring, Come Sorrow" follows from the religious proposition of "To Lettice, My Sister": if the dead do further our life on earth, then the web of natural vitality and love should be restored by them. But this web is intellectually grasped, not emotionally felt. It is too much like a debating point. The actual feeling towards Nature, towards the shivering anemones and the 'emerald snow' of the beeches, retains a hectic, Meredithian quality.

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1. Cf. MS 5, 77, "Mating": 'To quicken the virgin moon, and the maiden stars nearby'.

Many of the symbolic models of the early poetry -- growth and fertility, Eros and the Demiurge, the web and the window -- are brought together in "Last Words to Muriel".[1] One of the most private of the poems, a confession of sexual failure and a valediction to the ten-years' relationship which had been critical to his adolescence, "Last Words" is a skilful fusion of imagery and emotion. The girl, Muriel, obeyed the model of natural growth, but shrank from the fulfilment of this process in the fertilizing, male sunlight. The flower shrivelled from the intenser light of love; seed and fruit were not produced; and so the man, though 'fine enough to explore' her, 'suffered a balk'. The atmosphere of this wasted opportunity for fulfilment is less, however, that of the sunlit "Amour" or "Come Spring, Come Sorrow", than that of the lowering sunset of "Transformations/ 1. Evening". The act was to have been, not one of candid, springtime awakening, but a gruelling, turbulent rite of passage, such as Shelley's Demiurge makes through material Existence:

> .. the one Spirit's plastic stress
> Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,
> All new successions to the forms they wear;
> Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
> To its own likeness ... [2]

So the sexual act of "Last Words" should have included 'the last bright torture', a 'Fire-threshing anguish' that would have 'fused' and 'undrossed' what was 'opaque and dull' in the woman's flesh. The Eros-impulse of the poet is fulfilled, not in death, but in a cruel sexuality that identifies the self with the Demiurge of "Transformations".

The ambiguous fusion of the imagery of fire with sexual feeling and Platonic Eros is found not only in Shelley; it is common to much Victorian poetry. In Browning's "Andrea Del Sarto", for example, the protagonist confuses his role as a husband with his artistic genius and with the fire of divine inspiration. Lawrence's odd phrase, 'My fine

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1. A tolerable text for MS 1, 74, is in Poems, ed. Pinto, p.944-45; cf. p.945-46, A version; p.111-12, CP version.
2. Adonais, 381-85.

craftsman's nerve', is particularly Browningesque. Andrea del Sarto complains of some younger artists --

> There burns a truer light of God in them
> ... than goes on to prompt
> This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.

-- and Rabbi ben Ezra describes the soul as 'nerved' to 'catch/ Hints of the proper craft' from the Demiurge.[1] Swinburne bridges the chasm between Shelley's Eros, in which sexual desire is etherialized into spiritual yearning, and Lawrence's maleness, which is much more explicit in its physical transactions, by grounding Love in recognizably physical urges, even if the body which prompts them is the body of mankind. In the "Prelude" to Tristram of Lyonesse he apostrophizes:

> Love, that is first and last of all things made,
> The light that has the living world for shade,
> The spirit that for temporal veil has on
> The souls of all men woven in unison,
> One fiery raiment with all lives inwrought
> And lights of sunny and starry deed and thought,
> And alway through new act and passion new
> Shines the divine same body and beauty through,
> The body spiritual of fire and light
> That is to worldly noon as noon to night ... 2

Lawrence's love may be between individuals in "Last Words", but its object is to transfuse the body with a passion that goes beyond the individual, so that the body does become a 'fiery raiment'. Passion is identified with and absorbed in the universal: at the climax the individual becomes a 'God-thought', suspended between life and death at the mysterious juncture of creation. In his final image for this reconciliation, Lawrence reverts to Shelley:

> The One remains, the many change and pass;
> Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
> Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
> Until Death tramples it to fragments. -- Die,
> If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek! 3

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1. "Andrea Del Sarto", 79-82; "Rabbi Ben Ezra", 103-08.
2. Lawrence read at least part of Tristram of Lyonesse in March 1911 (Letters, ed. Boulton, p.85, 27 March 1911).
3. Adonais, 460-65.

Lawrence beautifully and memorably adapts Shelley's dome as a symbol for sexual fulfilment in the body, 'a lovely illumined mesh/ Like a painted window'. As with Shelley, Lawrence at this time must enhance his vision of life, of the body and the phenomenal world, by irradiating it with a passion that leads to an absolute beyond life. For Shelley this leaves one imperative -- 'Die'. For Lawrence some reconciliation must be found between the claims of life and the absolute, a moment of religious faith. Even at this extremity Lawrence's natural piety forbids him to tear aside the web of material reality. Sexuality, at once annihilating and rejuvenating consciousness, must hold the clue to the moment of creative resolution. Eros and sexuality may lead to a revelation of this moment; but sexuality, one feels, is distorted by an identification with Eros.

Adonais is a powerfully religious hymn, recording the struggles of the poet to attain faith in the purity of Eros. As he presses onwards to the final revelation, offering some resistance yet impelled by forces which annul resistance, the poet's struggles reproduce the throes of a religious crisis and conversion. Adapting the terminology and symbolism for this progression in "Last Words", Lawrence recreates the emotional barriers and traumas of sexual initiation. Sexuality becomes a rite de passage from which the novice emerges, or should emerge, into a new world. A religious reverence for and fear of sex are strongly invoked. Yet for all its psychological insight, "Last Words" is not a poem to which one would turn for sexual wisdom. Its exaltation of pain is too extreme; and its attitude to the woman is cruel and arrogant. Lawrence may not entirely have escaped a Victorian ignorance on sexual matters. A symbolic evocation of intercourse in The Trespasser culminates in the woman standing still and worshipping, 'involuntarily offering herself for a thank-offering', before the divine male light.[1] A passage in the "Prologue to Women in Love", which parallels the immolation of Miriam in

1. The Trespasser, p.114.

Sons and Lovers and "Last Words", shows more understanding of sexual failure, though, given the characterization of the novel, it can hardly be more sympathetic to the woman, Hermione.[1] The final version in the Collected Poems moderates the arrogance of "Last Words". As Vivian de Sola Pinto points out, it is a more humane poem than in the early drafts.[2] But the final version completely subverts the brilliantly organized symbolic patterns of "Last Words to Muriel", the coordination of the girl's organic education in love with the male, fertilizing sunlight and with the descent of the divine fire through the drossy world. Probably the best balanced version is that in Amores, though even here the addition of the last two stanzas, where the painted window comes to include a 'shrieking cross', tends to tip the delicate tonal scales towards melodrama. The extension is purely baroque. Thus, the reader is left with the uncouth diction and tautly organized symbols of "Last Words to Muriel", a brilliant, flawed and cruel poem, that perfects the glinting web in a moment of wishful, Keatsian stasis and illumination.[3]

Despite reservations about "Last Words" as a poem, one accepts it as a document, an intimation of Lawrence's mood in 1911. Exhausted by morbid powers of sympathy, and exacerbated by an existence which appeared, beyond all proportion, composed of suffering, he reacted suddenly, inflicting instead of absorbing pain, enjoying the brief excitement of sadism. The diction and feeling of the poem both warrant comparison with Swinburne's "Anactoria". Her love slighted, Sappho fantasizes on the delights of revenge:

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1. Phoenix II, p.100-01.
2. Pinto, "Lawrence: Craftsman in Verse", RMS, I (1957), 25-26.
3. Cf. Keats, The Eve of St Agnes, xxiv-xxv.

.. O that I
Durst crush thee out of life with love, and die,
Die of thy pain and my delight, and be
Mixed with thy blood and molten into thee!
Would I not plague thee dying overmuch?
Would I not hurt thee perfectly? not touch
Thy pores of sense with torture, and make bright
Thine eyes with bloodlike tears and grievous light?
Strike pang from pang as note is struck from note,
Catch the sob's middle music in thy throat,
Take thy limbs living, and new-mould with these
A lyre of many faultless agonies?
Feed thee with fever and famine and fine drouth,
With perfect pangs convulse thy perfect mouth,
Make thy life shudder in thee and burn afresh,
And wring thy very spirit through the flesh?
Cruel? but love makes all that love him well
As wise as heaven and crueller than hell.

As Lawrence's lyrics approach the purity of Shelleyan Eros, so they verge on the deathly climacteric of Epipsychidion, in which the two lovers are united. Swinburne, though longing for such union, cannot forget the physical body; and neither can Lawrence. His later warnings, about the need to strike a balance of identities in love, drew on hard-earned experience. In the phantasmagoric, unpublished "A Drama" Lawrence led the action towards this same climax, a perverse and fatal rejection of physical individuality:

.. we will pass together like one red flame
We leap like two clasped flames from off the fire
Of living, and waver in sweet extinguishment.

But the identity of the other is not finally forgotten in "Last Words". The poem concludes with a glimpse of the woman's 'mute, nearly beautiful ... face, that fills me with shame'. Nowhere in Lawrence's poetry can be found the pure, all-transcending, algolagnic wish-fulfilment of Swinburne's verse. But in the Rhyming Poems Lawrence does explore the mingling of guilt and desire, joy and pain, in sexuality. To follow this exploration is to investigate the influence of Swinburne in Lawrence's poetry, and to watch the glinting web grow:

.. interwoven with lines of wrath and hate,
Blood-red with soils of many a sanguine year. 1

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1. Swinburne, "In a Bay", xxix-xxx.

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> A young man is afraid of his demon and puts his hand over the demon's mouth sometimes and speaks for him. And the things the young man says are very rarely poetry. So I have tried to let the demon say his say, and to remove the passages where the young man intruded. [1]

As described in the published and unpublished prefaces to Collected Poems, Lawrence's demon became a controversial imp. Controversy began with R.P.Blackmur's pronouncement, 'after consideration', that the young man was 'just what Lawrence thought he was not, the poet as craftsman, and the demon was exactly that outburst of personal feeling which needed the discipline of craft'.[2] In view of Blackmur's predisposition towards Lawrence, this is a clever debating point, but it can hardly be sustained by a close reading of the prefaces. Blackmur further misconstrued the demon, when he interpreted Lawrence's request, that the poems should be given their 'penumbra of time and place', as an admission that he had failed adequately to articulate private emotion. The request is made with reference to Look! We Have Come Through!, and serves as a reminder of the historical context of poems such as "Frost Flowers", composed during the grimmest days of World War I, in 'the cruel spring of 1917'. Replying to Blackmur, W.H.Auden remarked that technical virtuosity is a common enough acquisition of young poets. Lawrence was remarkable in having been able to throw over so quickly the traditional repertoire of poetic feelings. He was able to let his demon speak before he

1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.28.
2. R.P.Blackmur, "D.H.Lawrence and Expressive Form", The Double Agent: Essays in Craft and Elucidation, (New York: Arrow Editions, 1935), p.105. Blackmur's attack was anticipated by Edward Shanks in a review of Collected Poems, Saturday Review, CXLVI (6 Oct. 1928), 425-26.

had found a style for him to speak in.[1] More indignant at Blackmur's misreading, Pinto points out that the demon does not represent an outburst of feeling; nor is it a matter of simply letting him speak; Lawrence's revisions are evidence of the difficult process of refinement towards a naked sincerity of expression.[2] Richard Ellman extends the idea of the demon as self-revelation into the realms of the subconscious. It is 'the archetypal self, purged from everyday accidents, from the self-consciousness of an inhibited young man bound by space and time'.[3]

Both prefaces attribute two powers to the demon, roughly corresponding to Pinto and Ellman's interpretations. The first of these is the demon's propensity for harrowing self-analysis:

> .. when I was twenty ... my real demon would now and then get hold of me and shake more real poems out of me, making me uneasy. I never "liked" my real poems as I liked "To Guelder-Roses". [4]

Lawrence recalls being genuinely disturbed by the things he wrote about himself and about his relationships with others, by his capacity for self-confrontation and -discovery. These revelations were often in conflict with his more conscious intentions and wishes, and they laid demands on him he would rather have avoided. They were 'things I would much rather not have said: for choice'.[5] The demon as the voice of sincerity shades into the demon as the involuntary voice of the subconscious. The voice of the demon is compulsive; it has continued throughout his artistic career and become identified with his vocation, his Romantic inspiration; it has made him aware of a division within himself:

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1. W.H.Auden, The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays, (London: Faber, 1963), p.285.
2. Vivian de Sola Pinto, "D.H.Lawrence: Poet Without a Mask", Poems, ed. Pinto, p.1-2.
3. Richard Ellman, "Barbed Wire and Coming Through", Achievement, ed. Hoffman, p.253-67.
4. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.27.
5. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.849-50.

> To this day, I still have an uneasy haunted feeling, and would rather not write most of the things I do write -- including this note. Only now I know my demon better, and, after bitter years, respect him more than my other, milder and nicer self.

From its continued manifestations Lawrence infers that his demon is identical, despite the passage of time, with that lurking within the young man. It is here we need to follow his argument closely; for he draws a very dubious conclusion about his powers of revision of his own poems. The quotation is taken from the unpublished preface, since it makes Lawrence's line of argument more explicit. But the same conclusion -- that the subconscious continuum of the demon enables re-entry into former complexes of feeling, as if they were still present -- is drawn in both prefaces:

> The Wild Common was very early and very confused. I have re-written some of it, and added some, till it seems complete. It has taken me over twenty years to say what I started to say, incoherently, when I was nineteen, in this poem. The same with Virgin Youth and others of the subjective poems with the demon fuming in them smokily. To the demon, the past is not past. The wild common, the gorse, the virgin youth are here and now, the same: the same me, the same one experience. Only now perhaps I can give it more complete expression.

Many of Lawrence's reminiscences of the composition of his early poetry and of his demon can be verified by letters written at the time, and by the poetry itself. The interpretation of the demon as the voice of sincerity is substantiated by characteristic declarations, such as that to R.A.Taylor: 'it is always hard to get my verse cut close to the palpitating form of experience'. Or to Edward Marsh, 'I have always tried to get an emotion out in its course, without altering it'.[1] The split consciousness of the girl in "The Hands of the Betrothed" shows an early awareness of the division between conscious and demonic selves. Lawrence warned Louie Burrows of the schism in his personality, of 'the second me, the hard, cruel if need be, me that is the writer which

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.68, [15 Nov. 1910]; p.221, 18 August 1913.

troubles the pleasanter me, the human who belongs to you ...[It]is the impersonal part of me -- which belongs to no-one, not even myself'.[1] Finally, returning to "Renaissance", one can find, beneath the meek poem to Jessie Chambers, another poem latent in the imagery. The most horrific image in the poem is that of Circe, the litter-devouring sow. She also makes an appearance in The White Peacock as one of the animal analogues for the male-destroying female. The other images, too, piece together a cycle of life and death as little more than labour-pains and carnage. The coy 'I have learned it all from my Eve' becomes an extraordinarily, one would say unintentionally, double-edged tribute. He has learned from her how a woman, mother or lover, can destroy a man, that 'It's the man who pays, not the woman'.[2] Circe makes it difficult to resist Ellman's interpretation of the demon, as the subconscious expressing itself through the poem's symbolism, despite the young man's censorship. But one should resist the corollary which Lawrence would attach to the demon subconscious: that it remains unchanged through time, and allows access to the past as if it were the present. At least, this should not be accepted uncritically. It can be tested, to some extent empirically, by examining one of Lawrence's revisions of his poems, one in which the demon was originally fuming to escape, and has now supposedly been given complete expression. Does a comparison of the first and second versions of "The Wild Common"[3] support Lawrence's contention that the 'common, the gorse, the virgin youth are here and now, the same: the same me, the same one experience'?

R.G.N.Salgado has previously compared the two versions, showing how Lawrence made the early diction more concrete and specific, pruning

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1. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.73, 27 Dec. 1910.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.61, [early 1910].
3. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.907-08, A version; p.33-34, CP version. The remaining fragment of MS 5, 12, has not been greatly revised in A. Therefore, the A version may be considered as substantially early.

away 'unlocalized feeling'.[1] This is relevant to the changed theme, 'all that is God takes substance'. The thematic change has not yet been analysed. In the original version the poet looks out over a spring countryside, in which even the hill and brook seem alive. But his soul hesitates to allow the body full, animal enjoyment of this spring-time rejuvenation. It will perhaps be conceded that this hesitation is like Shelley's in the "Ode to the West Wind"; the reader will sense this sooner than he can tell why; yet the soul has similar, cogent reasons for hesitation in both poems. In the end the soul takes the plunge, enjoying life in the body, as the young man dives into the sheep-dip. A spiritually and sensuously satisfying rapport is achieved between the self and Nature. As in the early version of "The Little Town at Evening", the wind typifies the opposite course, a barren, unrelated freedom.[2]

Lawrence's division of the self into the body with its senses and the 'insolent soul' with its intellect goes some way towards the dualism of Locke. At least to denominate the soul as the intellectual, reflective faculty in mind is not unlike Locke;[3] and the soul is cast as a retiring observer within the observer, one of the besetting problems of representationalist theories of cognition. If not Lockian, Lawrence is at least empiricist: he believes firmly in the reality of an external and an internal world. Interestingly, however, he tends to locate 'myself' not in his soul but in his senses. Like Locke he regards sensations as the basis of our experience. His metaphor for the union of soul with body and sense with substance is the mystery of sexual union. But elsewhere Lawrence often externalizes the perceptual act by the symbolic framework of a room and window -- most strikingly in "At the Window",

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1. R.G.N.Salgado, "The Poetry of D.H.Lawrence", Unpublished Ph.D., Nottingham, 1955, p.98.
2. Cf. The White Peacock, p.247.
3. John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed.A.D.Woozley, (London: Fontana Collins, 1964), Bk. II, ch. i, 9-16.

where he talks of 'the one who sits in the two-roomed darkness behind the eye's window'. This strongly recalls Locke's famous figure of a 'dark room', or 'a closet wholly shut from light, with only some little opening left, to let in external visible resemblances, or ideas of things without'.[1]

In his leaning towards education through the senses, and hence towards empiricist paradigms, Lawrence recalls George Meredith:

> The fact of the derivation of our mental faculties from the sense-life and so from the material world is central in Meredith; and the statement of it in him is so much more distinct and uncompromising than in any other English poet that it gives him a place of extreme importance in the history of poetic naturalism. [2]

Always making statements, Meredith lends himself to such philosophical epitomes. Once can compare 'the one ... behind the eye's window' in Lawrence to the mysterious 'her beyond the handmaid ear/ Who sits beside our inner springs' in "The Lark Ascending". But Meredith's primary interest as a poet is not to restate the metaphysical dualism of body and soul, but to diagnose and heal the psychological rift foreshadowed in it. In "Sense and Spirit" Meredith dissects the self into blood, mind and soul in ascending order: created from Earth, blood creates the higher faculties, but these must in turn seek unity through love of Earth. Lawrence would probably agree with these categories (even in "The Wild Common" it is the mind that sorts out the respective claims of blood and soul), and certainly with the aim of healing the divided self. But he would dissent from the idea of experience as an ascending education of the soul. Nevertheless, some of the feeling of fine, spiritual maleness present in Meredith's "The Lark Ascending" is reproduced in Lawrence's larks and sunlight and jetting gorse-flowers. In his later revision Lawrence's landscaping is more deliberately animistic. The whole of the scene is

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1. Locke, Human Understanding, Bk. II, ch. xi, 17.
2. Joseph Warren Beach, The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry, (New York: Russell, 1966) (First edition, 1936), p.473.

described in terms of a living body, and the 'sevenfold larks' may be an allusion to the seven centres of this body, the seven chakras of Tantrism and Vedantic texts.[1] But in the first version the young Lawrence seems scarcely aware of the air of male sexuality colouring the landscape, though the poem ends in an affirmation of the sexual quest. The demon rears his head timidly at first, but he is not be resisted.

A view of the demon in the round, and an understanding of why the soul, like the young man, hesitates to give the demon expression, can be gained by concentrating on the peewits. In the first version 'They are lords of the desolate wastes of sadness their screamings proclaim'; in the second 'They have triumphed again o'er the ages'. What the sound of the peewits meant for the young Lawrence can be gathered from The White Peacock, where they 'forever keen the sorrows of this world', 'crying always in mournful desolation, repeating their last syllables like broken accents of despair'. The rhythmic labour, suffering and death of the body are symbolized by the 'rise and fall of the slow-waving peewits', enmeshing George Beardsall as he tills the fields.[2] (The echo is from Keats's "To Autumn".) The soul has some reason for shrinking from commitment to the physical suffering of the body, which accompanies its exultations. But the only alternative is the barren freedom of the wind, and in any case the soul dies with the body. The soul is persuaded by these means, and by the rather literary apprehension of the themes of Ubi sunt and Carpe diem, to join forces with the body, come what may. It is a sexual commitment, too: screaming peewits attend the consummation of Paul and Clara in Sons and Lovers.[3]

The mature Lawrence seemed to have no awareness of this dimension of meaning in the poem. His peewits testify only to Nature's

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1. See Frederick Carter, D.H.Lawrence and the Body Mystical, (London: Archer, 1932), pp.16, 20-23.
2. The White Peacock, pp.182,253.
3. Sons and Lovers, p.430.

regenerative power, not to its cruelty. To a greater extent they resemble the peewits in Hardy's "The Revisitation". In Hardy's poem a man returns to a desolate spot on the moors, known once to himself and an old-time sweetheart, at the same date and hour 'as that which saw her leave me/ On the rugged ridge of Waterstone, the peewits plaining round'. As he climbs towards the ridge:

> Maybe flustered by my presence
> Rose the peewits, just as all those years back, wailing
> soft and loud,
> And revealing their pale pinions like a fitful phos-
> phorescence
> Up against the cope of cloud,
>
> Where their doleful exclamations
> Seemed the voicings of the self-same throats I had heard
> when life was green,
> Though since that day uncounted frail forgotten gener-
> ations
> Of their kind had flecked the scene.

In the end the poet realizes that, although Nature creates new generations of peewits, mutability only sunders and destroys what is distinctively personal and human in life, such as his former love. He complains of 'this trick of Time on us'; but the experience instils a certain wisdom, 'like physic-wine'. Lawrence, on the other hand, is bent on escaping the introspective, soulful self. He celebrates the body, glorious in the here and now, the body renewed in 'Wings and feathers on the crying, mysterious ages, peewits wheeling', in what Yeats called 'those dying generations'. Hardy's resignation about the past is wiser in this respect: that Lawrence, returning to his "Wild Common" after so many years only apprehends what is impersonal in the poem. He preserves and enhances what is crudely vital; but ignores or transcends what is subtle, confused and complex in a limited, human situation.

The second version plays down the emotionally charged dualism of the first. The soul becomes inferior, skulking, only there to be forgotten, whereas the life of the body is pure joy. Originally the 'white

shadow quivering to and fro' in the brook was an emblem to the soul of how the body could disintegrate, and to the blood of how it might be united with the palpitant life around it. It is transformed, cleverly, into a metaphor for the soul, which the body holds like a dog on a string -- a conceit that may have been appropriated from Swinburne's translation of "The Dispute of the Heart and the Body of François Villon". The echoes of the Narcissus myth become distracting and unsettling in the earlier version; possibly they point to some inward irresolution. In revision, Lawrence foists all suggestions of narcissism on to the self-regarding soul; but the young Lawrence did have a Whitmanesque ambivalence towards self-love.[1] The sexual overtones of the plunge in the brook are muted. The anticipation of sexual rapport was intrinsic to the original feeling of the poem, to the suspense on the 'steep, soft lip' of the stream. But this element in the first version does lead to confusion: the female soul has to mate with the male senses, and then the male body-and-soul with the external world -- a real embarras de richesses. The revised poem is clearer and, in the sense that it draws on Lawrence's later thought, more original. The joyous being 'Here!' sounds like a spatial equivalent for 'the mystic NOW' of Look! We Have Come Through! The bodily man is as 'royally here' as are the animals in Birds, Beasts and Flowers -- the kingly snake, for instance. Hence, this is a useful introductory poem; but it must be classed as a poor revision. The new conclusion is somehow external to the emotion of the poem; the ecstasy is asserted, not created. The subtler feelings in the original version, for the pain latent in Nature and the natural order, are trampled over roughshod in revision. The turf 'bitten down to the quick' and the darker passages of the stream become mere descriptive details.

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.21-22, 30 July 1908; Poems, ed. Pinto, p.909, "Virgin Youth". Cf. Whitman, "Song of Myself", xxii, xxiv.

But neither is the first version satisfactory. The diction is frequently limp and inherited. The symbolism is private: interpretation must refer to the novels and letters, an index of the poem's failure to articulate its underlying emotions. As so often with Lawrence's revisions, there is something to be thankful for in each version, but neither can be thought of as definitive. As a test-case, then, "The Wild Common" invalidates Lawrence's claim that, because of his demon, the past is present to him as a poet. He faces the same difficulties as any other poet attempting to re-enter an intricate world of feeling and image; and he comes off no better than most. Nevertheless, the mature demon can justifiably claim to be descended from the genius loci of "The Wild Common" -- from the relentless sincerity bringing to the surface uneasy suggestions of narcissism and morbidity towards pain, and from the growing sense of responsibility to a sexual quest.

The first triumphs of the young demon of sincerity were in poems like "Discipline" and "End of Another Home Holiday", in which Lawrence's blend of naturalism, symbol and frankness began to probe the depths of his parental relationship, and poems like "Dog-Tired", in which he wins through to an unsentimental explication of sexual relationship. But Lawrence was to write still franker, barer poems about sex in 1910, and these need to be confronted critically, and evaluated, despite the difficulty of coming to intellectual grips with their content:

> Had I but known yesterday,
> Helen, you could discharge the ache
> Out of the cloud:
> Had I known yesterday you could take
> The turgid electric weight away,
> Drink it off with your proud
> White body, as lovely white lightning
> Is drunk from an agonized sky by the earth
> I might have hated you, Helen. [1]

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.877, "Reproach"; p.117, "Release".

This is, in a manner difficult to state, admirable. There is a nakedness to sensation that makes the traditional symbol transparent, the perfect, unobstructive medium for transmitting the shock of the encounter. Rhythm in the last few lines takes on a physical immediacy. The emotion gives access to the experience, and the speaking voice to the emotion. Despite the lowering animus of the long conditional clause, the last line still comes as a shock, but a wholly justified one. A technique unfolds in the remaining stanzas of "Release", where the concluding stanzas of the original "Reproach" have been effectively condensed. The expanding symbolic associations of lightning and earth are used to dilate on the man's feelings towards the woman. Maleness is linked with fire and air, femaleness with earth. Sometimes there is laborious explication --

> I see myself as the winds that hover
> Half substanceless, and without grave worth ...

-- but elsewhere the touch is lighter and more suggestive:

> .. death
> Is washed from the blue
> Of my eyes, I see you beautiful, and dear.

The whole poem reveals a raw openness to sensation and experience, which would be admirable in any poet, but certainly is remarkable considering Lawrence's circumstances in 1910.

"Scent of Irises" also deals frankly with sexual intercourse, though it employs a richer technique of indirection. A barrier of time intervenes between the experience and the memory of it. Memory is triggered by what may be termed Romantic or Wordsworthian associationism: the odour of irises recalls the flowers growing in the bog-end, and the events associated with the place. As in "Dreams Old and Nascent" or "Discipline", the workaday world dissolves into a realm of day-dream and meditation, of heightened experience susceptible to symbolism; though here the symbols are localized by a specific time and place. Despite the deepening frame-

work of time, Lawrence still insists that the emotions recollected are exact, not coloured by their existence in memory; for there are two kinds of remembering. Firstly, there is the forgetful, consoling nostalgia of Thomas Hood's "I remember, I remember", that salvages only beauty and glosses over pain. Secondly there is the obsessional memory of emotional trauma, like images recurring on the retina. "Scent of Irises" intertwines both kinds of recollection to evoke the emotional texture of then and now.

In the hot yellow sunlight, flowers and pollen, 'the bridal faint lady-smocks' strike a discordant note, like the pale fearful soul of "The Wild Common". Here, too, the soul must be lost; it must fade before before the resurgent life of the king-cups. Sunlight, flowers and pollen, and later the symbol of the cup, invite a further comparison with the idyllic "Amour".[1] But the natural objects in "Scent of Irises" are more powerful symbols. Sensuously, in the pollen smeared on the face, they are more vividly presented; through the psychology of association, sense is fused with emotion, in the poem as in the event; and consequently, these sense-impressions have the power not only to stand for, but to constitute these emotions. Hence, the faint odour of corruption about the marsh and the irises -- 'a peculiar brutal, carnal scent' Lawrence calls it in a short story[2] -- is so united with the sexual experience and its recollection that it evokes the quality of both.

The last such complex image is of 'You upon the dry, dead beech-leaves, in the fire of night/ Burnt like a sacrifice'.[3] The leaves, with their dull, red glow (and with their deadness and incipient corruption) become a correlative for the man's passion, 'the fire of night'. This fire resembles that of "Last Words to Muriel". As in that poem, it is

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1. And cf. Sons and Lovers, p.352-54.
2. "The Old Adam", The Mortal Coil, p.73.
3. A version. The symbolic development in the last three stanzas of A is more coherent than in CP.

developed through various permutations of its basic form. The images of incense and smoke do not connote, as they might in Keats or a pre-Raphaelite poet, an ideal sublimation of the soul through passion, but instead the soul's corruptive knowledge of itself apart from the body in intercourse. The image, of the woman darkening the red fire of the leaves as she lies in wilful, conscious sacrifice, is the most striking and painful in the poem. Symbolically, the girl is united with the parental void, which ruptured the bright and fiery web of life, and with the death-experience, which reduced the material world to insubstantiality, to 'a smoke or dew', 'vapour, dew or poison'. But, despite the obsessive image, "Scent of Irises" reverts to other, present states of mind, to the ashen day that follows the 'fire of night' and to the fire that can re-kindle.

"Excursion Train" presents one occasion when it is advantageous to know some biographical information external to the poem: that Lawrence, returning to London after a visit to his dying mother late in 1910, travelled with Helen Corke on the night-train. Yet the emotion of the situation, if not the situation itself, can be deduced from the poem. The presentation is direct, with no formal framework of recollection, but after the first two stanzas the localized setting fades, leaving the poet to pore over his troubles, as in "Release". As in "Release", the passions are paradoxical and conflicting. The man desires to brood in the 'heart-beat's privacy' on his unnamed sorrow, yet he longs as well for complete union with the woman. Both seem equally unlikely as he watches her 'peering lonelily' through the window. There is a symbolic link between the 'turgid sorrow' of "Excursion Train" and the mother-death poems, in the 'red sparks' cast upon the darkness. The sparks, as they 'endlessly ... whirl and flee' are like the lives of the man and woman, watching them from the train, but themselves carried in a 'shot arrow of travel' through

the void of night to the apocalypse of morning. The metaphor is akin to Philip Larkin's in "The Whitsun Weddings", of 'an arrow-shower/ Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain'. Both metaphors have necessitarian implications -- Larkin seems fond of trains for the very reason they run on rails -- but a religious wonder attaches to the generation implied by these sparks and arrows. Lawrence's have a more immediate personal and sexual connotation, as part of his private symbolic myth. They relate to other poems, not to the pattern of meaning developed in a single poem. In "Blue" sparks are the product of a terrible internal tension, and certainly such an inner conflict is at work here, as the man and woman sit clenched and absorbed in their own problems. One solution would be a drowning out of consciousness in a kind of sexual death, an 'utter sleep' that would extinguish their individuality and make them one in the night; but the poet considers such a dream 'ill-founded'. Alternatively, the woman might open with her touch the clenched spark, or 'amorous, aching bud' of his body — an example of the visceral sensuousness of some Laurentian imagery. Thereupon will be loosed 'the essential flood/ That would pour to you from my heart'. "Excursion Train" with its sparks looks forward immediately to the lightning of "Release". It benefits from collective reading with the other elegies and love poems.

"Lilies in the Fire" combines elements from all these poems, notably the proud flowers and red beech-leaves of "Scent of Irises". It reworks the theme of that poem, more directly and with less depth of feeling. Nevertheless, its rapid flux of symbols does help to clarify some ambiguities in "Scent of Irises", such as the apparently destructive role of the lover:

> I come
> Upon you as an autumn wind on some
> Stray whitebeam, and her white fire all unladens.

The context of this symbolism owes something to the "Ode to the West Wind". As in the mother-death poems patterned on Shelley's ode, the detached spirit can be found seeking 'form/ Or substance'. A permutation of the Browningesque imagery of spark and clay occurs, although the 'helpless clay' also brings to mind Blake's "The Clod and the Pebble". However, maleness is generally identified with air, fire and the Demiurge -- 'God stepping through our loins' -- descending to inform the earthy female. But the woman's consciousness forestalls the natural impulse of the man, suspending him in a false spirituality and turning his act of creation to destruction:

> You love me while I hover tenderly
> Like moonbeams kissing you; but the body of me
> Closing upon you in the lightning-flamed
>
> Moment, destroys you ...

Despite the different biographical background, we are led back into the world of "Excursion Train" and "Release". These confessional poems fit together into an increasingly complex wholeness of statement about sexual relationship, never abstracting themselves from individual experience. Their symbols, as far as they are symbols, do not order, in the sense of excluding or colouring, nor do they idealize experience. They seem to arise naturally from the events themselves, and to probe towards deeper understanding and sincerity of utterance.

More readily than a present-day reader, who has passed the Rubicon of the 'twenties and 'thirties, Lawrence's contemporaries were able to recognize the tradition to which these poems of intensely private, sexual emotion belonged. They found his poetry 'perfectly sincere', praising its 'militant honesty', its 'robust' and 'naked sincerity'.[1]

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1. Amy Lowell, New York Times Book Review, (20 April 1919), 205-17; Francis Bickley, Bookman, LI (Oct.1916), 26-27; Times Literary Supplement, No.760 (10 August 1916), 379; TLS, No.583 (13 March 1913), 108.

They heard in the personal voice of his poems an answer to Carlyle's demand for sincere utterance, as the sole, difficult voice of originality that speaks from the heart of life and of Nature.[1] Yet they were conscious besides of a foreign element, an excessive concentration on sexuality and its physical facts, a courageous outspokenness for which Lawrence was only partly indebted to Whitman; for the frankness of Lawrence's poetry was not only a matter of 'singing the phallus',[2] but of discovering, singling out and evincing the nuances of individual intimacies. Hence, they scold the poet for morbidity or 'hyperaesthesia'. They complain that the emotions are insufficiently sublimated, and scold Mr Lawrence for an/in-ability to 'separate his spirit from his loins'.[3] But Lawrence could have defended the sexual detail of his poems as being organic to their feeling, in accordance with the best Romantic traditions. He would have realized that, in being able to render explicitly and symbolically the girl's dark body on the beech-leaves, to recreate the sensations and, moreover, the intense emotions of that moment, he was fulfilling the imperatives of a nineteenth-century, anti-Victorian tradition, and, in fulfilling them, extending that tradition to describe the locus of his own originality and sensibility.

The tradition to which these sexual poems belong is composed of two interwoven strands. The first was the placing of the poet, his personality and his biography at the centre of the poem. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge felt the need to inject or transfuse English poetry with a new strain of 'egotism' or strong, rudimentary, personal feeling. The reasons for this new subjectivism, for a narrowing and deepening of scope from the social to the private life, are manifold. One was to restore the validity of immediate experience after the denuding scept-

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1. Carlyle, On Heroes and Hero Worship, pp.280, 289, 384.
2. Whitman, "From Pent-Up Aching Rivers".
3. Louis Untermeyer, Saturday Review of Literature, VI (3 August 1929), 17-18.

icism of the Enlightenment, old pieties being internalized and verified by the intuition. Another was to illustrate the self-initiating, imaginative powers of the individual mind, and to trace its growth or education. The 'I' of the poem became recognizably, historically the poet. The poem enacted a dramatic interplay between the 'I', with whom the reader was encouraged to identify, and the external environment. Shelley and Keats, to an extent, withdrew from this 'egotistical sublime', though in many of their greatest poems and odes, they speak in their own voices. The imprint of their characters and their personal struggles and difficulties can be readily discerned in the content and even the style of their poetry. In addition, critical attention focussed on their tragic lives. Criticism began to delve for the poet behind the poem. For Arnold, as for Carlyle, the critical touchstone came to be earnestness and sincerity, faithfulness to private feeling. Poets felt the need to document their sincerity, to provide a non-fictional framework of circumstance in poetry. The distinction between the husband and the poet, in George Meredith's Modern Love, became problematical. Novelist-poets, like Meredith and Hardy, attempted to equal the psychological penetration and realism of the novel in poetry, particularly when dealing with sex and marriage.[1] Concurrently, a second trend, which M.H.Abrams terms Longinian, arises in poetry. It is typified by Keats's remark, 'The excellence of every Art is in its intensity'. In its original context Keats's dictum has a sexual reference. When, transmitted by Mill, the demand for intensity evolves into Edgar Allen Poe's dogma that a poem must be of short duration, since 'through a psychal necessity ... [the] degree of excitement which would enable a poem to be so called at all, cannot be sustained through any great length';[2]

1. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.11; Abrams, Mirror and the Lamp, pp.22-23, 98, 319; Robert Langbaum, The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition, (New York: Norton, 1957), pp.25, 52-53; Langbaum, The Modern Spirit: Essays in the Continuity of Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Literature, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.164-66.

2. Abrams, Mirror and the Lamp, pp.136, 290; Letters of John Keats, ed. Robert Gittings, (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.42, 21 Dec. 1817; Romantic Criticism, ed. Foakes, p.200.

then literary criticism has indeed become sexual in its paradigm; one begins to think of physiological as well as psychal necessities; and it seems inevitable that the call for sincerity in recounting intense, personal experience, of a short duration, will produce a poetry of greater frankness about love-making.

Lawrence's acute appraisal or accurate reflection of these tendencies can be observed in the early letters and criticism. From the point of view of sincerity he found much to criticize in Rachel Annand Taylor's poetry. He pictures the poetess thus: 'She lives apart from life, and still cherishes a yew-darkened garden in the soul where she can remain withdrawn, sublimating experience into odours'. By contrast, his own aesthetic preference was for 'live things, if crude and half formed, rather than beautiful dying decadent things with sad odours'.[1] Poetry must transmit the nature of experience as directly as possible, whatever the violation of aesthetic precepts. By implication, too, the life of the poet must be a heroic quest, after Carlyle. One should immerse oneself in the heart of life, not retire from it. There is something 'emotionally insufficient' in consciously distancing oneself from life. Lawrence's interest is aroused only when Mrs Taylor's sonnet sequence approaches the condition of a 'psychological novel'. 'For myself', he explains, 'I know it is always hard to get my verse cut close to the palpitating form of the experience'. Mrs Taylor's poetry takes the easier course; it is 'fingered by art into a grace the experience does not warrant'.[2] Mrs Taylor has made what, for the Carlylite, is the cardinal error: she has preferred grace to sincerity.[3] Lawrence's metaphor for his own symbolism and poetry is of a knife cutting to the

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1. Phoenix II, p.217; Letters, ed. Moore, p.48, 20 Jan. 1909.
2. Phoenix II, pp.218, 220; Letters, ed. Moore, p.68, [15 Nov. 1910].
3. Carlyle, On Heroes and Hero Worship, p.267.

quick of his experience, painful in its operation yet ultimately salutary. The poem does not treat of experience indirectly; it penetrates consciously and painfully to emotional reality. If the poem leaves something half-said, baulks away from personal experience, or clothes it with a false beauty or ease, then it has become an escape, a form of daydreaming, or of art for its own sake.

In a recently discovered review of two anthologies of Belgian and German poetry, Lawrence displays a knowledge of movements on the Continent, as well as in England, towards a more brutally explicit love poetry. But his emphasis is towards the need to develop this trend in English poetry:

> Synge asks for the brutalising of English poetry. Thomas Hardy and George Meredith have, to some extent, answered. But in point of brutality the Germans -- and they at the heels of the French and Belgians -- are miles ahead of us; or at the back of us, as the case may be.
>
> With Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Verhaeren, poetry seems to have broken out afresh, like a new crater. These men take life welling out hot and primitive, molten fire, or mud, or smoke, or strange vapour. But at any rate it comes from the central fire, which feeds all of us with life, although it is gloved, clotted over and hidden by earth and greenery and civilisation ... Why do we set our faces against this tapping of elemental passion? It must, in its first issuing, be awful and perhaps, ugly. But what is more essentially awful and ugly than Oedipus? And why is sex passion unsuited for handling, if hate passion, and revenge passion, and horror passion are suitable, as in Agamemnon and Oedipus, and Medea. Hate passion, horror passion, revenge passion no longer move us so violently in life. Love passion, pitching along with it beauty and strange hate and suffering, remains the one living volcano of our souls. And we must be passionate, we are told. Why, then, not take this red fire out of the well, equally with the yellow of horror, and the dark of hate? Intrinsically, Verhaeren is surely nearer the Greek dramatists than is Swinburne.
>
> The Germans indeed are sentimental. They always belittle the great theme of passion ... [It] does not mean to say that no man shall try to treat a difficult subject because another man has degraded it. Because a subject cannot be degraded. Sex passion is not degraded even now, between priests and beasts. Verhaeren, at his best, is religious in his attitude, honest and religious, when dealing with the "scandalous" subject. [1]

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1. Review of Contemporary German Poetry and Contemporary Belgian Poetry, ed. Jethro Bithell, in English Review, IX (Nov. 1911), 721-24; reprinted by Carl E.Baron, "Two Hitherto Unknown Pieces by D.H.Lawrence", Encounter, XXXIII (August 1969), 4.

The review is a manifesto for the early poetry. At some points, in his reference to the hate and suffering inherent in love, and to the necessity of these emotions in any unsentimental rendering of 'the great theme', Lawrence seems to be explicating as well as justifying his verse. The figure of the volcano, which continued to occupy his symbolic thought, conveys something of the self-expressive Romantic aesthetic underlying his poetry. Poetry draws on subrational or subconscious powers; a new poet must tap these sources, and provide a new revelation of them. Lawrence finds in Verhaeren's poetry the aim of his own verse, a resolution between two polarized touchstones, religious wonder and brutal sincerity. Verhaeren succeeds in being 'honest and religious'; he lives up to his subject. But the motive behind Lawrence's review was not to canonize Verhaeren's poetry, but to promote in English poetry the preoccupations which he interpreted Belgian and German verse as sharing with his own. He lists certain poets whom he regards as having forwarded this trend in England -- Hardy, Meredith and Swinburne. (The derogatory mention of Swinburne, possibly a reference to the imitation of formal Greek models in Atalanta in Calydon, does not disqualify him from the ranks of those modern poets who have broken through to the volcanic life of passion.) In The Rainbow, a novel for which Lawrence prepared by drafting a Study of Thomas Hardy, the heroine Ursula is presented, on completing her teacher training, with two volumes, one of Swinburne, the other Meredith.[1] It is from these three English poets, whom Lawrence had read before chancing upon Verhaeren, that his youthful demon drew instruction. Analysis of "The Wild Common" suggested affinities in that poem with Meredith, Swinburne and Hardy; their influence on Lawrence's other verse will be evaluated in the remainder of this chapter.

In the event, this polemical review -- a manifesto which, had it succeeded, might have set Lawrence, with his note-books full of un-

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1. The Rainbow, p.424.

published, confessional verse, in the vanguard of English poetry -- was ignored. More learned, sophisticated and comprehensive aesthetics carried the day. The Great War made it plain that 'love passion' was not the sole 'living volcano of our souls'. A deeper and subtler understanding of society's malaise was called for, and Lawrence's contribution to that diagnosis was not primarily in the genre of poetry. Like the agonized sincerity of the trench poets, Lawrence's sexual realism and frankness remained a cul de sac, an unfinished bridge between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet, although they have shown little regard for Lawrence as a poet, British and American poets of the past two decades have revived something of the plain-spoken, confessional honesty, and the direct and unsophisticated attention to emotion, which Lawrence comprehended in 'the brutalizing of English poetry'.

ii

* How strange, we never knew
Till now, that while she walked within our ways
Red beside her walked [the angel wrath] which slew
The crouching sins we ambushed from her view

Tis strange, we never knew
The angel white at her right hand whose praise
Of holy honest things has kept us true,
The sweet, white smiling angel which life-through

Shone us her sympathy ... * [1]

Lawrence may have known as many as four of George Meredith's volumes of poetry. He recommended to Louie Burrows "Love in the Valley" and "The Woods of Westermain", and may therefore have read other of the Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth. He praises in the same letter Modern Love: if he was acquainted with this sequence in the 1862 edition, he may have known as well "Ode to the Spirit of Earth in Autumn", "Phantasy" and "Marian". Pinto notes a verbal echo of the last of these poems in "Renaissance".[2] In Lawrence's short story "New Eve and Old Adam" a stanza is quoted from "A Preaching from a Spanish Ballad", a poem included in Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life. Then, while at Lerici, Lawrence received an unnamed volume of Meredith's poetry, which he had not read before, but in which he was 'a bit disappointed'.[3] His usual verdict on Meredith was quite the contrary. To Jessie Chambers, Helen Corke and Louie Burrows successively, he waxed enthusiastic over "Love in the Valley".[4] Considerable time could be spent enumerating points of similarity between individual poems - between Meredith's "Marian" and Lawrence's "Renaissance", "By Morning Twilight" and "Blue", "A Roar Through the Twin Elm-Trees" and "Love Storm", "Phantasy" and the chapter "Moony" in Women in Love.

1. MS 5, 83, "Her Birthday".
2. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.85, 27 March 1911; Pinto, RMS, I, 22.
3. The Mortal Coil, p.182; Letters, ed. Moore, p.279, 2 June 1914.
4. E.T., p.110; Corke, RMS, IV, 8; Letters, ed. Boulton, p.85, 27 March 1911.

It seems more valuable, however, to remark on the general affinities shared by both poets and, within these limits, to discriminate between them. While Lawrence agreed with most of the critics of his day that Meredith tried to squeeze too much thought into too few lines, he also divined the same fault in his own poetry -- adding respectfully that the comparison was a 'presumptuous contiguity'. Several years later he remained aware of the contiguity between himself and Meredith as novelist-poets:

> Tell me, when you write, what you thought of the poems in Poetry and in the English. I am glad you sent me the former. In England people have got the loathsome superior knack of refusing to consider me a poet at all: 'Your prose is so good,' say the kind fools, 'that we are obliged to forgive you your poetry.' How I hate them. I believe they are still saying that of Meredith. [1]

The poems which brought Meredith to mind for Lawrence include "Meeting among the Mountains", "Fireflies in the Corn", "On the Balcony" and "All of Roses". Already Lawrence was, in all possibility, thinking of collecting these lyrics into the narrative sequence of Look! We Have Come Through! This verse autobiography of a successful marriage was often compared by contemporary reviewers with Meredith's sonnet sequence on a failed marriage, Modern Love. Undoubtedly aware of his indebtedness, Lawrence probably saw his poem-sequence as modernizing Meredith's.

Meredith's originality in Modern Love lay in his ability to turn the new taste for sincerity and intensity to a subject so close and real, so blindingly immediate, as to be almost unhandlable. It is not just about love, but love within marriage, and passionate love, and passionately unhappy love within marriage. Meredith distances this highly charged material by means of a fictional narrative framework, and a distinction between the poet's voice and the husband's. In effect, however, this distinction is swallowed up, or dramatized, within the powerful emotional field of the poem: it reflects the division within

1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.264, 9 Feb. 1914.

the husband between attempts at achieving a detached, reasoned acceptance of his wife's infidelity, and his spontaneous surrender to emotion -- to a love that has converted into hatred and lust for revenge:

> He sickened as at breath of poison-flowers:
> A languid humour stole among the hours,
> And if their smile encountered, he went mad,
> And raged deep inward till the light was brown
> Before his vision, and the world, forgot,
> Looked wicked as some old dull murder-spot.
> A star with lurid beams, she seemed to crown
> The pit of infamy: and then again
> He fainted on his vengefulness, and strove
> To ape the magnanimity of love,
> And smote himself, a shuddering heap of pain. (II)

In Sonnet IX fragile reason again maintains a precarious and painful balance against repeated outbursts of the 'wild beast' of murderous hate. The suspense of this confinement throws up an image which is used by Lawrence himself in the Helen poems, of a 'poison-cup'. The Helen poems share with this sonnet a tense atmosphere of repressed violence and frustration:

> Devilish malignant witch! and oh, young beam
> Of heaven's circle-glory! Here thy shape
> To squeeze like an intoxicating grape --
> I might, and yet thou goest safe, supreme.

Lawrence thought of Helen, and Hardy's Sue Bridehead, as the witch-type. Individually, Meredith's sonnets do not achieve a repose, but create an unresolved, electric tension between opposites, such as characterizes Lawrence's own poems of sexual passion. Midway through Meredith's sequence, the inner conflict breaks down, and what comes through is purely the husband's voice, a voice of bitchy jealousy, hatred, sarcasm and misery:

> Madam would speak with me. So, now it comes!
> The Deluge or else Fire! She's well; she thanks
> My husbandship. Our chain in silence clanks.
> Time leers between, above his twiddling thumbs. (XXXIV)

It is a raw, unguarded, authentic voice, rarely heard in English poetry before this century, and Lawrence must have pricked his ears at it. Even more, he must have noticed how the husband's vindictive hatred gives

way to moments of sympathetic insight into the wife's plight; how this brings about a relapse into tenderness and love which, thwarted, is spurred on to renewed hatred; how there intervene spells when passion is exhausted and the poet escapes into reflection. This capturing of the flux and reflux of passion within the speculum of the poem is one of the great virtues of Look! We Have Come Through!

Meredith finds 'no sin' in his tragic tale; for 'Passions spin the plot:/ We are betrayed by what is false within' (XLIII). Sociologically, as C. Day Lewis has pointed out, Modern Love belongs to a particular phase in the development of European mores and in the enfranchisement of women, when no fixed social code obtained to decide the rights and wrongs of marital disharmony.[1] Unmediated by any certain moral presumptions, the emotional and psychological undercurrents of sexual conflict rear up with a new clarity and starkness. This in itself is like the world of Lawrence's poems. Emotion is valued for its intensity; symbol and situation for the access they allow to the subconscious; between suffering and joy there is no dogma of right and wrong. Both Meredith and Lawrence believe that, in the natural course of events, intense and powerful feelings, of their own right, should find some expression; that harbouring unacted desires, in Blake's phrase, only breeds evil. Both are aware of dark and potent deeps beneath the surface of action and conscious thought, of our impotency to control 'what evermore/ Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force' (L). Both would concur that the truth is too 'little known to human shades,/ How rare from their own instinct 'tis to feel' (XLI). Yet Lawrence is more willing finally to align action and desire with spontaneous motivation, admitting little or nothing that is 'false within', and protesting only of the rigidity and falseness of our social codes without. The dark, inundating wave of sexual passion, flowing from Meredith's 'midnight

1. George Meredith, Modern Love, ed. C.Day Lewis, (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1948), pp.xiii-xiv, xix.

ocean', runs through Lawrence's early verse, notably "In a Boat" and "Love on the Farm". But despite his determination, the youthful demon of "Lightning" knows the pain of feeling:

> A wave of the great waves of Destiny
> Convulsed at a checked impulse of the heart. (IV)

Meredith gives stature to the originative power of the sexual impulse, but only by demonstrating the evils of its collapse or suppression. Considering the amount of sexual feeling compressed in Modern Love, the sequence is surprisingly reticent about the sexual act. Lawrence is more explicit, of course. Yet, though he evokes the pleasures and pains of sex, it is only in order to show their connection with emotion. He, too, remains primarily a poet of the motivations, moods and memories, and later the psychological and religious fundaments, of sexuality.

Throughout Modern Love the dichotomy between what the poet should do and the civility of his behaviour towards his wife, and what he cannot help but feel and the courses of action which irrepressibly suggest themselves to him, deepens into an awareness of a subconscious component in his own being, which is the source of his emotion and unwilled, spontaneous action. Social acts, conscious thoughts and willed emotions float unreally over this abyss, like a star over a pit (II), or a corpse-light over a grave (XVII). Love might act in spontaneous unison with this subconscious; but when love is thwarted, the repressed underdark becomes evil, peopled with demons and witches, and possessed of 'Satanic power' (XXVIII). Meredith's Hades is a little Gothic and febrile, lacking the deep mythic resonance of Wordsworth's 'mighty forms'. But plainly its demonic associations and largely sexual emanations bring it closer to Lawrence's dark gods than previous Romantic underworlds; though it lacks, for instance, the fatal overtones and mythopoeic potentialities of the Laurentian void. Nevertheless, the last sonnet of Modern Love did have a direct influence on Lawrence's symbolism:

> In tragic hints here see what evermore
> Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force,
> Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse,
> To throw a faint thin line upon the shore! (L)

The same faint line of consciousness, cast up by the dark realities of the subconscious, becomes in "Restlessness" 'the surf's thin line' 'that edges the night', and in the 'black sea' of "Blue", the 'fringe of the blue' where day is being created from night. Fusing with Swinburne's 'wave of the world', in "Corot" it appears as the 'grey foam-fringe of advancing God', no longer the membrane of the self or sensorium, but a play of plasm by which the vital Demiurge moves through the world. The 'faint thin line' is woven into the glinting web of self and Nature; and it continues to divide the two encroaching darknesses as late as "The Ship of Death":

> And yet out of eternity, a thread
> separates itself on the blackness,
> a horizontal thread
> that fumes a little with pallor on the dark.

Meredith anticipated the twentieth-century preoccupation with a primarily sexual subconscious. In one of the first articles written on Lawrence as a poet, Conrad Aiken placed Lawrence thus:

> He belongs, of course, to the psychological wing of modern poetry. Although we first met him as an Imagist, it is rather with T.S.Eliot, or Masters, or the much gentler Robinson, all of whom are in a sense lineal descendants of the Meredith of "Modern Love", that he belongs. [1]

Modern criticism would find Aiken's bracketing together of Lawrence and Eliot, in 'the psychological wing of modern poetry' and under the aegis of Meredith at that, strangely off-centre. Aiken made his assessment on the grounds of Lawrence's Love Poems and Amores and Eliot's Prufrock and Other Observations. He can be charged with not recognizing the gulf between confessional sincerity and the ironic projection of the dramatic monologue. But from the evidence before him he deduced that Eliot and Lawrence shared a major theme, sexuality, its motivations and psychological undercurrents.

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1. Conrad Aiken, "The Melodic Line: D.H.Lawrence", Skepticisms: Notes on Modern Poetry, (New York: Knopf, 1919), p.98-99.

If anything, Eliot's approach to his theme is more akin to Meredith's, employing a technique that allows some distancing of raw emotion, a retreat from precipitous confession into knowing irony, and an analysis of failure, of 'what is false within'. Lawrence's poems bespeak a headstrong determination to hurdle all the precipices from failure to fulfilment, a self-educating, Romantic commitment. Modern criticism seems to have scanted the historical importance and the sheer poetic achievement of Modern Love. There are sound historical reasons for laying a fresh emphasis on Meredith's part in the development of modernism; for, as Graham Hough has pointed out, it was during the artistic adolescence of Lawrence and other writers of the modernist generation, that Meredith's reputation reached its high-water mark:

> This young generation had discovered ... in Meredith's poetry ... a power of psychological analysis and a frankness in reporting its results that were new to English nineteenth-century poetry; and an attitude to nature that seemed tough, vigorous and enduring to a generation for whom the Wordsworthian consolations were no longer possible. [1]

This second area of Meredith's influence, the toughness of his approach to Nature, also enters into Lawrence's verse.

Meredith considers that, although man is evolving away from Nature or Earth towards a more spiritual condition, he needs always to reconnect himself with some principle in Earth, or more poetically, with the source and well-head from which his being springs. Sometimes this principle is felt as being dimly sexual: in "Earth and a Wedded Woman" the woman's marriage experience has brought her close to the stern principle of all vitality; it has:

> .. struck the roots which meet the fires
> Beneath and bind us fast with earth to know
> The strength of her desires,
> The sternness of her woe.

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1. Meredith, Selected Poems, ed. Graham Hough, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.5.

Organic imagery is extensively used. In "Ode to the Spirit of Earth in Autumn" the poet seeks to withdraw to the centre of his being, to return to Earth and avoid the frantic disconnection of the shed leaf. (The "Ode" draws heavily on Shelley.) What repels him from Earth is the fear of death, but once the natural cycle is accepted with humility, this fear vanishes. Like Lawrence in "Transformations", he 'smells regeneration ... in decay'. Fear overcome, one may, communing at mutual springs in "The Woods of Westermain", enlarge the egotistical self by 'sweet fellowship' with the creatures of the woods. Furthermore, life can then be appreciated in the present, as "The Thrush", 'One voice to cheer the seedling Now', tells us:

> Flame, stream, are we in mid career
> From torrent source, delirious dream,
> To heaven-reflecting currents clear.

Lawrence would not have subscribed to the teleology reflected by this flux, but does himself take up and lay aside at different times the symbolic models for life, as immediately experienced, of a stream, a flame or a dream. Meredith develops many of the implications of natural and organic paradigms, which he, like Lawrence, inherits from Romanticism, in directions later followed by Lawrence.

In particular, Meredith's Nature is more zoological than his Romantic predecessors'. Sermons are to be found in animals, since these have remained less differentiated from the source of life. Lawrence's intuitions about animals, though anticipated by Meredith's, are at once more sensitive and more intellectual in their foundation. But Meredith's interest in animals did lead him in "The Woods of Westermain" to one of the few truly imaginative responses in the nineteenth century to the theory of evolution:

.. where old-eyed oxen chew
Speculation with the cud,
Read their pool of vision through,
Back to hours when mind was mud;
Nigh the knot, which did untwine
Timelessly to drowsy suns;
Seeing Earth a slimy spine,
Heaven a space for winging tons.

Each individual contains within itself the whole of its species' evolutionary history; and a kind of meditative communion with one animal can open on to vistas of evolutionary time. The idea must have lodged firmly in Lawrence's mind, germinating at last in such poems as "Fish" and "Humming-Bird". He might have found more immediate inspiration in Meredith's "Melampus", a poem about the legendary Greek physician who was empowered to converse with the birds and beasts:

The secrets held by the creatures nearer than we
To earth he sought, and the link of their life with ours.

What Melampus found was something very like Lawrence's world-view in "Renaissance":

Of earth and sun they are wise, they nourish their broods,
Weave, build, hive, burrow and battle, take joy or pain
Like swimmers varying billows: never in woods
Runs white insanity fleeing itself: all sane

The woods revolve: as the tree its shadowing limns
To some resemblance in motion, the rooted life
Restrains disorder: you hear the primitive hymns
Of earth in woods issue wild of the web of strife.

Nevertheless, Melampus' concern for the creatures is necessarily rather clinical; he reads them like a book, and he interprets them humanly, for the benefit of men. Meredith has little use for the wild as such; it only fortifies us to return among men. Earth, our whole idea of Earth as we know her, has for its parentage humanity, or more accurately the interaction between Earth and her sons. So Meredith carries on the Romantic debate on the relation of mind and Nature.

But he has little of the sensitive and subtle response to the external world that distinguished Coleridge and Wordsworth. His willingness, in such early poems as "By the Rosanna", to personify Nature as 'the Nymph' shows a lack of appreciation of the Romantic sensibility and metaphysic. Wandering through a Meredithian landscape can be like reading through a biologist's note-book, interesting phenomena cropping up with a certain frequency; or even more like scanning a medieval illumination, diapered with beasts and flowers at regular intervals. Lawrence's Nature always leads down lanes of realistic English countryside, if only because these lanes are the background for the biographical emotion recalled in the poem. Meredith's woodlands are an avenue of escape from the pressures of the human world; his landscapes seem conceptual reconstructions, frequently verging on the pastoral. Indeed, the stylized scenery of "The Day of the Daughter of Hades" deliberately hearkens back to medieval gardens of Love and allegory. It is another instance of his conceptualizing and allegorizing Nature that he symbolizes the woodlands of "Melampus" as a 'web of strife'; for this is not his feeling for the non-human world; it is merely the application of the Darwinian model to the not-too-intense data of his perceptions. Meredith did not respond to evolutionary theory with the same intellectual violence as Swinburne, or even Hardy. Apart from the occasional fox, he mildly observed, English forests were not greatly given to blood and carnage. Nature was the place where the poet recharged his batteries, in essential peace and sanity, before returning to the human fray. It was in the bedroom, or at least the drawing-room, that the survival of the fittest confronted him as a frightening and predatory reality.

'The sexes' war' was the seat of conflict and struggle for Meredith.[1] In the jungle of Modern Love the young eagle of love is soon struck down by the arrow of denial or deceit, and reduced to a poisonous

1. "A Preaching from a Spanish Ballad", xvii.

and vengeful serpent (XXVI); the antagonism between the serpent and the eagle is eternal. The ancient dual symbol has already been discussed, as it appears in Lawrence's first novel, The White Peacock. The struggle is not only between the sexes, but between different aspects of the self, between the blood that seeks the end of its desire through lust or cruelty, and the mind that struggles for understanding, decency and kindness. Blood symbolizes, by a process of rapid, psychological transmutation, desire, then pain, then cruelty, the desire to wound. Lawrence explains in "Manifesto":

> A man is so terrified of a strong hunger;
> and this terror is the root of all cruelty.

For Meredith, the intense emotion of the blood blends inextricably pain and sympathy, desire and cruelty, sadism and masochism:

> I bleed, but her who wounds I will not blame.
> Have I not felt her heart as 'twere my own
> Beat thro' me? could I hurt her? heaven and hell!
> But I could hurt her cruelly! (XIX)

Thus Modern Love does provide a prototype for those poems in which Lawrence probes the psychopathology of sex, using the internecine struggle for survival in Nature as a clue to understanding sexual hostility. In "Cherry Robbers", for instance, the man is attracted to the laughing girl as naturally as thrushes are drawn to a cherry-tree. The birds' aim is despoliation, not so different from the man's. Made wary by the omen of the three red-stained birds, however, the man comes to the girl in fear. There is something exotic, witch-like, in her attractiveness; and he must overcome his hesitancy and fear of rejection in a resurgence of brutal lust. Desire has been adulterated by cruelty. He goes to the girl, not from joy alone, but to 'see/ If she has any tears'.

The snaring of birds in Modern Love symbolized how innocence falls prey to 'the fatal web' of strife that is adult sexuality,

thwarted and competitive. In "Love on the Farm" or The White Peacock animals caught in traps become synecdoches for a world where, 'If we move, the blood rises in our heel-prints'.[1] It is a world including human relationships. The undercurrent of violence lurking in the serene landscape siezes on the characters' minds in the same way as their semi-conscious obsessions and desires. The girl of "The Hands of the Betrothed" denies this aspect of her self to herself:

> .. her hands are still the woman, her large strong hands
> Heavier than mine, yet like leverets caught in steel
> When I hold them; my spent soul understands
> Their dumb confession of what her soul must feel.
>
> . . . . .
>
> How caressingly she lays her hand upon my knee!
> How strangely she tries to disown it, as it sinks
> In my flesh and my bone, and forages into me!
> How it stirs like a subtle stoat, whatever she thinks!

So her emotions and actions issue crudely and violently. The blood that betrays her into passion causes her to reach blindly, hurtfully, after the man's heart, a tempting 'red fruit' as in "Cherry Robbers". Hunger overcoming fear turns to viciousness.

'My verses are tolerable -- rather pretty but not suave; there is some blood in them', Lawrence confided in 1908, possibly intending the double entendre.[2] Blood as pain, passion and retribution animates many of the early lyrics. Likewise, several of the first short stories attempt to create a realistically violent climax. In The White Peacock George confuses the pleasures of the chase with those of courting; Lettie thrills to the deep cut in his hand; and Leslie has a yen to drink the blood from her veins. In Sons and Lovers the psychology of Paul Morel is based in large measure on the concept of a sane equilibrium, between sympathy for pain and the desire for fulfilment in pleasure. Paul's equilibrium has been disturbed from birth and before; he is literally christened in blood; and consequently, in adult sexual life, he

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1. The White Peacock, p.25.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.21, 17 July 1908.

cannot sustain a relationship that makes strong demands on his sympathy, and offers little ecstasy in return. Lawrence's reading of Dostoyevsky is subtly in evidence in the novel's psychology, not least in the character of Baxter Dawes. But in the poetry this effort to understand the permutations of the sado-masochistic element in sexuality, where it was sane and where imbalanced, is strongly influenced by Swinburne's Poems and Ballads.

Aiken was of the opinion that a strong sadistic element existed in Lawrence's verse,[1] but a comparison with Swinburne's suffices to dispel this misconception. It is true that in certain poems, "Snap-Dragon" or "Love on the Farm" for instance, sexual desire merges at its climax with an overwhelming, quasi-violent brutality in the male; but this brutality is aroused by the need to overcome an impasse or frustration, whether in the woman or the man. Swinburne customarily deals with an altogether more aberrant range of feeling: he 'weaves and multiplies/ Exceeding pleasure out of extreme pain'; and often his only resort is to 'Pain [to] animate the dust of dead desire'.[2] There is, in fact, only a very small amount of very intense feeling in Swinburne's poems, which are more exclusively sensational. His sensationalism and extreme, if obscure, passion for revenge are quite alien to the world of Lawrence's poetry. The longing for vengeance and sensation create and feed the notorious Swinburnian atmosphere, heavy with roses and algolagnic rapture, which is equally foreign to Lawrence. Even the little poem "Cherry Robbers", often isolated for its supposedly pre-Raphaelite atmosphere, makes use of its exotic allusions and diction primarily to evoke the cherry-tree. The human emotions are resolved in an English countryside, of haystacks. Nevertheless, the love of "Cherry Robbers", like the Love addressed in the third choric ode of Atalanta, bears 'Before [her] the laughter, behind [her] the tears of desire'. Lawrence looked to

1. Aiken, Skepticisms, p.101.
2. Swinburne, "Laus Veneris" and "Anactoria".

Swinburne, as Swinburne to Baudelaire, as a venturer past taboos, a seer and iconoclast:

> Thou sawest, in thine old singing season, brother,
> Secrets and sorrows unbeheld of us;
> Fierce love, and lovely leaf-buds poisonous,
> Bare to thy subtler eye ... [1]

Admiring this insight, Lawrence tended to copy Swinburne's sexual diction. The sensational terminology in "Snap-Dragon" --

> My own heart in her power
> Strangled, my heart swelled up so full
> As if it would burst its wine-skin in my throat,
> Choke me in my own crimson.

-- outdoes "Laus Veneris", where the worshipper's 'Each pore doth yearn', his 'heart's vein ... goes nigh to break':

> And my heart chokes me till I hear it not.

The symbolism of the cup in Lawrence's poem might be compared with Tristram and Iseult's drinking of the love-potion in Tristram of Lyonesse:

> Their Galahault was the cup, and she that mixed,
> Nor other hand there needed, nor sweet speech
> To lure their lips together; each on each
> Hung with strange eyes and hovered as a bird
> Wounded, and each mouth trembled for a word;
> Their heads neared, and their hands were drawn in one,
> And they saw dark ... [2]

Lawrence did know his Swinburne. In the essays and novels he scattered familiar tags from "Dolores" and the "Hymn to Proserpine". He offered "Ave atque Vale" to Helen Corke at the time of her bereavement, and quoted "The Garden of Proserpine" to Louie Burrows. He was thoroughly acquainted with Atalanta in Calydon, and even started out to read Tristram of Lyonesse. Apart from the longer poems, his knowledge of Swinburne came from at least two selections of his poetry. In 1916 Lawrence rated Swinburne as 'our greatest poet', second only to Shelley,

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1. Swinburne, "Ave atque Vale".
2. Swinburne, "I. The Sailing of the Swallow", Tristram of Lyonesse.

and threatened to read the whole opus.[1] Even more than Meredith, Swinburne was a culture-hero for Lawrence's generation. Lawrence evidently enjoyed the apparent freedom from moral sanction, the liberty of movement and the sound of the verse. However, as was the case with his reservations on Meredith, he shared the opinion of his day as to the lack of content beneath the fine phrases. He rejected the mechanical, repetitive element in the composition of the verse: 'One can get good Swinburnian consonant music by taking thought, but never Shakespearean vowel-loveliness, in which the emotion of the piece flows'. He thought of the cultivation of pure sound as eroding the organic wholeness of the poem: verse was reduced to being a metronome or 'noisy desert'.[2] Instinctively, he rebelled against Swinburne's perfection of technique, sensing that it made art an end in itself, a substitute for the world; whereas the end of his own writing was to reveal the world beyond art.

Nevertheless, of all the poets to whom Lawrence could have turned for an explication of the human consequences of evolutionary theory -- Tennyson, Meredith, Hardy -- it was probably Swinburne who most affected his translation of Darwin into terms of immediate relationships. "Discipline"'s dictum, 'only in pain are we brothers', is very much in tune with the older poet's interpretation of the natural and human order. Lawrence saw clearly that 'Swinburne was no love poet'.[3] His paradigm for sexual behaviour was an unending, amoral war, a delicious but exhausting exchange of pain that is finally 'fulfilled of unspeakable things'. Likewise the earth is:

> Filled full with deadly works of death and birth,
> Sore spent with hungry lusts of birth and death ...

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1. Corke, Croydon Years, p.9; Letters, ed. Boulton, p.80, 30 Jan, 1911; p.85, 27 March 1911; ed. Nehls, I, p.406; Letters, ed. Moore, p.474, 11 Sept, 1916.

2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.67, 26 Oct. 1910; Letters, ed. Boulton, p.85, 27 March 1911.

3. Phoenix, p.306.

'The divine contraries of life',[1] whether human or natural, bodily or spiritual life, are forever locked in a vicious, internecine conflict. The universe is governed by a duality of cruelty and pain, retribution and terror, rampant sadism and cringing masochism:

> In the darkening and whitening
> Abysses adored,
> With dayspring and lightning
> For lamp and for sword,
> God thunders in heaven, and his angels are red with the
> wrath of the Lord.
>
> . . . .
>
> Lo, winged with world's wonders,
> With miracles shod,
> With the fires of his thunders
> For raiment and rod,
> God trembles in heaven, and his angels are white with the
> terror of God.

These stanzas from "Hertha" are a possible source for the twin white and red angels, of punishment and sympathy, which appear in the early version of "On That Day", "Her Birthday", quoted in the epigraph to this section. Lawrence's psychology of the blood, involving the necessary infliction of pain and the rapid recoil into pity, could be partly derived from his reading of Swinburne. But this dynamic only applies to the mother, to mother-figures or to mother-oriented relationships. The blood of true sexual passion, while it may contend with this dynamic, gains its energy from other sources. Beyond the angels of pain and sympathy is the demon of the intrinsic self, that still keeps contact with the unknown.

The transition in Swinburne from private sexual fantasy to grandiose political and mythopoeic fantasy does not transform him from a misanthropic atheist to a humanist pantheist. It extends his obscure vengefulness and algolagnia from woman to the creation, the Magna Mater. For all his aggressively organic paradigms, Swinburne's work is without natural piety. It does, on the other hand, reveal an intimate relation-

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1. Quotations from "Hymn to Proserpine", "Anactoria" and "Genesis".

ship with a Mother Nature of his own making. Creation is female and material: she is Hertha, or the great Venus of the Sea. Some such large archetype can be found brooding at the back of Lawrence's novels, where she is usually associated with the moon. The watershed of The Trespasser is drawn when the wretched Siegmund succumbs to 'Hawwa -- Eve -- Mother'.[1] Thereafter his course is downwards to death, as he obeys the maternal dialectic of pain and pity, helpless once his male sexual passion has forsaken him. But the root of evil in the female archetype of The Trespasser lies in her dreaming immateriality. The female principle in Swinburne is always material, yet some transcendence is to be gained through it.

It was this concept of a physical transcendence which made Swinburne so attractive to Lawrence, as he was working out his own mystical materialism. Towards the end of his life Lawrence lost patience with the vague universals and generalized emotions of the pre-Raphaelite. His sexuality seemed wish-fulfilment: 'Swinburne's "white thighs" are purely mental'. His attempts at shooting his being through a material cosmos were also too abstract, too ideal:

> [The] blood of all men is ocean-born. We have our material universality, our blood-oneness, in the sea ... The further extreme, the greatest mother, is the sea. Love the great mother of the sea, the Magna Mater. And see how bitter it is. And see how you must fail to win her to your ideal: forever fail. Absolutely fail.
>
> Swinburne tried in England ... [2]

But 'vivid failure' is in itself a revelation. Earlier, Lawrence had tried to pinpoint the quality of Swinburne's materialism and transcendence. How could the continual recurrence to the flesh and to the pain of material being be explained, coupled as it was with a complete absence of feeling for immanent, substantial reality? In the Study of

1. The Trespasser, p.72-74.
2. Phoenix, p.552; Studies in Classic American Literature, p.120.

Thomas Hardy Lawrence suggestively linked Swinburne's metaphysic with his life and life-long dedication to art:

> .. in Swinburne, where almost all is concession to the body, so that the poetry becomes almost a sensation and not an experience or a consummation ... [We] find continual adherence to the body, to the Rose, to the Flesh, the physical in everything, in the sea, in the marshes ; there is an overbalance in favour of Supreme Law; Love is not Love, but passion, part of the Law; there is no Love, there is only Supreme Law. And the poet sings the Supreme Law to gain rebalance in himself, for he hovers always on the edge of death, of Not-Being, he is always out of reach of the Law, bodiless, in the faintness of Love that has triumphed and denied the Law, in the dread of an over-developed, over-sensitive soul which exists always on the point of dissolution from the body.
> But he is not divided against himself. [1]

Poetry is a passionate striving for re-entry into material reality. Hence, it becomes an end in itself, 'almost a sensation' that might almost re-unite the anguished consciousness with the physical body. Yet language and art do in fact become an alternative world, and it is in this complete, alternative world the poet achieves his transcendence. Lawrence has little taste for that apotheosis of Swinburne's art, when the words, rising above mere signification, become self-justifying as a pure musical totality, a sensation in themselves. But, like Eliot, he grudgingly admits that this creation of a unified world of words is the arresting achievement of Swinburne's artistry.[2]

During the War the spectacle in the poetry of the 'over-sensitive soul which exists always on the point of dissolution from the body' took on an added dimension of meaning for Lawrence. Swinburne's combination of extreme materialism and idealism, his deathly blend of sensuality and spirituality seemed to hold a clue to the psychic malaise of Western civilization. The 'daughter of Death and Priapus,/ Our Lady of Pain' was instrumental in the genesis of Lawrence's concept of sexual reduction. She was an aspect, too, of the archetype of Cybele, lurking

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1. Phoenix, p.478.
2. T.S.Eliot, "Swinburne as Poet", Selected Essays, p.325-27.

behind Women in Love. Lawrence's debt to Swinburne during this period will be further examined in Chapter V.

Lawrence valued Swinburne's realization of death as the ultimate sensation in life, and his insight into the desire for a peace beyond life. It could help him to understand the war and Brooke's sonnets; it could help him mould the outlines of Gerald Crich's tragedy. But it could not contribute to his attempts to strike a sane balance in his metaphysic between the claims of life and death, nor to his early efforts to come to terms with bereavement. Lawrence's sense of death was more richly emotional, more like Hood's than Swinburne's, and it had close affinities with another pre-Raphaelite, D.G.Rossetti. Rossetti's "The Blessed Damozel" has a similar theme to many of Lawrence's elegies: it laments the irremediable gulf between the poet and the beloved, and longs for some manifestation across this space, for a warm, physical rapprochement. The stanza-form in "A Passing-Bell", one of Lawrence's more lugubrious lyrics, though not an elegy as such, is an oblique tribute to Rossetti's "Sister Helen". "The Blessed Damozel" and "Sister Helen", both of which Lawrence knew,[1] were contained originally in Rossetti's first volume, Poems (1870). Had he read the other poems from this volume, Lawrence would have encountered a sensibility not unlike his own in bereavement, if over-endowed with a certain Keatsian fulsomeness. "The Portrait" is comparable, for instance, to the original version of "Troth with the Dead":[2]

> And as I wrought, while all above
> And all around was fragrant air,
> In the sick burthen of my love
> It seemed each sun-thrilled blossom there
> Beat like a heart among the leaves.
> O heart that never beats nor heaves,
> In that one darkness lying still,
> What now to thee my love's great will
> Or the fine web the sunshine weaves?

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1. E.T., pp.101, 146; Letters, ed. Moore, p.61, [1910].
2. MS 5, 81.

In the revised version of "Troth with the Dead" it is possible that the mysterious 'coin of troth' may be related to an equally mysterious 'broken coin' in "Sister Helen". The famous disinterment of Rossetti's poems may itself have contributed to the atmosphere of necrophiliac horror in Lawrence's poem.

Lawrence's elegies, it has been suggested, are less than fully adequate to the emotion to which they testify. The stunned inarticulateness of the first poems give way, later in 1911, to a more inventive, mythopoeic energy; but nearly all suffer from generalized symbolism and emotion, and the lack of a distinct correlative. "The End" may be taken as typical. One notes the helpless excess of love:

> If I could have put you in my heart,
> If but I could have wrapped you in myself ...

In the aftermath the poet longs, quite exceptionally, not for a revelation, but a concealment of life:

> And oh, that you had never, never been
> Some of your selves, my love; that some
> Of your several faces I had never seen.

The numbness of shock is well summarized in the concluding line, 'I own that some of me is dead tonight'; and beyond this, the aching halfness of the poet longs for further anaesthesia. The elegies have a loose, structural role in the autobiographical edifice of Lawrence's early verse; they act as psychological mortar. By Look! We Have Come Through! this novelistic outline has become much more tightly organized. But a necessary prelude to appreciating the consciousness of death at the opening of that sequence is some knowledge of the otherworldly love of the Rhyming Poems, that has left the poet:

> Free of all hearts, my darling,
> Of each heart's entrance free.

Among the elegies "Sorrow" stands out as the one fully realized poem. Its images are sharply visualized and exactly juxtaposed. Notwithstand-

ing, a suggestive, unstated quality enhances the emotion, much more so than in "Brooding Grief" -- the same poem with a different stimulus -- where the focus is directly on disease and the body's decay. In "Sorrow" the grey hair and the white cigarette smoke mingle implicitly with the white fumes produced by a coal-fire: abruptly, the draught of the flue carries the exanimate thread into the night. Symbolic overtones are muted, and the psychological format is unadventurous. It is Romantic associationism in an emotional field Hardy made peculiarly his own. But the simplicity of form and the gentle, English reticence of tone complete the poem's feeling. This simple, dignified tone is again achieved, momentarily, in "On That Day"; and the poem is a fitting conclusion to Rhyming Poems.[1]

Death and separation are the great themes of Hardy's poetry. But this only drives a wedge of difference between himself and Lawrence. As Donald Davie has pointed out, recent biographical studies have caused Hardy, despite the disclaimers in his prefaces, to appear anew as a decidedly confessional poet.[2] A selection from Hardy's Collected Poems might show him sketching the changing moods of the lover in various situations, particularly of separation from the beloved, to the extent of tracing a submerged story-line. Among these are woven what Lawrence calls in his "Preface" 'fictional' poems.[3] The inspiration and aesthetic principles underlying Hardy's poems are, therefore, not unlike Lawrence's own. Both value 'unadjusted impressions' as constituting 'the road to a true philosophy of life'.[4] Yet, though both record their impressions of the moods and circumstances of sexual love, Hardy's superimposing a lengthy time-scale or perspective on his love poems imparts to them a

1. "On That Day" does conclude Volume I of Collected Poems, but not, owing to an unfortunate misallocation of material, the first section of The Complete Poems, ed. Pinto.
2. Donald Davie, Thomas Hardy and British Poetry, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p.54.
3. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.27.
4. Thomas Hardy, Collected Poems, (London: MacMillan, 1930), p.75.

distancing effect, a melancholy and an irony that is almost wholly lacking in Lawrence. The latter's poems to Jessie Chambers can strike a note of half-wistful, half-savage regret for what might have been; but nostalgia is not to be compared with Hardy's extra-human vistas of time, merging love for the body with the ugliness of age and the certainty of the grave, and warping and sundering even 'life-loyalties'. Within this time-scale the moment of physical love dwindles to a vanishing point, or brings upon itself long years of marital disharmony. 'If hours be years', is his refrain, 'the twain are blest'.[1] In Hardy's conception of time and love no such possibility exists.

It is usually assumed, by such critics as Blackmur, Reeves or Davie, that Lawrence was broadly acquainted with Hardy's poetry. Apart from the review quoted previously, however, this assumption cannot be justified either from Lawrence's own writing or from the memoirs. Lawrence always talks of Hardy as a novelist, never a poet. He probably had read certain of Hardy's poems from the English Review.[2] "The Two Rosalinds" and "Reminiscences of a Dancing Man", published under the joint title of "London Nights", appeared in the Review just a year before a similar contribution of Lawrence's called "Night Songs". It is likely, then, that Hardy's description of night-time London in "The Two Rosalinds" inspired Lawrence's attempt at subjective city-scapes in "Yesternight" and "Tomorrow Night". A memory of "A Sunday Morning Tragedy" would have been sufficient for Lawrence to include Hardy among those 'brutalising' English poetry. But it is possible that Edward Garnett introduced Lawrence to Hardy's and Kipling's dialect ballads, when the young poet stayed with him at the Cearne in 1911 and 1912; for this is

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1. Hardy, "At a Hasty Wedding".

2. "A Sunday Morning Tragedy", I (Dec. 1908), 1; "London Nights" (comprising "The Two Rosalinds" and "Reminiscences of a Dancing Man"), II (April 1909), 1; "A Singer Asleep", III (April 1910), 1; "The Torn Letter", VII (Dec. 1910), 1; "Among the Roman Gravemounds" (retitled "The Roman Gravemounds"), X (Dec. 1911), 1; "The Place on the Map", XV (Sept. 1913), 161.

when Lawrence wrote 'the best of the dialect poems',[1] and it is in these he reveals most clearly a debt to Hardy. If Lawrence had read any one volume of Hardy's, it would have been Past and Present. There are affinities between this volume and Lawrence's oeuvre, at once thematic -- a mother's love for her children before her husband, a man's love for his ideal of a woman before the woman herself, the dead retaining life in the living, and the death-wish associated with the Boer War -- and formal -- the triolets with which Lawrence experimented in "Birdcage Walk" -- and tonal -- the tough humour of a dialect poem like "The Ruined Maid" -- and finally, affinities between individual poems -- "I Need Not Go" and "A Winter's Tale", "A Wasted Illness" and "In Sickness".

Wordsworth, Hardy and Lawrence all belong imaginatively to the same external world, 'the world of all of us'. But material Nature could no longer be for Hardy Romantic Nature. It is Hardy who absorbs the implications of nineteenth-century rationalism, of positivism, humanism and the proliferation of scientific knowledge, translating this into a poetic sensibility that translates the nineteenth-century into the twentieth. Tennyson may have recognized the intellectual consequences of the new scientific discoveries in In Memoriam; that theologically God had taken one more step back from his creation, and that Wordsworth's Nature, which 'never did forsake/ The heart that loved her', was no longer tenable. But it was Hardy who realized these recognitions as immediate, poetic vision. His universe is material, drab and unresponsive, difficult when not inexorable, and ill-adjusted to human needs: it 'Has other aims than my delight'. No question of solipsism or idealism arises. The bumps and bruises of this real world are too frequent for us to doubt its existence, or our real and painful knowledge of it.

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.852.

Although the universe may seem pluralistic and random in its motions, there is a world-weaver, a necessitarian Demiurge whose bitter laws can and should be learnt. But this Great Dame of Nature, a kind of factory-worker in all things, is blind to humanity and its aspirations. Contrariwise, Hardy himself seems blind to Nature, even wilfully so, dismissing as a mirage what he apprehends as beauty. The only animals that excite him are birds; these excite his pity. The biology of "In a Wood" and the astronomy of "In Vision I Roamed" have set a distance between man and his material world, however much he acknowledges its mere presence. He no longer has any sense of a mutual interchange with his environment. He can no longer find a centre of religious value in it, unless 'rapt to heights of trance-like trust'.[1]

Man is alienated from Nature; but, as "At a Bridal" or "Her Dilemma" shows, the Great Dame still governs sexuality. And the Darwinians are right: the sexes, like Nature, battle indiscriminately in "The Ivy-Wife". Therefore the poet turns to what is exclusively human, to affection and loving-kindness:

> Since then, no grace I find
> Taught me of trees,
> Turn I back to my kind,
> Worthy as these.
> There at least smiles abound,
> There discourse trills around,
> There, now and then, are found
> Life-loyalties. [2]

Hardy turns to what appears to be exclusively human, but in so doing, he ostracizes the remainder of human nature, whatever is animal, vital and spontaneous. This self-alienation is evident in the fiction and the poetry, where those characters most strongly possessed of sexual feeling, spontaneity and vivid passions are disfigured or destroyed by their very excess of life. Such is Lawrence's analysis of the novels

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1. Quotations from Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey", 122-23; Hardy, "Let Me Enjoy" and "A Sign-Seeker".

2. Hardy, "In a Wood".

in his Study of Thomas Hardy. The greatness of Hardy's novels, according to Lawrence, lies in the ability to present the nonhuman, unknown life of Nature, 'the primitive, primal earth' of Egdon Heath, within which the strong individuals search for self-fulfilment or a life-potency like the Heath's.[1] The littleness of Hardy's novels lies in the fact that these characters, or 'aristocrats', come into conflict with and are destroyed by, not the natural law, but the law of men, the civilized values of the society in which they live, and from which they cannot break free. Lawrence is dissatisfied with this kind of tragedy, and with the tragic solution itself. His aim is to counteract the awareness Hardy dramatizes, of a cleavage in human consciousness between natural instinct and civilized intellect; and by healing this schism, to restore a wholeness to human consciousness. Hardy, by contrast, delights in schism and separation; or if 'delights' is hardly fair, these can be discerned as the underlying dynamic of his art; and he does derive a certain lugubrious pleasure from the way Time catches up with its laughing-stocks.

Like most satirists Hardy is obsessed by the fact and reliability of death. It offers a fixed point from which to survey life, 'Speeding on to its cleft in the clay'.[2] Lawrence's reaction to this aspect of Hardy's thought might be guessed from his youthful outrage over A.E.Housman's similar ethic:

> He is thin; gloomy, I swear; he sits by the fire after a raw day's singling the turnips, and does not doze, and does not talk, but reads occasionally Blatchford, or perhaps Night Thoughts; he is glum; Death has filched the pride out of his blood, and there is the conceit of death instead in his voice ... To a man, and supremely to a man who works in the wholesome happiness of a farm, Life is the fact, the everything: Death is only the 'To be concluded' at the end of the volume. [3]

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1. Phoenix, p.415-20.
2. Hardy, "The Dream-Follower".
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.44, 31 Dec. 1908.

With less earnestness but equal conviction, he combats in the Study the application of a vast time-scale to the facts of human existence, asserting in its place the eternal quality of intensely apprehended, though momentary experience. Hardy finds room, even in the eternal moment, for despondency: 'nought happens twice thus', he complains; and even this moment was inspired, not by a reunion, but a separation.[1]

Hardy's great theme is the past, and the painful knowledge of his own separation from it, his certainty that linear time cannot be transcended.[2] His ghosts do nothing to bridge this separation; they merely shadow it forth. At first, the ghosts might seem to invite comparison with Lawrence's "Spirits Summoned West". There is a marked similarity in theme between Hardy's poems of the Boer War, "The Souls of the Slain" and "The Sick Battle-God", and Lawrence's protests at the Great War, "We Have Gone Too Far" and "Erinnyes". But Lawrence's ghosts are more truly denizens of anima mundi, are more obscured by the veil separating the subconscious from the conscious mind; whereas Hardy's are more purely the machinery of a humanist's imagination.[3] Nor are ghosts always needed to adumbrate visitations from the past.

In "The Rambler" it is the poet's oblivion to his present surroundings which tells us these scenes 'Are those far back ones missed when near,/ And now perceived too late by me'. The irony of such preoccupation is that he can neither regain the lost past, nor appreciate the present, soon to become an equally regretted past. Hardy recognizes this dilemma in "In Front of the Landscape". But that his grief for the past is profitless and irrational scarcely matters to him: he values the emotion, however painful the fact of separation and bereavement:

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1. Hardy, "On the Departure Platform".
2. See Davie, Hardy and British Poetry, p.4.
3. Cf. Hardy, "My Spirit Will Not Haunt the Mound".

True, you'll never know. And you will not mind.
But shall I then slight you because of such?
Dear ghost, in the past did you ever find
The thought "What profit" move me much?
Yet abides the fact, indeed, the same,--
You are past love, praise, indifference, blame.[1]

Hardy values emotion in poetry, but the emotions are all of a piece -- grief at departure, loss or bereavement, gloom, discontent or despair, regret and nostalgia, remorse and self-reproach. They are the sufferings of a man in time. Contrariwise, time was the human limitation Lawrence strove most eagerly to transcend with his theory of 'the mystic NOW' -- the notion that all time, past and future, has its origin in the present moment, so that the past is always present to a man living actively in that moment. Hardy would seem to covet his misery, instead of kicking out against it, and getting on with the business of living. Necessarily Hardy's regret and remorse, and his detachment from the living world of Nature, must be:

Despised by souls of Now, who would disjoint
The mind from memory ... [2]

To Wordsworth as to Hardy, memory is the source and mother of poetry. Yet Hardy cannot extract from memory a sense of potential divinity in the human mind. Memory and the entire fabric of his humanism testify and lead back to an awareness of human limitation. His memory is like Lawrence's in the elegies, when mythopoeia fails him. Emotion longs to transcend the gulf; but the longing itself can offer no redress, save the bitterness of knowledge. Hardy aligns himself with to distinguish himself from Wordsworth. "In a Wood" is "Tintern Abbey" after Darwin's advent; "To Outer Nature" the "Immortality Ode" without the consolations of philosophy; "On a Fine Morning" the rainbow and the visionary gleam, once natural piety has evaporated into scepticism. In "Shelley's Skylark" and "Rome: At the Pyramid of Cestius" he lauds

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1. Hardy, "Your Last Drive".
2. Hardy, "She, to Him", III.

Shelley and Keats as 'Those matchless singers': they are his forebears, but their song can no longer be his. Hardy, Swinburne and Meredith consciously and unconsciously borrow and repeat, explore and extend their inheritance from Wordsworth, Blake and Shelley. Lawrence, in his turn, inherits the changing spectrum of a whole century's Romanticism. When Hardy, by virtue of his longevity, was able in 1909 and 1910 to write obituary tributes to Meredith and Swinburne, he would not perhaps have minded if his theme had been altered and his scope enlarged, so that a new, young poet, for all his differences and infelicities, might be included in the ranks 'Of all the tribe that feel in melodies'.[1]

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1. Hardy, "A Singer Asleep".

iii

And life, some think, is worthy of the Muse.[1]

Feeling in melody and in poetry demands a vehicle for its aesthetic transmission, a symbolism. Lawrence with his reading of Baudelaire and Verlaine had the choice of two nineteenth-century schools of poetic thought on which to base his symbolism, the English and the French. The latter lies outside the scope of this thesis; and however much its content may have appealed to him, his aesthetic preference for the native tradition is succinctly stated in an early letter:

> Poetry now-a-days seems to be a sort of plaster-cast craze, scraps sweetly moulded in easy Plaster of Paris sentiment. Nobody chips verses earnestly out of the living rock of his own feeling: you know Verlaine's famous verse
>
> De la musique avant toute chose
> Et pour cela préfère l'Impair
> Plus vague et plus soluble dans l'air
> Sans en lui qui pèse ou qui pose.
>
> ... Something undecided, vague, suggestive. I like it, but will not practise it. Before everything I like sincerity, and a quickening spontaneous emotion. I do not worship music or the 'half-said thing'. [2]

Lawrence has no interest in the symbol for its own sake, in the possibility of creating from it an integral and detached world of feeling. He values it only insofar as it reveals and relates to the real world which stimulates his emotion. The value of the symbol and of the poem is in their offering to the poet and the reader a medium in which each can refine his knowledge of 'the living rock of his own feeling'. It is a fundamental rejection of symbolisme, and an acceptance of Carlyle's sincerity, and of his injunction to take up a quasi-spiritual quest.

The failures and falterings of Lawrence's first ventures into symbolism are instructive in themselves. A draft of "End of Another Home Holiday" opened with this stanza, for instance:

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1. Meredith, Modern Love, xxv.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.20-21, 17 July 1908.

* When shall I [hear] see the half moon sink again
Behind the black sycamore at the end of the garden
When will the scent of the dim, white phlox
Creep tenderly up/ cool with a [cool wish] wise kiss
of pardon. * [1]

There is little reason why the scent of phlox should suggest a concept as well-defined and restrictive as 'pardon'. In later versions the phlox was allowed to stand without annotation, to introduce the night with its myriad life opening on the senses, to hint at a momentary relaxation from the tension of personal relationship and guilt, and to be itself, suggestively, in its own dramatic context. As in "The Odour of Chrysanthemums" the scent of the phlox was allowed to expand into its own dramatic space. "In a Boat", on the other hand, sketches rapidly a scene -- a starlit night on dark waters -- and then presses these scant properties into symbolic service in exclamatory, Browningesque stanzas. It seems incongruous, in the poem, that a lover should be so chatty in such a cryptic style. But what truly confuses is the number of different contexts in which the stars have to stand for unspecified, but seemingly different values. This confusion seems to spring from an uncertainty in the poet's own feelings. A false note intrudes with the literary nenuphars and graves and swoonings, and the derivative dark waves. According to a letter from Jessie Chambers, the scene itself is a manufactured article: the boat is purely metaphoric, and the deep, starry waters were found by the path along Moorgreen Reservoir.[2]

Lawrence moved closer towards understanding what he wanted from symbolism in his lecture on Rachel Annand Taylor, whose poetry was taken as typifying its misuse:

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1. MS 1, 54.
2. See Corke, Croydon Years, p.23.

> Unfortunately, Mrs. Taylor has begun to dream of her past life and of herself, very absorbedly; and to tell her dreams in symbols which are not always illuminating. She is esoteric. Her symbols do not show what they stand for of themselves: they are cousins of that Celtic and French symbolism which says -- 'Let X = the winds of passion, and Y = the dim yearning of the soul for love.'
>
> Now the dim, white petalled Y
> Draws dimly over the scalded atmosphere
> The scalded kisses of X.
>
> Mrs. Taylor has begun the same dodge.
>
> Since from the subtle silk of agony
> Our lamentable veils of flesh are spun.
>
> 'Subtle silk of agony' may claim to sound well, but to me it is meaningless. [1]

Symbols should 'show what they stand for of themselves'; they should not be restrictive or denotative in their meaning; and they should not be vague or meaningless, either in themselves or in what they stand for. Lawrence is searching for some definition of what symbols positively should be within his own, fundamentally Romantic sensibility. He would have agreed with Coleridge that a symbol combines multiple layers of meaning and association. In later life, thinking of archetypal symbols rather than those created by an immediate poetic context, he defined symbols as 'organic units of consciousness with a life of their own', as whole complexes of emotional experience.[2] But the young poet felt the salient feature of a symbol was not only that it was part of an emotional or experiential whole, but that 'while it enunciates the whole, [it] abides itself as a living part of that unity of which it is representative'.[3] Symbols should partake of at least two levels of reality, objective and emotional, since experience itself proceeds on both these levels. This realism affects the poetry deeply, demanding almost of itself the Laurentian autobiographical commitment. In the finest poems the symbols arise, almost unbidden, from the objective circumstance of the experience. One hesitates to talk of 'symbols' in a poem such as

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1. Phoenix, p.219.
2. Phoenix, p.295-96.
3. Coleridge, A Statesman's Manual, from English Romantic Writers, ed. David Perkins, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967), p.503.

"Dog-Tired". These must be 'images', sense-impressions, yet ones that are carefully organized and transfused with the emotional pattern of the whole. It is a reasonable conjecture that the poems contain some reconstruction or condensation of impressions. But the end is a fine balance between subjective emotional reality and objective sensory reality. Each is poised against and relies upon the other. Nature offers no escape, as it had for the later Meredith and the Georgians. In the realism of rabbits screaming in traps the poet confronts the reality of his own emotion. For such a landscape Coleridge's (or Eliot's) word 'correlative' might be used. But 'symbol' seems more appropriate; for, as will be seen, the final loyalty of these poems -- in describing a green, shimmering sunset, a carpet of beech-leaves or the flowers at the bog-end -- is to the emotional reality.

In the best of Lawrence's verse a dual realist and expressionist pressure is resolved. Lawrence places and holds more weight in both these pans, and carries a greater sense of objective and subjective reality over to the modern reader, than do any of his contemporaries among the Georgian poets. Amid the Georgian ruck his poetry stands out as cruder, but more powerful. He himself was aware of the gulf between their aims and his, describing W.H.Davies, for instance, as 'a linnet that's got just a wee little sweet song'.[1] Davies is a fine, but an extremely light-weight poet in comparison with Lawrence. Lawrence's best early poems and his strongest symbols are rooted in everyday physical reality. In "Dreams Old and Nascent" and "Discipline" the representation of the concrete environment of the school precedes the movement into more abstract symbolism. The equilibrium of the poems lies half in such scene-setting; for the coherence and congruity of the emotion and thought are tried against the social reality from which they sprang. The symbol must 'abide itself as a living part' of 'the world of all of us'.

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.236, 28 Oct. 1913.

Unlike Shelley, Lawrence tests Shelleyan precept against mundane reality. It is a novelist's virtue; but on it depends much of Lawrence's modernity as a poet.

In his first play, A Collier's Friday Night, Lawrence assesses each of his dramatis personae, and elicits their relationships with the other characters, by the response of each to a burnt loaf of bread. The bread momentarily enshrines the emotional essence of each individual; it never becomes more nor less than a real, charred loaf of bread; yet it is as well a kind of sacrament, transubstantiated with immediate human feeling. The creation of symbols like these was one of the most important achievements of Lawrence's early writing. A play, novel or short story offered him the space to set up a dramatic context, in which the interaction, creating the symbol and being illuminated by it, was possible. But the compass of Lawrence's fundamentally lyrical poetry could not contain this sort of dramatic complexity. The poems had to work instead from dramatic expectations. In "End of Another Home Holiday" the familiarity of the objects described by the poet must, to some extent, be taken on trust. The reader must accept, from the implied dramatic context, that the images are already laden with feeling and associations for the poet. Once this principle has been accepted, the reasons for the images' inclusion and the psychological complexities suggested by their interaction will begin to emerge. The origination of Lawrence's symbols in a recognizable external world also means that they cannot be explicated by reference to an inherited literary word-hoard. Rather than say what a symbol stands for, or leave it to the learned reader to guess, the poem strives to make the reader feel the object, as the poet feels it in the dramatic context. The red moon of "Dream-Confused" and the half-moon of "End of Another Home Holiday" cannot be explained by a dictionary of symbology. Their significance is part of the interplay of feeling reconstructed in the poems. The poems work towards creating possibly no more than one

symbol. But a symbol can obtain growing and changing meanings from one poem to the next. The red, phallic moon of "Dream-Confused" is related to the half-moon of "End of Another Home Holiday", which the darkness threatens with eclipse and annulment.

The difficulty of creating symbols within a poem, and of co-ordinating this process with a narrative progression and emotional unity within the poem, can be illustrated by looking at the different versions of "The Yew-Tree on the Downs".[1] The symbols circle, disappearing and re-appearing, combining and re-combining, mutating and expanding, in an effort to reproduce the exact texture of an experience, and to find a total aesthetic coherence within themselves. Their failure finally to achieve coherence is itself illuminating. The poem begins with only a few scenic properties, a dark yew, the moon like a bud, and the stars like spiders hanging from threads. The lovers shelter under a tree, for the stars seem to spy on them, along with some other insect life, an ermine moth (Spilosoma lubricipeda). The tree's 'leaf-cloths' are like curtains or a tent; and the exotic, Arabian associations come to include frankincense and a reference to Belshazzar's feast. Picturing how --

> .. the white moths write
> With their little pale signs on the wall, to try us
> And set us affright.

-- Lawrence alludes to the Book of Daniel (v); in MS 5, 39, he even began to write 'Mene, mene tekel upharsin'. As the lovers defy the judgment of Hebraic morality, the profanation of the sacred vessels is, metaphorically, at hand: 'Taste, oh taste and let me taste'. The scent of frankincense also helps to bind together the manifold symbolism. Lawrence seems to have been very aware of the odours of love, as well as the odour of sanctity. The burning of incense is a mutation of the paradigm of earthy femaleness consuming or sublimating fiery maleness. The scent of frankin-

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1. MS 5, 39; MS 5, 41; Ferrier, MSS 19, 22, 26; Amores (see Poems, ed. Pinto, p.947); CP.

cense is further linked with the scent of some night-primroses, which the man had seen while waiting for the woman in her street. The primroses are a clumsy extension of the narrative, since no explanation is needed of how the lovers came to the tree. The poet is intent only on introducing the symbol of the flowers, which 'flagged loose and lovely', and of the man's moustache, which was drenched in pollen, when he stooped to smell the flowers. The woman should now open like the primroses to the man, whose hands quiver 'like antennae yearning'. Confusion arises because the woman is also compared to a moth, 'a wing-shut moth', that will not open, like a flower, to the man. There is a further confusion as to whether the moth is in the street or under the yew. The dryness of the pollen on his lips leads the poet back to the image of fire. A drouth of fire threatens to consume him slowly to ashes. Like frankincense, however, the woman can rouse this fire to a healthy blaze. By this means the early versions of the poem round, with considerable difficulty, to their conclusion.[1] Much progress has been made from, but little use is made of, the initial scenic properties.

Other drafts develop other aspects of the symbolic scenario. The first draft had turned to another biblical allusion, Paul's 'thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan',[2] which the man asks to be drawn from him, in a manner which would not have pleased the Apostle. The allusion adds to the poem a wistful overtone from the old ballads, where the thorn is a common euphemism;[3] but it does not contribute to symbolic cohesion, and MS 5, 39, falters to an uncertain close. Later versions conclude with the man imploring that the woman eclipse his soul, and thus return to the initial symbol of the phallic moon.[4] These versions are concerned

1. MS 5, 41, and Ferrier, MS 19.
2. II Corinthians xii, 7.
3. See "The Seeds of Love" and "Waly Waly", The Idiom of the People: English Traditional Verse, ed. James Reeves, (London: Heinemann, 1958), pp.194, 218.
4. Ferrier, MS 22 and A.

with excisions rather than developments. In Amores the primroses are disposed of, though the unexplained pollen still lingers on the man's lips. In Collected Poems the allusion to Belshazzar's feast is glossed over. Instead the concept of 'mystery' is introduced: the man pleads for admission to an inner sanctum of darkness, as the tree is a night within the night. It is rather schematized, like Chinese boxes. The business of the primroses was awkward enough to warrant total excision. But the poem is thereby reduced to little more than a poeticized account of a liaison.

Despite its clumsiness the early version reproduced a keen sense of actual sexual experience, at least from a male point of view. The yew's black shadows add secrecy and guilt to the assignation, and erotic excitement. This ambience of feeling is pinpointed by the biblical allusion. Despite its intrinsic health and sanctity, this sexual act is sacrilegious. Fear tinges pleasure. The primroses are a type for sexual abandon, an ideal of warm, relaxed sensuality. But they do not correspond to the woman, who is therefore profaned by the moth-like male. The man's sexuality is of a tense, nervous quality. For all the visual absurdity, the moustache bristling with pollen is a wonderful tactile correlative for his hypersensitive sexual arousal. The dying of this heightened state into drought and ashes hints at a state of feeling, explored again in "Passing Visit to Helen". It is clear that the original version aimed primarily at expressing these states of consciousness and sensation, and secondarily at organizing the symbols, which enable this expression, into a narrative and aesthetic pattern. Despite patient re-arrangement, the symbols would not cohere. To solve the technical problem,as in the Collected Poems, by excision, destroyed the poem's end to order its means. The end had been to trace the transition between these emotions and sensations, refining the expression towards an experiential criterion. The poem fails, instructively. It can be seen

that "Scent of Irises" and "Snap-Dragon" are more successful experiments in a very difficult genre.

"The Yew-Tree on the Downs" contained examples of the exception to the rule that Lawrence's poetry creates dramatically its own patterns of symbolism and allusion. Biblical allusions and references to Christian ritual and symbol are frequent in Lawrence's poetry; and commonly they set up subtle tensions between the biblical context or orthodox Christian interpretation, and the significance which is placed on them by their dramatic context in Lawrence's poem. Repugnance at this characteristic usage led T.S.Eliot to accuse Lawrence of 'ignorance', of indulging in 'the solely centrifugal impulse of heresy' and of lacking 'a wise and large capacity for orthodoxy':

> It is using the terminology of Christian faith to set forth some philosophy or religion which is fundamentally non-Christian or anti-Christian ... The variety of costumes into which ... [he has] huddled the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, in [his] various charades, is curious and to me offensive ... I was brought up outside the Christian fold, in Unitarianism ... The Son and the Holy Ghost were not believed in, certainly; but they were entitled to respect as entities in which many other people believed, and they were not employed as convenient phrases to embody any cloudy private religion. [1]

Lawrence never resorts to blasphemy as a shock-tactic, but it would be difficult to refute the charge of heresy to an orthodox High Anglican. There is an element of truth in Eliot's (and later Blackmur's) portrait of him as an arch-Protestant heretic, fabricating his own private religion. Like the medieval theologian he was interested in tracing correspondences between Biblical typology and contemporary events: the difference lay in the ground-value for comparison. Lawrence found in his own experience an understanding of what remained vital to him in the old Christian formulae and configurations, and not <u>vice versa</u>. At the same time, although the initial impact of Lawrence's recasting of Christian

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1. T.S.Eliot, review of <u>Son of Woman</u>, <u>Criterion</u> (July 1931); from <u>D.H.Lawrence: A Critical Anthology</u>, ed. H.Coombes, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p.243-44.

terminology is one of secularization, his final aim is the elevation of experience into a kind of sacrament, or the finding of an anagogical level in human existence. We have Lawrence's word for it -- 'One has to be so terribly religious, to be an artist'[1] -- and we have the evidence of the poems. Here Lawrence can seldom be accused of a muddling of terms or a decorative 'charade'. Within the poems' contexts can be found a strenuous and inventive reworking of traditional interpretations. Lawrence's rejuvenations are the converse of Rossetti's languid Catholic trappings, with their diffuse, atmospheric effects. They display at once more intellectual vigour and more earnestness, a seeking among the ruins of nineteenth-century rationalism.

"The Punisher" -- one of the school poems that has attracted little attention -- exemplifies Lawrence's taut control of Christian myth. As usual the early versions of the poem attend to symbolic values, while that in the Collected Poems pays heed to diction.[2] The poem begins unspectacularly. The tears elicited in the first stanza are brought to the surface by a rather indefinite metaphor, confusing nibs scooping ink from ink-wells and a wind-pump lifting water by a wheel. The submerged metaphor in the second stanza is more striking. Tears spill down the children's cheeks as a wind shakes rain from a fruit-orchard. The orchard is specified as Eden. The children have apparently been eating of the tree of knowledge (though how they can eat their own cheeks is problematic); and the teacher drives them forth from their no longer innocent pleasure with his righteous anger -- 'the Judgment which stood in my eyes/ Whirling a flame'. Yet the teacher is racked by conflict at the approach of the faintly Spenserean figures, 'Cringing Pity, and my Self, white handed'. It is the figure of 'pitiful love' from "End of Another Home Holiday"

1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.189, 24 Feb. 1913.
2. Cf. Poems, ed. Pinto, pp.914, 94.

come begging to the 'nicer self' that is the antithesis of the demon. The teacher feels himself trapped in a web from which the vitality has evaporated. He is like an Eden sacked by fiery Cherubim, or like a burning bush whose nature has been ironically transformed: entered by the angel of the Lord, it burns and is consumed.[1] In addition, most versions contain the fine simile of the church:

> * The Cherubim of Judgement have returned to the Nearness:
> Desolate am I as a church whose candles are blown out
> As Night [enters in / sweeps in with] drearness. * 2

The wind, which is a suggestive presence in most stanzas, here turns to malevolence, extinguishing the body's fires. The candles' symbolizing of bodily life anticipates Sons and Lovers and the well-known passage in the Letters: 'man's body is a kind of flame, like a candle flame'.[3] The single emendation in Amores, 'And doubt enters in drearness', greatly intensifies and expands the significance of the benighted church. The symbol comes to constitute an implicit justification and criticism, within the poem, of the poem's aesthetic use of religious terms. Since the shining 'Sea of Faith', to paraphrase Arnold, has ebbed into darkness, the poet must seek a new religion, in the temple of the body and its spontaneous life. In his search he is entitled to reshape the old faith according to his own experiential points of reference. Anger, for example, is a burning bush that is consumed.

This twisting or extension of biblical narrative is quite characteristic. The simplicity of this technique is of the deceptive kind. The teacher finds that the Cherubim withdraw from the east gate, and the children perform a sly reversion to their former Edenic state,

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1. Genesis iii, 24; Exodus iii, 2.
2. MS 5, 8. Lawrence may have been thinking of the derelict church at Annesley. Thus, the poem would draw together the two geographical poles of his experience, Nottinghamshire and London.
3. Sons and Lovers, p.18; Letters, p.180, 17 Jan. 1913; and cf. "The Death of the Baron".

gorging themselves on the tree of life:

> The tears are dry, and the cheek's young fruits are fresh
> With laughter, and clear the exonerated eyes, since pain
> Beat through the flesh.

Alternatively, in a subtle irony, the children may be 'the children of Israel', and the teacher's blazing anger the burning bush which heralds their escape from oppression to the promised land. The reader is left to wonder whether the anger and punishment did serve a useful end for the children. It did not for the teacher, left 'Like a flower that the frost has hugged and let go ... / ... clogged and heavy with wasted ash;/ My hand is heavy and helpless, since wielding the lash'. The fire is unhealthy, wasting, like the fire of "The Yew-Tree on the Downs". Yet in the word 'lash', with its recollection of the windy storms in "Discipline" and "Discord in Childhood", we are reminded that the teacher's anger was a fiery inspiration from God the Father, that, as an angel of the Lord, he has enjoyed his moment of pure possession and glamorous male power. That this exaltation of spontaneous passion is half the message of the religious allusion can hardly be doubted. 'Once I said: "How can I blame -- why be angry [with the boys]?"' mused Lawrence to his fellow-teacher Helen Corke.

> Now I say: 'When anger comes with bright eyes, he may do his will. In me he will hardly shake off the hand of God. He is one of the archangels with a fiery sword -- God sent him -- it is beyond my knowing' ... 1

Despite his scanty classical education, Lawrence might have made shift with the classical pantheon, with Dis and Persephone. He rejected it not because, as a result of his religious upbringing, the language of Christian faith, with its complex allusory power, sprang uncalled to his mind; nor because, abetted by the atmosphere of free religious debate which was his Congregational heritage, he moved with greater ease and freedom among theological concepts than might a writer

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.62-63, 21 June 1910.

steeped in 'orthodoxy'. Christian theology had emotional and psychological associations for him, and he drew on these, as a source of power, in his poetry. He found that the crises of his life conformed to, and their emotional intensity could be conveyed by, Christian paradigms. The rite of passage and the call for regeneration in "Transformations" have Christian overtones; and in "The Virgin Mother" the crisis of bereavement is understood as a trial preceding rebirth:

> My little love, my dearest,
> Twice you have issued me,
> Once from your womb, sweet mother,
> Once from your soul, to be
> Free of all hearts, my darling,
> Of each heart's entrance free.
>
> . . . . .
>
> And so, my love, Oh mother
> I shall always be true to thee.
> Twice I am born, my mother,
> As Christ said it should be,
> And who can bear me a third time?
> -- None love -- I am true to thee. 1

But as Frieda's energetic marginalia in MS 5 remind us,[2] the pattern of quasi-Christian rebirth in Lawrence's poetry does not come to a halt with this deadly troth and barren liberation. The 'insurgent day' of Look! We Have Come Through! has yet to dawn; and in that poem-sequence the underlying pattern of death and resurrection, though no longer simply Christ-like, insistently recalls the dynamic of religious conversion. To find the crucifixion corresponding to the death and resurrection of Look! We Have Come Through!, we have to turn to "Reminder", and to:

> .. my dearest
> Love who had borne, and now was leaving me.
> And I at the foot of her cross did suffer
> My own gethsemane.

Again, biblical narrative is distorted: the roles of mother and son are inverted. The reference to Gethsemane is curious. Christ was offered the cup of death on the Mount of Olives; he was also betrayed there.

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.101; and MS 5, 61. Cf. John iii, 3-8.
2. See Poems, ed. Pinto, p.1057.

"Reminder" brings together several of the strands of Lawrence's poetic achievement which have been considered in this chapter -- his use of Christian myth, his debt to Romantic and Victorian predecessors, and his confrontation of the demon of sexual experience in order to convey symbolically intense, confessional emotion.

The moon in "Reminder", obscured by a 'low and level' sky, recalls the meteorology of Wordsworth's "A Night-Piece" and Coleridge's Christabel. Unlike Wordsworth's poem, where the moon's appearance in her vault of clouds reflects momentarily an infinite sustaining a relationship with the sublunar world; and unlike Coleridge's romance, where the moon implies a rational world of faith, subverted by a dream-like atmosphere of horror and anxiety; Lawrence's poem attaches humbler associations to the moon. She beats about the sky like a penned beast vainly seeking release, 'to go/ Forth to her fields'. Lawrence handles this descent, almost to bathos, with sureness. The son and his mother are not seeking any lofty transcendence; their need is release from the most animal aspect of their humanity. There is the claustrophobia of the sick-room, with its touch of hysteria, and there is the imprisoning sense of sickness itself. The moon in "Reminder" is an example of Lawrence's ability to make his reader feel the thing, the moon's struggling constriction, before he begins to feel the symbol, in its far-reaching growth within the poem.

An equally complex symbol is the 'red blotch in the sky', and like the moon it tends to merge the son's and the mother's suffering. The red blotch is actually the dirty glow from the Bennerley Iron Works;[1] and if this fact is not needed for an appreciation of the poem, it is a reminder of Lawrence's willingness to subdue his art to Eastwood and

1. See Letters, ed. Boulton, p.65, 17 Dec. 1910.

Croydon, to select symbols from, and test their emotional timbre against, a real social environment. Initially, this flaw in the darkness is compared to the man's anxiety as he walks through the night. Like Paul Morel, he knows that '"When she's dead ... that fire will go out"'.[1] Anxiety leads swiftly back to the sick-room, and the red coal-fire with its 'small flames ... / Like ghosts on the shadow of the ember'.[2] One can foresee in these flames the other death poems -- "Shadow of Death", "Blueness" and "The Inheritance" -- in which the world floats like a bodiless flame on the underdark. The sense of detachment, like an astral body from the physical body, recalls the unhealthy sublimation of passion that accompanies sexuality in "Scent of Irises", "Lilies in the Fire" and "Passing Visit to Helen". The sore redness of the son's anxiety becomes fused with the illness itself, and the mother's gnawing pain. Her pain becomes the red stigma of her crucifixion, as she is projected against the sky, once again, in an unhealthy disjection from the body. In its context in the Rhyming Poems the smouldering fire carries yet a third connotation, of Laurentian sexual Eros. Combined with images of smelting and crucifixion, this strongly hints at a connection with "Last Words to Miriam". The sudden transition, 'So I came to you', is psychologically glossed by the allusion to Gethsemane. The son seeks to avoid the 'bitter black grail' which is offered him (as in "The Crow"), hoping to find some restorative for his will to live. He seeks release, too, from the chronic, suffocating monotony of vicarious pain. Peace lies in the intense oblivion of orgastic light or the overwhelming oblivion of fatal darkness. The reversion to 'The rim of the moon' to symbolize this waxing hope of a bright, alternative rite of passage is natural and explicatory.

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1. Sons and Lovers, p.474.
2. LP version.

The pathos of the next two stanzas depends on the continuing association of the moon with the mother as well as the son (an effect developed from "End of Another Home Holiday"). The moon strives valiantly and phallicly (as in "Dream-Confused") to come into its own; but it cannot achieve a full flowering. Instead, the moon's efforts to free itself 'from the raw/ Blackened Edge of the skies' breaks open again in the idea of a wound, and of the mother's terrible illness. The superimposition is an exact and startling insight into the contrary passions of the son's mind. One sympathizes with the girl's refusal; the reference to the 'dour/ Awareness' of "Last Words" makes it doubly understandable. But neither is sympathy for the son destroyed; for what the girl offers is a precise aggravation of his state of sickly, spectral detachment. The fine poise is disturbed by an interjection of the authorial voice. It is not only the captiousness of the tone that makes this exclamation an unwarranted intrusion: God's 'keys' have suddenly extended the symbolic apparatus of the poem, and the Biblical allusion[1] does not consolidate their place in its economy. However, the keys do finally solidify the yearning for a means of escape. This need has pressed on our attention from the first, and is felt anew with the recrudescence of dullness and constriction. The exclamation renders the son's exacerbation dramatically, but the poem fails to place this as dramatic. The lapse in tone seems to carry over to the penultimate stanza, where the notion of baptism 'in the well/ Of ... love' has a Freudian crudity and a lack of symbolic context. The version from Love Poems is to be preferred:

> If only then
> You could have unlocked the moon on the night,
> And I baptised myself in the light
> Of your love; we both have entered then the white
> Pure passion, and never again.

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1. Matthew xvii, 19, and perhaps Isiah xxii, 22-23.

The mention of baptism has some justification. Lawrence is referring, in his view, to the most sacred of acts; and the baptism is the preparation for a sacrament, not the 'dour/ Communion' of "Last Words", but 'the white/ Pure passion'. The son seeks a consummation that utterly eschews the imprisoning darkness, that will substitute pure oblivion for the knowledge of his mother's pain and his impending bereavement. That denied, as it must be, the anger returns and the sense of ashen waste. The last stanza is plain-spoken, toughly reticent statement, Hardy at his best. At the last moment sympathy is re-extended to the girl. It is not maudlin pity, nor, for the perceived loneliness, can any consolation be offered. Rather, one realizes, with a shock, how exterior the girl has been to the emotion of the poem.

If it is not perfect, "Reminder" surely is a very fine poem, a resonant sounding of the great themes of the Rhyming Poems, sexuality and death. The intersection of these themes generates an intensity which electrifies the symbolism, and an exceptionally subtle and finely ramified symbolism is able to support the burden of intensity. Yet "Reminder" has been strangely ignored by critics.

The general distaste for Lawrence's confessional poems, the poems of the urgent, passionate "I", must be overcome. Among the Rhyming Poems critics habitually select the dialect poems and "Ballad of Another Ophelia" for praise. Indeed, they deserve praise, not only for the originality of their diction, at once sparse and energetic, but also for the flashes of wry humour and the skilful characterization. Lawrence has a penetrating sympathy for his characters, the product of a deep, imaginative knowledge of their situation that is the inverse of s entimentality; yet he maintains a balanced detachment from his creations. But these are a novelist's virtues -- one who successfully condenses short stories into ballad form -- and to specify, they are

the virtues of one kind of novelist. In the preface to The Princess Casamassima Henry James described how, walking the streets of London, he was able to build his impressions into the situation of a single character, and then, by projecting his imagination into that situation, to create the protagonist of his novel.[1] The dialect poems exhibit this kind of novelistic genius, what James calls the 'penetrating imagination'. One can conceive of another mode of characterization, in which the writer parcels out fragments of his own personality, and then attempts to make them stand up, and move, within a social milieu. Lawrence was perhaps more this kind of novelist, But, laying aside that question, it would be agreed that, astonishingly early in the tales, and triumphantly in Sons and Lovers, he achieved a balanced characterization of persons with vibrantly real inner lives moving in an utterly credible social environment; then promptly lost interest in it. In his novels Lawrence developed a new concept of characterization. From a special, active ideal of self-knowledge he was able to penetrate to the infra-personal, subconscious or, as he called it, 'elemental' level of the human psyche; and hence, was able to base his characterization on what was common or radical to all men and all women. To understand what this development means in terms of Look! We Have Come Through! and Birds, Beasts and Flowers, one must begin to appreciate its origins. These lie not in the balanced, detached dialect poems, but in those lyrics which Lawrence had to wrest from his own elemental self or demon, the poems of the passionate "I".

Lawrence's early reviewers may be forgiven for preferring "Michael Angelo", "Corot" and "Aware"; they were merely accepting the familiar. But the persistent predilection of later critics for such poems is less easily excused. "Michael Angelo", in its truncated form, is cryptic if not garbled. It tells us little about the artist, the art-

1. Henry James, The Princess Casamassima, (London: Lehmann, 1950), p.vii-xxii.

work or his living subject, and that by banal allusion. "Corot" is a vague mish-mash of Shelley and the rest of the nineteenth-century. Both poems, by being about art, encourage a spurious detachment and stylization. If they are religious, they concern a religion no-one feels strongly about, least of all Lawrence. "Aware", apart from being arrant sentimentality, is an unusual, for Lawrence, psychological regression into uncritical nostalgia. These three poems gained favour because they were not like Lawrence, because they sounded like other poets. The poems in which Lawrence tried to assess his own feelings and consciousness, in relationship with others and a real social environment, were dismissed as oddities. Yet these, the poems of the passionate "I", might be regarded as a minor watershed in the transition from nineteenth- to twentieth-century verse. To understand Lawrence's originality and his development as a poet we must begin to appreciate the poems with the demon in them. The reader may begin to see some reasons for such appreciation.

iv

Tell me where is Fancy bred,
Or in the heart, or in the head? 1

A group of poems occupies the transition from Lawrence's early note-books and the Croydon period to the elopement to the Continent and the beginning of the experience recorded in Look! We Have Come Through! These poems form a bridge, more or less overlapping on both periods, and including work which might, more chronologically, be assigned to the earlier or later phases. They include complete rescensions of earlier work and new writing -- dialect poems, love lyrics, elegies -- and a handful of poems which actually trace this transitional period, "The Sea", "Red Moon-Rise" and "Two Wives".

In October 1911 Lawrence wrote complaining that he 'ha/d/n't done a stroke of Paul [Sons and Lovers] for months'. During that time he had been preparing, with Edward Garnett, the book of verse that eventually became, in 1913, Love Poems.[2] Garnett was sufficiently impressed with "Violets" to send it, together with "Lightning", for publication in The Nation (4 November 1911); and it may have been at his instigation that Lawrence sat down to write the other dialect poems, "The Collier's Wife", "Whether or Not" and "The Drained Cup". At any rate, Lawrence recollected 'evenings at Garnett's house in Kent, by the log fire. And there I wrote the best of the dialect poems. I remember Garnett disliked the old ending of Whether or Not.'[3] These evenings must have been spent either in autumn 1911, or possibly February 1912.

Two elegies, "Grey Evening" and "Firelight and Nightfall", have a complex textual history, resulting from a shuffling of stanzas from

1. Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice, III, ii, 63-64.
2. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.139-40, 10 Oct. 1911.
3. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.852.

three earlier poems, "Afterwards", "Grief" and "Twilight". Of these drafts "Afterwards" was sent to Edward Marsh between May and November 1913;[1] "Grief" was sent to Marsh as a Christmas card on 17 December 1913;[2] and the stanzas "Twilight", first found in the English Review (February 1914), probably originate from this period. Both poems contain motifs drawn from autumn and winter, as does another elegy, "Call into Death". This poem has no textual history, first appearing in Amores. The only clue to its provenance is the mention of 'a cathedral dome' such as Lawrence would have seen in Bavaria or Italy. Although these poems belong chronologically to the Look! We Have Come Through! period, Lawrence chose to include them among earlier work. A fourth poem, "In Trouble and Shame", shares the theme of some of the elegies, the desire to transcend or escape the trammels of the physical body. It is first found, grouped with other elegies, in a note-book collection of the poems begun by Lawrence in 1915.[3] It may, therefore, owe something to Lawrence's reaction against the war, and his re-reading of Swinburne.

It is impossible to affix even a tentative date to many of the love lyrics. "Passing Visit to Helen" (originally entitled "And Jude the Obscure and His Beloved") refers to Lawrence's relationship with Helen Corke in 1911, as may "These Clever Women" (originally "A Spiritual Woman"), though no manuscript of this poem survives. A larger number of poems refer generally to love -- "Thief in the Night", "A Pang of Reminiscence" and "A White Blossom" (poems which may have been written earlier, for Louie Burrows and Jessie Chambers, respectively), "Mystery",

1. It is found in Ferrier, MS 20, a collection of 17 loose leaves of ruled paper, written in mauve ink, in the Edward Marsh Papers. According to Ferrier, Unpublished thesis, p.33: 'Letters in this mauve ink appear in the Marsh papers dated from May to October 1913'.
2. See Ross, Georgian Revolt, p.111-12.
3. Ferrier, MS 26.

"Love Storm", "Twofold" and "Lotus and Frost". Of these, "Mystery" and "Love Storm" were among poems sent to Marsh between May and November 1913. "Mystery" especially, with its stanza imitated from Walter de la Mare,[1] may be seen as a response to Marsh's request, in August 1913, for greater formal control in the verse Lawrence sent to him.[2] "Twofold" and "Lotus and Frost" contain some exotic allusions, absent from Lawrence's early work. "Lotus Hurt by Frost" first occurs in a typescript sent to Amy Lowell, probably in January 1916.[3] The meaning of the single lotus resembles that of the multiple centres of consciousness in Fantasia of the Unconscious, and was probably influenced by Lawrence's reading in theosophy: it corresponds to the Tantric lotuses or chakras.[4] The significance of the moon and lotus together recall the symbolic structure of Women in Love. Another group of poems have reference to incidents which have a place in the novels, but no known place in Lawrence's biography. These are "Assuming the Burden", "The Chief Mystery" and "Moon New-Risen".[5] Like "Red", a sketch or prototype for The Trespasser, these poems are found among Garnett's papers.[6] Another poem, "Erotic", belongs to the same manuscript group, written in 1911 or 1912, and displays the same fluid, impressionistic mode of composition. Three more poems from Garnett's papers, "She Was a Good Little Wife", "Pear-Blossom" and "At the Cearne", may be Lawrence's first lyrics to Frieda. Possibly all three

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1. Cf. de la Mare's "Fear"; the point has been made by R.K.Sinha, "Literary Influences in the Novels and Poems of D.H.Lawrence", Unpublished Ph.D., Oxford, p.214.
2. See Letters, ed. Moore, p.220, [17 August 1913].
3. Ferrier, MS 22. See Ferrier, Unpublished thesis, p.34, and Unpublished correspondence, No.33, 20 Jan. 1916; No.34, 1 Feb. 1916.
4. See Martin Wickramasinghe, The Mysticism of Lawrence, (Colombo: Gunasena, 1951), p.39f.
5. Sons and Lovers, pp.378-79, 429-30; The Rainbow, p.478-81.
6. Ferrier, MS 19; from the Berg Collection in the New York Public Library (see Poems, ed. Pinto, p.1052).

refer to a week-end Lawrence spent with Frieda at Garnett's cottage -- the Cearne -- in Edenbridge, Kent.[1] Finally, a fictional narrative poem sent to Garnett, "The Young Soldier with Bloody Spurs" was very probably written at Wolfratshausen, between the last week of May and the first week of August 1912.[2]

After his near-fatal pulmonary illness at the end of 1911, Lawrence convalesced at Bournemouth in January 1912. His first poem after his illness, "The Sea", is designated in Look! We Have Come Through! as having been written in Bournemouth; and it corresponds to a description in the letters.[3] The earliest draft of "The Sea"[4] ended, not with the stanza of revulsion against the sea's deathly mocking of life, but with the cosmic symbols of sunset and moonrise, implying sexual regeneration. Some of these lines, revised and expanded, form the sonnet-like "Moonrise", at the head of Look! We Have Come Through! Elsewhere Lawrence re-worked the symbol of the rising moon to connote the resurrection of the self, and more particularly the sexual self, after illness. On February 3 he travelled from Bournemouth up to Victoria station, London, where he met Helen Corke. The two then took a southbound train and, as Lawrence was going on to Edenbridge to stay with Garnett, Helen was prevailed upon to go past her station at Croydon:

> .. I went as far as Woldingham and by that time the sun was set. It was February, and there was a lovely pink glow in the sky, and I got out at Woldingham. [5]

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1. Delavenay, I, p.142.
2. Lawrence did not actually stay in Wolfratshausen, but in nearby Beuerberg and Icking. He would, however, have frequently visited Frieda's sister, Dr Else Jaffe, who had a flat in Wolfratshausen. Two poems in LWHCT are located there.
3. Letters, ed. Boulton, p.160, 12 Jan. 1912; and cf. The Trespasser, pp.13, 43.
4. Ferrier, MS 19; in Garnett's papers.
5. "The Dreaming Woman -- Helen Corke in Conversation with Malcolm Muggeridge", The Listener, LXXX (25 July 1968), 106.

Travelling alone across the Surrey weald to Edenbridge -- 'The train, in running across the weald, has fallen into a steadier stroke'[1] -- Lawrence would have had every opportunity to see the moon as described in "Red Moon-Rise". Moon-rise was at 5.27 p.m. and lighting-up time at 5.49 p.m. on February 3. The full moon had been on February 2,[2] and we know, from Helen Corke's description, that on the night in question the sky was clear. It is worth establishing these minutiae concerning the circumstances of "Red Moon-Rise", since the poem is one of the few written by Lawrence, where biographical circumstances are not explicated by the poem itself, or by the context of the poetry. The poem is considerably illuminated by being read in the light of Lawrence's severe illness and convalescence.

"Two Wives" is another poem that attempts to find a correlative, this time in a dramatic duologue, for this transitional phase of Lawrence's life. Two women, fairly obviously Frieda and Jessie, set forward their claims to a dead man's body and soul, in the after-life and in memory. The original draft of "Two Wives", called "White", is in the Garnett papers, and as such is unlikely to have been written later than 1912. It is noticeable that 'Less than a year the four white feet [of the married couple] have pressed/ Proudly the white-furred floor'. The reference to 'A storm like snow from the plum-trees and the pear/ And the cherry-trees' hints that Lawrence may have had in mind the same room as he described in "Pear-Blossom" -- a room looking out over the orchard at the Cearne. The first version is deeply concerned, to the point of capitulation, with working out the debt and guilt of the Miriam relationship.

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1. '<u>Weald</u> 1. The name of the tract of country, formerly wooded, including the portions of Sussex, Kent and Surrey which lie between the North and South Downs.' (<u>OED</u>). It is crossed by the line from Croydon to Edenbridge.

2. <u>Whittaker's Almanac</u>.

Since "The Sea" and "Moonrise" have already been discussed, it is worthwhile mentioning that others of the first eight poems in Look! We Have Come Through! spring from and trace this transitional phase. Lawrence indicates that "Elegy" was composed in Eastwood, though there is no internal or external evidence to support this. Émile Delavenay considers that "Don Juan" and "Hymn to Priapus" reveal a new Don Juanism in Lawrence himself, which is reflected in the letters.[1] The former poem may owe something to Lawrence's visit to George Neville, a friend whom he considered, not without reason, 'Don Juanish'.[2] "Hymn to Priapus" may have been sparked off by an incident Lawrence mentioned to Garnett.[3] The poem itself, however, is set at a Christmas party. The new phase of Lawrence's life began when he and Frieda eloped on 3 May 1912, to Metz. Expelled from Metz as a suspected spy, Lawrence passed about five days in Trier, brooding on his own and Frieda's situation. "Ballad of a Wilful Woman", which he marks out as having been conceived in Trier, is therefore the first poem of this new period. Frieda is rather woodenly allegorized as an apocryphal Mary, fleeing to Egypt and surrounded by her various menfolk. It would be a pity to give the new poetic period such an inauspicious beginning: the ballad is, in addition, largely concerned with the past. On 13 May, once again separated from Frieda, Lawrence journeyed to Waldbröl to stay with a German cousin, Hannah. Changing trains en route at Hennef-am-Sieg, Lawrence dashed off an idyllic postcard:

> I am sitting like a sad swain beside a nice, twittering little river, waiting for the twilight to drop, and my last train to come ... it's a nice place, Hennef, nearly like England. It's getting dark. Now for the first time during today, my detachment leaves me, and I only know I love you. The rest is nothing at all. [4]

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1. Delavenay, I, p.82.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.103, 8 March 1912.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.101, 24 Feb. 1912.
4. Frieda Lawrence, "Not I, But the Wind ...", (London: Heinemann, 1935), p.18.

This letter is recognized as a companion piece to the poem "Bei Hennef"; it is assigned to this place of origin in Look! We Have Come Through! Looking forward to the body of the sequence, and written in Lawrence's increasingly graceful and fluid free verse, "Bei Hennef" can be said to be the point of embarcation on a new stage of the poetry. Sixteen years later Lawrence, too, thought of it as the poem that 'starts the new cycle'.[1]

It is not proposed to continue a close chronological scrutiny of Lawrence's verse beyond this point. Although Look! We Have Come Through! is deeply and intricately connected with the biography, it can be with equal profit considered synchronically, as a single whole in time, instead of a chronological progression through time. In addition, several critics -- Moore, Sagar and Delavenay -- have already applied themselves to the chronology of the sequence.

There remain, however, two poems which, although they are reportedly rescensions of earlier work, can best be considered as the end-product of this transitional phase. Firstly, there is "Love on the Farm", which Jessie Chambers remembers as 'two separate poems', roughly contemporaneous with the first draft of The White Peacock, of which it was 'a sort of epitome'.[2] One of these fragments, "A [Lover] Beloved",[3] survives, and may well date from this early time. But it seems unlikely that Lawrence conceived the idea of expanding the early draft, or of fusing it with another poem, before 1912. In 1912 Lawrence prepared a manuscript for Love Poems in which "Cruelty and Love", a version of the expanded poem, appears.[4] Moreover, by December 1912 Lawrence had read Wilson Gibson's "The Hare"

1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.28.
2. E.T., p.116-17.
3. MS 5, 7.
4. Ferrier, MS 14.

in Georgian Poetry, 1911-1912.[1] As Carole Ferrier has pointed out, Gibson's poem seems to have had a formative influence on Lawrence's.[2] Secondly, there is "Snap-Dragon", of which Jessie Chambers recollects:

> On a day in the summer of 1907 Lawrence went to her home to tea, giving me to understand that he meant to find out whether his feeling towards [Louie Burrows] was what he thought it was. Some days later he handed me, with a significant glance, the poem Snapdragon, in which the lines:
>
> And in the dark I did discover
> Things I was out to find:
>
> is a literal description of the situation. [3]

While it is quite credible that this situation occurred, and that these particular lines were written, in the summer of 1907, it is difficult to believe that Lawrence was, at that age, capable of the metrical control and the complex symbolic development exhibited in the first published version of "Snap-Dragon".

This appeared in the English Review (June 1912), and the earliest surviving manuscript version, in the Garnett papers, could hardly have been written before autumn 1911. Appearing in the Georgian anthologies, "Snap-Dragon" and "Cruelty and Love" were probably, in his day, Lawrence's best-known poems. Marking his divergence from the Georgians, they can be thought of as representing the maturation, in 1912, of Lawrence's first period as a poet.

Initially, "Snap-Dragon" conforms to a slow rhythm and a controlled, almost stately stanza, that finely offsets the potentially explosive subject matter. The man keeps his eyes downcast. Immediately roused by the woman's ambiguous invitation to come into the garden, he fears the recognition he might bring about, if their eyes meet. Looking down, he only sees the rhythmic motion of her dress, 'that rocked in a lilt

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1. Georgian Poetry, 1911-1912, ed. Edward Marsh, (London: Poetry Bookshop, Dec. 1912), p.93-105. Lawrence reviewed this volume in March 1913, praising "The Hare" as a 'complete poem'.
2. Ferrier, Unpublished thesis, Explanatory notes, p.95.
3. E.T., p.142.

along'. There is an echo of Lawrence's own "Movements" sequence, suggesting that the lightness of the woman's rhythmic motion has a significance extending beyond herself; and a further echo of Yeats's sumptuous imagery in "He Wishes for the Clothes of Heaven". Kneeling to the flowers, the woman moves into the man's field of vision 'like a settling bird'. Birds symbolize an active principle of sexuality, as in "Cherry Robbers". The basic symbolic poles of the poem -- hand, bird, flower and cup -- are introduced unobtrusively, as part of the economical scene-setting. Though the woman remains unaware or insufficiently aware, merely flirting, the man detects a sexual innuendo in all her words and actions. He sees (and we are reminded of Coleridge's impassioned "Lewti"):

> .. her bosom couched in the confines of her gown
> Like heavy birds at rest there, softly stirred
> By her measured breaths ...

His awareness of the scene governed by what the man sees and feels, the reader notices at this point an alteration in the tenor of the description. As the man's sexual feeling is roused, the imagery turns inward and becomes expressionistic, almost wholly symbolic of that feeling. The basic symbols recur in terms of passion or the blood. The change of mood is further signalled by the change in metrical form; the rhythms become noticeably more urgent. Once this change in the direction of the symbolism has been observed, it is easier to appreciate the effects Lawrence is trying to create, and to judge their effectiveness. The swollen wine-skin, for instance, cuts a strange figure in the old garden, and conjures up ludicrous physiological associations; but seen, or rather felt, in terms of subjective, organic sensation, it becomes at least less ridiculous. The wine-skin does, however, hold up to clear view the difficulties in sustaining, at a serious level, any kind of sexual expressionism. A simile or symbol cannot become fixed, and so degenerate into phallic representation, that is only evasion. The expressionist must evoke

emotion and sensation internally, not as manifestations, despite the fact that poetry, simple sensuous and passionate, deals in the latter. Both the state of feeling and the flower must retain their autonomy, despite the expressionism tending to merge them. In "Snap-Dragon" emotion is never fixed by a single representation or symbol: instead there is a flux of symbols, or rather two dual races of symbols, which by their interaction recreate the transition through various states of feeling. The hand becomes a brown bowl, a cup, a brown bird or cuckoo, a dove (by inference, brooding upon the face of the waters) and a bee. The flower is transformed into the man's heart, turning a 'red measure' of 'hot blood', the face of the waters, a nest, a clover flower and a flag. Neither of these races of images is restricted to male or female, the Freudianly phallic or the uterine. If anything, Lawrence polarizes sexual action here as aggression or instrumentality versus surrender; and these poles move significantly in the course of the poem. This fluidity, surely one of the great virtues of Lawrence's expressionism, does not, however, make for easy reading.

Alertness is needed to detect in these lines --

> Then suddenly she looked up,
> And I was blind in a tawny-gold day,
> Till she took her eyes away.
> So she came down from above
> And emptied my heart of love.

-- a momentary suspension, as he catches the woman's eyes, of the sexual surrender into which the man is sinking. This narcissistic lapsing into his own emotions is again interrupted when the woman speaks: 'I closed my eyes/ To shut hallucinations out'. The images conjured up by his sexual self become unreal, 'hallucinations': it never more than 'seemed' that the woman shared his desire, and her actual presence interferes with its cultivation. The final interruption, signalled by a return to the formal stanzas, comes when the woman demands he should act, not merely respond.

Shaken from dreams, he proceeds to subject her to his sexual feelings, instead of passively surrendering himself.

If this is taken to be Lawrence's meaning in these interstitial passages, he unfortunately lacks the technical and stylistic means to bring his vision convincingly before us. The awkwardness of adjusting rhymes with the auxiliary 'did'; the unusual rhymes, 'dove', 'reiver', 'shout', which, while they have some justification, attract too much attention to themselves; and the decline into clichés like 'The windows of my mind', 'swollen veins', 'hot blood' and 'the morning world': all these indicate that Lawrence is writing below his best. It is as if the falling off of style were designed to express a relaxation into spontaneity. The opposite happens: the reader grows aware of a lack of focus in the emotions themselves, as the poet fails to articulate the fluctuations in the man's consciousness. The short, italicized chant, while making explicit the form of the intermediary passage, is another lapse in artistic judgement.

Nor does the last phase of the poem recapture the former technical control. When Lawrence writes of 'the wretched, throttled flower' in 'mordant anguish', of 'stark/ Fervour' and of 'the pool of her twilight,/ Within her spacious soul', he is padding out a stanza, and encumbering his own utterance. But, despite its trammels, the poem does rise with some vigour to its conclusion. His yearnings and fantasies thwarted, the man seeks to impose his sexual will upon the woman. There is a suggestion of instrumentality here, that the man is using his sexual self against her; and the woman is fascinated, in the full etymological sense of that word:

> she did not move, nor I,
> For my hand like a snake watched hers, that could
> not fly.

Remembering Coleridge's hypnotic simile in "Christabel", we find that the bird is no longer the aggressor. Where sexual fulfilment has become a battle,

a fierce, inhuman instrumentality must overcome fear and shame, and win through to the underlying joy. The inhuman substratum is plumbed:

> Till her dark deeps shook with convulsive thrills,
> and the dark
> Of her spirit wavered like water thrilled with light ...

This is one of the last mutations of the web, now incorporated in the human and in heterosexuality. Superimposed on the harvest moon in the last stanza, it looks forward to the symbolism of Women in Love and "Poetry of the Present". Its dual nature, light and dark, moon and water, make it one of Lawrence's most positive composite symbols.[1] The redness of the moon also looks back to the earlier, phallic moon-rises. For all this, it is difficult to read the conclusion satisfactorily. Offered the Coleridgian dichotomy of death or death-in-life, Lawrence chooses death, with its hope of renewal, rather than a static hell-on-earth. But what sort of death? The 'large hands of revenge' are perhaps the brown hands squeezing the flower; but the strangulation they brought about, an arrested sexual swoon, revealed them as agents of the woman's life-denying prudery; and prudery must be life-in-death, not death. Surely we are not to think the man risks literal death for indulging in what a moon-rise symbolizes? Yet the stoic 'I do not care' implies that vengeance will be dire; and to stipulate that the joy is one 'Which even death can only put out for me' confuses confusion. The complex of feeling resembles that in a passage from Sons and Lovers. Paul Morel drifts into a strange limbo after making love to Miriam. He is not satisfied, but spent:

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1. Cf. Phoenix, p.516.

> Now he realized that she had not been with him all the time, that her soul had stood apart, in a sort of horror ... [He] felt as if nothing mattered, as if his living were smeared away into the beyond, near and quite lovable. This strange, gentle reaching-out to death was new to him ... To him now, life seemed a shadow, day a white shadow; night, and death, and stillness, and inaction, this seemed like being. To be alive, to be urgent and insistent -- that was not-to-be. The highest of all was to melt out into the darkness and sway there, identified with the great Being. [1]

T.A.Smailes is of the opinion that the poem is 'the record of a mild act of coitus reservatus'.[2] Whether orgasm is reserved or not, the poem does seem to end on a mild act of self-bowdlerization, when to have been a little more daring and explicit would have clarified the expressionism. Nonetheless, the linking of the sexual 'death', a Keatsian ecstasy, with the imaginative death-experience of the elegies does cast interesting and ambivalent light on Lawrence's conception of his sexual quest. The component of will in the accomplishment of fulfilment might be thought of as making sexuality deathly; the girl's prudery might be held to blame; or the very aim of the quest might be to make contact with the mythopoeic darkness underlying the bright, feverish world of not-to-be. The personal poem is given too private a resolution in these last lines.

A review of Georgian Poetry, 1911-1912 singled out Lawrence's poem as exhibiting 'a degree of self-abandonment ... so invertebrate as to be practically abnormal'.[3] "Snap-Dragon" is not, as this comment indicates, a particularly easy poem to read, but neither is it an undifferentiated chaos of impressions. It sustains a close analytical reading. It invents symbolic means to circumvent the problem of its subject-matter, and these form a structural principle within the poem. But even more, the spine, the principle round which the poem coheres, is an experiential flow which the poem attempts to reproduce. Where Lawrence is the most

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1. Sons and Lovers, p.350.
2. Smailes, Comments on the Verse of D.H.Lawrence, p.5.
3. Arthur Waugh, Tradition and Change: Studies in Contemporary Literature, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1919), p.32.

acutely and adroitly personal, as opposed to where he is obscurely private, there the poem finds its appropriate form. When, therefore, Harold Monro praises "Love on the Farm" as one of Lawrence's 'most objective poems', on the grounds that in it 'the ego' is cast 'into a scene of dramatic significance',[1] he seems, while perceiving an important fact about this poem, to have missed the general point about Lawrence's poetry. 'Dramatic significance' is the sort of form that can be stuck on from the outside. "Snap-Dragon" is a better poem than "Love on the Farm" precisely in those areas where it is more personal, and more sensitively honest about a man-woman relationship. "Love on the Farm" does dramatize an action with great sensitivity from a woman's point of view, as opposed to the male vision of "Snap-Dragon". But at the dénouement, when that female vision is rejected and figuratively destroyed, uncertainties of diction and tone bring the poem uncomfortably close to melodrama. Nonetheless, this dramatic monologue is more amenable to criticism than "Snap-Dragon": indeed, it is a veritable happy hunting-ground for sources and analogues. At points in the poem where Lawrence contends with these influences, "Love on the Farm" becomes a nexus, sorting and re-arranging the strands of his Romantic heritage.

Carole Ferrier's conjecture, that W.W.Gibson's "The Hare" is a source for "Love on the Farm", is the most valuable contribution to the question of the poem's origins. Sweetly versified and replete with every possible cliché of narrative and character, Gibson's story-line still bears a resemblance to Lawrence's. Chasing a hare all day across the fields, in the evening a young man falls in with an encampment of gypsies. There he sees a girl who reminds him of his quarry, and in the night the two elope together. In spite of the plot, the violence of the poem's first lines does compel attention, and recall Lawrence's snared rabbit:

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1. Harold Monro, Some Contemporary Poets (1920), (London: Parsons, 1920), p.194.

My hands were hot upon a hare,
Half-strangled, struggling in a snare,
My knuckles at her warm windpipe --
When suddenly her eyes shot back,
Startled and startling, big and black,
And, ere I knew, my grip was slack
And I was clutching empty air,
Half-mad, half-glad at my lost luck ...

Even then, this blood-thirstiness is circumscribed within the limits of a dream -- at this juncture, the protagonist wakes up and sees the hare -- and the conclusion works against the initial identification of girl with hare. It seems likely, then, that Lawrence expanded his early draft[1] in an ironic reversal of Gibson, in order to assert the intimate connection between the two forms of venery, between cruelty and love.[2] There is nothing new in Lawrence's refutation of Gibson's sentimentalism. If Gibson's poem is Georgian, then Lawrence's is pre-Georgian, a return to the crueller countryside of Hardy and the fiercer, sadistic fantasies of Swinburne. But, despite the poem's antecedents, and despite a tinge of melodrama, "Love on the Farm" remains a much more disturbing and absorbing poem than "The Hare". Witnessing the obliteration of the woman's fear in a kind of brutal, sexual death, not unlike that foreseen in "Snap-Dragon", the reader wonders if he can agree with, or believe in, a woman who finds this death good.

The ending is meant to shock, but it does not follow that Lawrence is proposing, as a man's ideal relationship with his environment, sexual as well as natural, a carnage that ends in complete obliteration of the other. Critics have pointed out the parallel between this poem and the chapter "The Scent of Blood" in The White Peacock.[3] Notwithstanding, an even closer parallel exists in the fragment of Lawrence's proposed 'Burns novel'.[4] Jack Haseldine, the protagonist, finds a rabbit in his

1. MS 5, 7, "A [Lover] Beloved" (see Poems, ed. Pinto, p.910-11).
2. "Cruelty and Love" is the poem's title in Ferrier, MS 14, Georgian Poetry version and LP version. For LP version, see Poems, ed. Sagar, p.28-30.
3. E.g., Sinzelle, Geographical Background, p.53.
4. See Letters, ed. Moore, p.167-68, 17 Dec. 1912; p.169, 19 Dec. 1912.

snare:

> The creature spurted away, to be choked back. The wire ring that throttled it was tightly pegged ... There alone in the darkness with the rabbit, that crouched now still, too terrified to move, feeling its little heart quivering, his wrists went weak and his heart melted like fire in him ... He had snared and killed hundreds, but this one frightened him. It was a living little rabbit-person with dark eyes, and it was afraid of him ... He dared not kill it. Feeling the palpitating thing crouch and warm his breast he was stifled. [1]

Later his confrontation with the rabbit is counterpointed against a love scene with a Mary Renshaw. Jack Haseldine's recognition of another life in the rabbit and his refusal on this account to kill it are even more centrally Laurentian than George Saxton's pronouncement: '"When your blood's up, you don't hang half way"'.[2] But George more closely resembles the man in "Love on the Farm", apparently unconscious of the life around him. Like this man, George's rabbit-hunt was watched by a nervously sensitive woman, Lettie Beardsall; and the action was reported by the effeminate Cyril.

It must be recognized that the poem is a dramatic monologue: it begins when the speaker is shocked into a new wakefulness and it ends with her 'death'. As a self-portrayal, or a Browningesque self-betrayal, the monologue has worked into it considerable psychological subtlety. What Lawrence said of "Ballad of Another Ophelia" can be applied to "Love on the Farm": 'Don't you see the poor thing is cracked, and she used all those verses -- apples and chickens and rat -- according to true instinctive or dream symbolism?'[3] If she is not 'cracked' to the same extent as Ophelia, the woman is disturbed, and she projects her fantasies on to the scene before her.

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1. Ed. Nehls, I, p.190.
2. The White Peacock, p.67.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.288, 31 July 1914.

The first quatrains of the version "Cruelty and Love"[1] are more projected, and hence more fully dramatized, than Lawrence's subsequent revision:

> What large, dark hands are those at the window
> Lifted, grasping in the yellow light
> Which makes its way through the curtain web
> At my heart to-night?
>
> Ah, only the leaves! So leave me at rest,
> In the west I see a redness come
> Over the evening's burning breast --
> For now the pain is numb.

The woman is startled by what appear to be large hands at the window -- they are only leaves -- but they cast a shadow over her, and mar the otherwise pretty pattern of light. The implied symbol of the web, somewhat falsified, is spoiled for the woman by something frightening and hinting at violence -- what become later in the poem, the 'large, hard hands' of the man. In the second stanza it seems to her that the hands have actually <u>hurt</u> the evening and that, though the pain, her fright, has subsided, a red mark has been left on the evening's breast, sunset. This is extremely fanciful, but the woman's fancifulness reveals a nervous personality, and the images of her fancy, hands and breast, hint at the origins of her nervousness. In "Love on the Farm" the connection between what the woman feels and what she sees in the evening -- 'the wound of love' -- is more overt, and a less subtle dramatization of her thoughts. In general, Lawrence's successive revisions of the poem[2] improve euphony, patch holes in the rhythm and curb old-fashioned extravagances of diction. But awkwardnesses of diction and technical faults persist: Lawrence is capable of rhyming 'spring', 'oncoming', 'ring' and 'throttling' to the end. Nevertheless, his poem continues to engross more attention than technically more polished productions -- Hardy's "The Homecoming", Gibson's "The Hare",

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1. <u>Georgian Poetry, 1913-1915</u>, ed. Edward Marsh, (London: Poetry Bookshop, 1915), p.156-58.

2. A schema for these would be:

$$\text{MS } 5, 7 \longrightarrow \text{MS } 14 \longrightarrow \underline{\text{LP}} \longrightarrow \underline{\text{CP}}$$
$$\text{MS } 14 \longrightarrow \underline{\text{GP}}$$

de la Mare's "Dry August Burned" and Charlotte Mew's "The Farmer's Wife" -- for the pervading psychological insight it offers into the somewhat stereotyped situation.

The woman's desires, as distinct from her fears, can be surmised from her fantasies about the female honeysuckle at the window, and the male bee:

> The sun-lit flirt who all the day
> Has poised above her lips in play
> And stolen kisses, shallow and gay
> Of pollen, now has gone away --
> She woos the moth with her sweet, low word:
> And when above her his moth-wings hover
> Then her bright breast she will uncover
> And yield her honey-drop to her lover.

The woman's ideal of love is flirtation and the superfine gentleness of kisses like 'moth-wings'. She conceives of sex as a gift, something to be bestowed, rather than as a passion intrinsic to her own being. Above all, the woman is the centre of power, the man the satellite, as in the first half of "Snap-Dragon". If he behaves nicely, 'Then her bright breast she will uncover'. The farm appears in constantly sexual terms, though bowdlerized -- the swallow's 'marriage bed' and the blushing of the water-hen -- and her horror mounts to a crisis as the man is seen to move actively, as in the second half of "Snap-Dragon", through this environment. But, if the man seems insensitive, intruding into her idyll, he may be attuned in another dimension to circumambient life. Dead, the rabbit 'swings all loose from the swing of his walk'. It is the man who sensuously feels the rabbit quivering in his hands, the woman who emotionally feels the pity. The man's character has a complexity that does not exclude consideration for other things:

> Yet calm and kindly are his eyes
> And ready to open in brown surprise ...

But consideration is kept firmly, even rigidly, in place. He is a realistic farm-worker earning his livelihood, unmindful of the palpitant life

about him, yet maintaining some level of interaction with it. A balance exists between his 'cruelty' and the struggle for survival of living things.

The thud of the rabbit, 'soft on the table board', prefigures the confrontation of the hard male and the soft pitiful female. Jessie Chambers, who claimed that "Love on the Farm" was an epitome of an early version of The White Peacock, in which George Saxton married Lettie Beardsall, judged the credibility of their conjugal life as 'highly dubious'.[1] George Orwell, on the other hand, confessed to having been 'completely overwhelmed' by the shocking realism of the poem's climacteric. Orwell has considerable insight into the lovers' relationship:

> [He] comes in, throws the dead rabbit on the table, and, his hand still stinking of the rabbit's fur, takes the woman in his arms. In a sense she hates him, but she is utterly swallowed up in him. [2]

The man's psychic possession of the woman, as he comes into her presence, is what Lawrence tries to evince at the poem's close. The woman increasingly sees her own plight as that of the rabbit -- 'God, I am caught in a snare!/ I know not what fine wire is round my throat' -- though the poem suggests that she feels her own sexual response, not just the man's advances, as threatening to entrap her. Her nightmare vision of him as a stoat is the furthest reach of her mental fantasy. Immediately after, she is overwhelmed. She becomes an animal to herself, a bird of prey, yet hooded by the masterful male. The 'hood' covers her mind, but another aspect of her is refreshed by 'a flood/ Of sweet fire'. She finds 'death good', because a partial death has enabled a renewal and realization of her physical being. It has been a death only of her ideal of the 'sunlit flirt'. Death is balanced against new life, as in the farm's ecosystem. Jessie Chambers's reservations against the credibility of the relationship are not, however, unfounded. Clumsiness of rhyme and

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1. E.T., p.116.
2. Orwell, Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters, Vol. IV, p.31.

diction, and the unpleasant, bravura tone of the passage, may be indications that Lawrence is writing more out of wishful, partisan speculation than sensitively recorded experience. Nonetheless, the perceived tension between the girl's horror and her fascination is a compelling psychological insight. Some of the apparently melodramatic phrases in the narration -- 'he flashes bare/ His strong teeth', 'and flashes his eyes/ Upon me', 'ah! the uplifted sword/ Of his hand', 'and oh, the broad/ Blade of his glance' -- help to weave a hypnotic pattern of bright light, recreating the girl's consciousness, as she helplessly complies. Her fascination is like Bathsheba Everdene's, mesmerized by Sergeant Troy's sabre practice in Far from the Madding Crowd.[1]

Another suggestion of Ferrier's, that the much-kissed honeysuckle may derive from a song in Browning's "In a Gondola", seems to have some truth:

She sings.

I

The moth's kiss, first!
Kiss me as if you made believe
You were not sure, this eve,
How my face, your flower, had pursed
Its petals up; so, here and there
You brush it, till I grow aware
Who wants me, and wide ope I burst.

II

The bee's kiss, now!
Kiss me as if you entered gay
My heart at some noonday,
A bud that dares not disallow
The claim, so all is rendered up,
And passively its shattered cup
Over your head I bow.

Browning's woman is more generously and deeply passionate; but this poem ends with the literal death of the man. The passages from both poems share a prettiness. It must be urged that the prettiness and fancy of Lawrence's description is wholly dramatic, a revelation of the woman's state of mind. As such, it may be further compared with a lyric from Shelley's Prometheus Unbound:

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1. Thomas Hardy, Far From the Madding Crowd, (London: MacMillan and Pan, 1967), p.184-87.

Fourth Spirit.
On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aërial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality! [1]

Lawrence certainly knew this song as "The Poet's Dream", an extract in Palgrave's Treasury. The woman in "Love on the Farm" does not see what things are at the window; rather she lets her fancy create for her ideal forms, expressions of her own mind, that for a time blot out the real world in which her husband moves. Wary of immortality and 'thought's wildernesses', impatient with any vision that extends beyond and excludes 'mortal blisses', and having 'aërial kisses' for a pet aversion, Lawrence might, in his assertion that the death of such mental consciousness is good, be rejecting obliquely the claims upon him of Shelley's ideal fancy.

As has been mentioned, Lettie Beardsall and George Saxton in The White Peacock are the two characters in Lawrence's fiction who most adequately fill the roles of "Love on the Farm". But the rabbit is always on Lawrence's hands. He returns again and again to this basic situation, in the chapter "Rabbit" from Women in Love, in the poem "Rabbit Snared in the Night", in a short story like "Second Best" and an essay like "Adolf". R.G.N.Salgado has even proposed that the characters in the poem are types for Lawrence's father and mother.[2] Full of discrepancies, the identification has some basis in fact, and it is suggestive. The father 'was very good at wild life', and sometimes caught rabbits on his way home from

1. Prometheus Unbound, I, 737-49.
2. Salgado, Unpublished thesis, p.66.

the pit; the mother, nervously intelligent, wrote poetry, and thought keeping wild animals indoors was cruel.[1] Whether from his parents, or from Jessie Chambers and her older brothers, or from the community at large, the young Lawrence, who could not watch classroom dissections yet was given to rages of fetichistic violence, absorbed and internalized these contradictions; and later characterized them, the female response of nervous sympathy, the male blood-lust for the hunt. A deeper understanding of the significance which Lawrence constructed around these contraries can be gained from The Trespasser.

Helena, the dreaming, morbidly fanciful woman, plainly corresponds to the female, but Siegmund, the cultured musician, is a less promising candidate for the male part. Nevertheless, the opposition is there. Lawrence describes Helena thus:

> She belonged to that class of 'dreaming women' with whom passion exhausts itself at the mouth ... With her the dream was more than the actuality ... For centuries a certain type of woman has been rejecting the 'animal' in humanity, till now her dreams are abstract, and full of fantasy, and her blood runs in bondage, and her kindness is full of cruelty.

By contrast, Siegmund's 'dream was melted in his blood'. Listening to his heart-beats, Helena was forced to recognize another form of consciousness in him, in connection with the heart of the world and the thudding roar of waves.[2] But female consciousness triumphed over male, and thereafter Siegmund fell away from connection with the world into death. His death is the not-to-be postulated in "Snap-Dragon"; In effect, it is what Lawrence sees as the alternative to the sexual death of the female principle. In the first half of the novel an elaborate contrast is developed between Siegmund's and Helena's ways of looking at the world. They look at each other differently; Helena sees the physical details of Siegmund's features, whereas Siegmund feels Helena as 'a

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1. Cf. ed. Nehls, I, p.14; Phoenix, pp.7-8, 135.
2. The Trespasser, pp.30, 47-48, 51.

presence'. Their perception of an anemone is at odds; Siegmund has a 'sympathetic knowledge of its experience', while for Helena it is 'one more fantastic pretty figure in her kaleidoscope'. Their memory of place differs; Siegmund remembers atmosphere, but never particulars, and Helena the opposite. The operative word for Helena's mode of perception is fancy: dwelling on 'all tiny, pretty things', 'she clothed everything in fancy'. Siegmund is linked closer by sexuality, the metaphoric discovery of a hidden bay, to the phenomenal universe: 'I felt as if I were the first man in the world to discover things: like Adam when he opened the first eyes in the world'.[1] This exactly echoes Coleridge's definition of the imagination.[2] Siegmund, with his feeling for atmosphere, the spirit of the whole, and his empathy for living things, and Helena, with her taste for aggregating discrete particulars, resemble a translation into novelistic terms of Coleridge's distinction between imagination and fancy.

Lawrence transformed Coleridge's imagination into a mode of vision less ideal and more sensual, intertwined with the human body and its basic drives, and permitting active intercourse with a living, physical universe. The subversion of the true vision, 'blood-consciousness', by the false, fancy, fantasy or dreaming, resulted in a detached state of life-in-death, such as Coleridge's Mariner had endured. Lawrence suggested this state of being as an aerial, spectral detachment from the body. Sexuality became an imaginative act, relocating the self in the body, and refreshing communion with the physical world. Nevertheless, the uncertainty at the conclusions of "Snap-Dragon" and "Love on the Farm" indicates that Lawrence had yet to comprehend imaginatively the full implications of 'blood-consciousness'. What sort of relatedness does it imply 'between man and his circumambient universe, at the living

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1. The Trespasser, pp.23-24, 65, 67, 43, 60.
2. Coleridge, Biographia, pp.49, 167.

moment'? He had to win through to a new synthesis of the contraries of vision, beyond the pain and pity of the two angels, centred instead in the intrinsic self of the demon. The progression towards this synthesis did not demand greater objectivity or detachment. Lawrence's poetry proceeds from a scheme of active self-knowledge through highly confessional personal verse to a poetry that is ultra-personal in its psychological focus, that confronts in Look! We Have Come Through! depths of selfhood which are impersonal.

CHAPTER V NOT A RIVER OR A TREE

i

> After much struggling and loss in love and in the world of man, the protagonist throws in his lot with a woman who is already married. Together they go into another country, she perforce leaving her children behind. The conflict of love and hate goes on between the man and woman, till it reaches some sort of conclusion, they transcend into some condition of blessedness. [1]

Like Lawrence's defence of Sons and Lovers against the formal strictures of Edward Garnett,[2] the Argument of Look! We Have Come Through! presents a drastic simplification of a complex entity; and it raises as many problems as it solves. Both Argument and Foreword are useful in encouraging us to read the volume from first to last as a single whole. The sequence is an updating of the early poems, which had been 'a sort of inner history of my life, from 20 to 26';[3] it covers 'the sixth lustre[4] of a man's life', his inner history from 25 to 30. Beyond this, the Foreword encourages us to look at the 'organic development' of the poems. Looking, we find a series of conflicts leading to various temporary resolutions and further conflicts, a pattern no less complex than the intricately warring 'eternities', fitted each inside the next in Lawrence's war-time essay, "The Crown". As with the précis of Sons and Lovers, the difficulties converge on the conclusion. Is Paul left with 'the drift towards death'?-- Do the lovers 'transcend into some condition of blessedness' -- words which Lawrence omitted from his Argument in the

1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.191.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.160-61, 14 Nov. 1912.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.419, 1 Feb. 1916.
4. 'Lustre. A period of five years' (OED). The word is an anglicization of the Latin Lustrum, and as such contains religious connotations.

Collected Poems?

The introductory poems merge with the elegies written for his mother. In "Martyr à la Mode" life is like a dream or a spark, briefly jetting across universal darkness. Darkness threatens to overwhelm consciousness in "Elegy". The sense of disconnection from the body and the world recurs, and the phenomenal world appears an insubstantial film:

> Still, you left me the nights,
> The great dark glittery window,
> The bubble hemming this empty existence with lights.

Haunting the night or the twilight, the poet envies the sea its grey lovelessness, projecting on to it a self-sufficient capacity to dispense with all relationships. It seems to mock human need, to 'mock us to death with its shadowing'. He longs for a respite that only death can give, but a force seems to drag him back into the world of 'bright rivers' and 'bright people', in spite of his protests:

> Where is there peace for me?
> Isis the mystery
> Must be in love with me.

As John Vickery has indicated, this passage from "Don Juan" identifies the protagonist with Osiris, the dying god of ancient Egypt.[1] Though he does not break out of his passiveness, he is led in "Hymn to Priapus" reluctantly to acknowledge his sexual being:

> The warm, soft country lass,
> Sweet as an armful of wheat
> At threshing-time broken, was broken
> For me, and ah, it was sweet!

Why Orion should be in this poem 'the star of my first beloved/ Lovemaking' is obscure. Orion was said to have been 'the handsomest man alive', and as such was somewhat troubled 'in the thorny difficult/ Ways of men' by the attentions of Greek goddesses. One account has it that he was slain for pursuing the virgin attendants of Artemis. He suffered maiming and death for love before his elevation to the stars, and may be

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1. John B.Vickery, The Literary Impact of the Golden Bough, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973), p.288.

taken as a type for the dying god or divine king.[1] The poem's setting is winter, not yet time for the god's resurrection. But now, although the protagonist still feels 'The stream of my life in the darkness/ Deathward set', although he is still drawn by love towards his mother's grave, yet he finds the frozen fields are 'goodly', and learns 'To be faithless and faithful together'.

"Bei Hennef" celebrates the annunciation of a new love, seeming to fill the twilight and to confer peace and happiness. What might otherwise be a formal catalogue of dualities -- 'You are the call and I am the answer' -- becomes more pointed by contrast with the preceding poems. Their passiveness has been displaced by a new demand for responsive action. The awakening of love brings responsibilities and suffering as well as peace. The awakening from winter into spring remains incomplete in "First Morning". The past with its darkness and unreal light strikes in on the man:

> with the pale dawn seething at the window
> through the black frame
> I could not be free,
> not free myself from the past, those others ...

Only a hint of recollection occurs here of the 'wan, dree dawnings' of "Elegy". But in the description of the scene, with its 'Myriads of dandelion pappus/ Bubbles ravelled in the dark green grass', the cross-reference to 'The film of the bubble night' is direct. Not yet freed from the entangling darkness, the dandelion clocks look forward to the germination, through love, of whole, new worlds of perception. The lovers have the potential to create a whole visual universe, which is hidden at present behind haze and shadow.

In "'And Oh -- That the Man I Am May Cease to Be--'", however, the man abruptly reverts to the self-extinguishing darkness of his death-experience, longing for an utter oblivion beyond 'sleep, which is grey

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1. Robert Graves, The Greek Myths, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955), Vol. I, p.150-54.

with dreams' and 'death, which quivers with birth'. But the Tennysonian quotation of the title, taken in context, avers that oblivion is the prelude to the rebirth of a new self.[1] The woman is repelled by the man's unwillingness to accept the trials of the day-light world in "She Looks Back". She watches her own hopes of a new world and her chances of recovering the sunshine of the past slip through her fingers. 'The lovely pale-gold bubbles of the globe-flowers' roll towards the sunset. She nonetheless finds an image of consolation and renewal in the encroaching darkness:

> .. a glow-worm's sudden
> Green lantern of pure light, a little, intense, fusing
> triumph,
> White and haloed with fire-mist, down in the tangled
> darkness.

Fearful of the twilight from which he has struggled, and finding it again in 'the under-dusk of the Isar', the man frankly gives vent to his jealousy of the woman's children.[2] Lawrence manipulates the biblical story at this juncture. Lot's wife was allowed to take her daughters with her, and looked back to Sodom for less worthy reasons.[3] But to the protagonist motherhood means not the woman's death, but his own. It is inasmuch as he sympathizes with the woman, looking back towards Nottingham or London -- cities Lawrence identified with Sodom -- that he feels himself turning figuratively into salt. In uttering a curse 'against all mothers/ All mothers who fortify themselves in motherhood, devastating the vision', he is exorcizing himself, and cauterizing the severed attach-

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1. Tennyson's Maud, X, vii:
   > And ah for a man to arise in me
   > That the man I am may cease to be.

   For Lawrence's interest, especially in the lyrical segments of Maud, see E.T., European Quarterly, I (May 1934), 38.

2. Tennyson's protagonist suffers as well from agonies of jealousy (Maud, X, i-ii). A further parallel is the mining background. As H.T.Moore, Life and Works, p.108, has pointed out, the imagery for oblivion in "'And Oh -- That the Man I Am May Cease to Be -- '" is based on a pit disaster.

3. Genesis xix, 12-26.

ment to his mother. The sensuous gentleness of "On the Balcony" seems to offer some hope of remedy, or a covenant -- 'a faint lost ribbon of rainbow, behind the thunder'. In the chaos of elements and swift transience, the lovers must cling to each other. Their love is realized in "Frohnleichnam", with some reservations.

'Frohnleichnam' is the German (old spelling) for the Feast of Corpus Christi. The lovers watch the traditional pageant of the feast-day and then, retiring to their 'upper room', find in their love-making a revelation of the mystery to which the religious ceremonial pointed. The phenomenal universe is perceived anew, embodied in their love-making:

> I have done; a quiver of exultation goes through me,
> like the first
> Breeze of the morning through a narrow white birch.
> You glow at last like the mountain tops when they catch
> Day and make magic in heaven.

A day celebrating the institution of the Eucharist may seem an inappropriate setting for such unspiritual love, especially considering Lawrence's proclamation of about this time:

> I worship Christ, I worship Jehovah, I worship Pan, I worship Aphrodite. But I do not worship hands running with blood upon a cross ... I want them all, all the gods, they are all god. But I must serve in real love. If I take my whole, passionate, spiritual and physical love to the woman who in return loves me, that is how I serve God. [1]

Lawrence understands Corpus Christi as a feast of incorporation: a spirit as if divine returns to a bestows its inspiration upon the body. In addition, the Feast falling that year on 22 May, he may have linked the ceremony with primitive May rites celebrating the regeneration of the dying god. Attention is drawn to the 'loads of green and silver birch-trees' -- green, the colour of regeneration, in which the woman of "She Looks Back" had seen a hope of renewed love. In The Golden Bough

1. Phoenix, p.304.

J.G.Frazer compiles various May customs, celebrated throughout Europe, in which bushes and boughs or a May-tree, birch-boughs on occasion, were brought into villages in order to promote the fertility, not only of the crops, but of the young married couples.[1] But the poem is not as simple as this. Look! We Have Come Through! as a whole has a complex and disturbing quality, upsetting to comfortable expectations. The poems evoke states of emotion almost too exactly; they have in them a receptivity and an honesty of rendition that seems unable to avoid revealing cracks and tensions beneath the surface of apparent union. Here, the sexual excitement shared by the lovers is heightened and suffers under a peculiar strain of nervous tension. Their love is 'shameless and callous'; and although they succeed, in a play of light and dark, of 'sunshine into shadow', in consummating their passion from their opposition, the heaven they attain to is 'sheer with repudiation'. These last words turn back to the first words of the poem, where both remember how discarding their past has hurt the people belonging to that time. The sacrament of the present has involved a sacrifice, and the Eucharist celebrates another such sacrifice, for the sake of new life.

"In the Dark" concentrates on the disturbing quality of their union. '"There is something in you destroys me"', the woman cries. The pale light at the window, recalling "First Morning", lends justice to her plea that the man still adheres to darkness and to deathliness. The man claims that the darkness, which seems to refer to his phallic presence, to death and the unknown mystery underlying appearances, is an intrinsic and benign part of life. He eventually cajoles her to a sleep like the Sleep of "Martyr a la Mode". The woman clings to light, the man reverts to darkness. The reader's sympathy probably goes to the woman, who claims that, in all his mysteries and symbolism,he forgets

1. James George Frazer, The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion, (London: MacMillan, 1957) (Abridged edition, first published 1922), p,167-170.

that she, too, has a self. In "Mutilation" the disharmony brings back the man's fears of deprivation. Suddenly conscious of vast, geographical distances, he appeals to his 'dark Gods' to 'make her lapse me-ward'. He has reverted to a passive, helpless role. "Humiliation" expresses a deep resentment at having no choice but to cling to the woman for his fulfilment. Living or dead, he would suffer, without her love, 'The same insanity of space'. These poems lead directly to "Song of a Man Who Is Not Loved", where the man's fears reduce him to an isolated speck in a chaos of twilit space -- 'a big wind blowing/ Me like a gadfly into the dusk'. It is not too fanciful to find in the gadfly a negative image of the firefly's 'intense, fusing triumph', and to identify the wind with the breeze that had symbolized, in "The Wild Common", freedom devoid of relationship.

At last, however, in "A Young Wife" the woman submits, acknowledging an aspect of life and of living things which she had ignored. The perception is achieved through her own suffering --

> The pain of loving you
> Is almost more than I can bear.

-- so that she begins to appreciate, as he does, the subconscious forces and tensions underlying their relationship. Interpretation of 'the darkness' is difficult, however, and the reader may now feel, if he has not previously, that it has come to symbolize too much. This poem, "Mutilation" and "Humiliation" answer Lawrence's call for a 'stony directness of speech' in poetry.[1] For the most part they display little but bareness, and are more distinguished for the strength of the emotion expressed than for the strength of their expression. They would perhaps have served as speeches in the highly naturalistic dramas with which

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1. See Letters, ed. Moore, p.413, [?11 Jan. 1916].

Lawrence was concurrently experimenting, in The Fight for Barbara, for instance. Their interest lies in their representing a transitional stage in Lawrence's gradual modernization of his diction from the Victorian and pre-Raphaelite idiom of the early poems. This purification seems to have proceeded, not as an end in itself, but in response to the need for accurate self-expression. The fine refrain with its soft and hard rhymes is effectively repeated through the course of the poem, an example of Lawrence's 'accidental rhyme'. The hard dipthong with its falling rhythm -- 'bear/where/air' -- contains in itself some of the woman's grating pain and pleasurable submission. The tiny imagist poem, "Green", perfects this submissive unfolding, and announces the lovers' emergence on a new plateau of sensual joy. The colour that had promised regeneration glows in all the reawakening world; and the substance of the sacrament is perhaps implied in the 'golden petal' of the moon and the 'green wine' of the sky.

'The rose', for Lawrence, 'is the symbol of marriage-consummation in its beauty'.[1] But elsewhere he insists on the rose as a type for the fulfilled self, achieving 'pure being': 'when I understand fully, flesh and blood and bone, and mind and soul and spirit one rose of unison, then I am'.[2] The rose symbolizes both the fulfilled self and marriage-consummation, because each depends on the other. 'I am here myself', the poet declares, 'as though this heave of effort/ At starting another life, fulfilled my own'. In "Rose of All the World" this active self is blown into its full flowering from a tiny seed of fire, harking back to the jetting sparks of "Martyr à la Mode".[3] As is emphasized by the potent darkness which generates and absorbs the sparks,

1. Phoenix, p.506-07.
2. Phoenix, p.680.
3. The title of "Rose of All the World" is probably taken from the refrain of Yeats's "The Rose of Battle". Its imagery may owe something to Yeats's "The Secret Rose".

this bursting into full flame is, in Lawrence's view, our only immortality or eternity; and much of the remaining sequence is devoted to discovering its nature. Better than Lawrence's verse or prose philosophy, "Gloire de Dijon" conveys the mood of this fulfilment. The man watches the woman bathing in a relaxed absence of prurience or desire, yet with a newly awakened sense of beauty. At first the poem recalls a Bonnard painting, both in its subject and its close attention to lighting; but in the second stanza the sensuality deepens into the contented voluptuousness of a Renoir. The concentration on the folds of the body, like the doubling of petals on a rose, conveys a cumulative and Keatsian richness: light becomes flesh, sight touch.

This secure and peaceful love extends into "Roses on the Breakfast Table". Although the first stanza is, as has been pointed out,[1] charged with suggestions of transience, the man suffers no fear of impending loss. Enjoying the beauty of the moment without fear, he can, for the first time, realize his own beauty in accepting evanescence. Like characters in any Laurentian novel, however, the lovers cannot permanently pass over into a state of being. Into the Eden of "River Roses" intrudes a snake, which, albeit not evil in itself, guarantees progression into new states of being. Into the 'pollyanalytics' of "Rose of All the World" intrudes the thorny issue of children and motherhood. In "Forsaken and Forlorn" the Isar is still flowing, but 'eerily, between the pines, under a sky of stone'. Deprived of support, the man reverts to his fears and the battle resumes. The battle for what Chaucer, five hundred years before, had called 'maistrie' is still drawn up in "A Bad Beginning", attended by the same fears and the same struggle for sexual domination. This is an important theme in Lawrence's short stories of this period -- "Once" and "New Eve and Old Adam", for example. But

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1. David Holbrook, The Quest for Love, (London: Methuen, 1964), p.341.

other troubles beset the couple -- a society that would endorse the accuracy of the title "Sinners", and in "Why Does She Weep?", the woman's Eve-like consciousness of sin. Most of these poems lack any distinction of cohesion, as if the distress had infiltrated their very composition.

The monologue of "Fireflies in Corn" allows the woman to talk of the need for struggle. The fireflies appear to her 'questing brilliant souls going out with their true/Proud knights to battle!' The knights are the tufted heads of the rye, with which the fireflies, 'like little green/ Stars come low and wandering here for love', must contend. Accepting the need for conflict between dark and light, male and female principles, the woman now delights in the 'dark knights' of the rye: her complaint is that her own man is not more like them. He is 'Limping and following rather at my side', more like the Dwarf attending Red Cross in The Faerie Queene than the knight himself. Always he is 'Moaning for me to love him'. The rising of Sirius in "Winter Dawn" brings in a similar dawn of recognition:

> Green star Sirius
> Dribbling over the lake ...

Much is compressed in this image, and a little Egyptology and astronomy aids comprehension:

> Sirius was known as Sothis to the Egyptians, who early in their history were aware that this star made its first appearance of the season in the twilight before sunrise at about the time when the annual floods were beginning in the Nile delta. The Egyptians long believed that Sothis caused the Nile floods and was the "creator of all green things", as a Pyramid text declares. [1]

The risings of Sirius are heliacal, that is, the star first emerges from the sun's rays and becomes visible just before sunrise. The lovers have lain awake all night, tied together by love, yet kept apart by hate --

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1. Encyclopaedia Britannica (1967). Lawrence's probable source for his information was Frazer, Golden Bough, p.487-88.

.. This love so full
Of hate has hurt us so
We lie side by side
Moored ...

-- and now Sirius' rising seems bitterly ironical. Though it brings in 'The new young year', Sirius does not bring the lovers hope that the currents of their lives are moving towards regeneration. It dribbles rather than moves over the face of the waters. Rising himself, the man determines to wash, in a half-ritual attempt to cleanse himself of hate. But just as 'the hate is gone', 'The great star goes'. It seems as if the transcendency of the 'intense, fusing triumph', for which he longs, demands both love and hate. Instead of the hoped-for incorporation, he is left in the cold light 'pure like bone/ Of all feeling bereft'.

Between "Fireflies in Corn" and "Winter Dawn" two poems are interpolated in The Complete Poems which do not occur in the original edition of Look! We Have Come Through![1] "Meeting among the Mountains" is included at the editors' own discretion; "Everlasting Flowers" was added to the sequence by Lawrence himself in Collected Poems. Of the other poems which Lawrence arranged in the revised sequence, "Bei Hennef" and "Song of a Man Who Is Loved" are valuable and necessary additions; "Coming Awake" neither contributes greatly to, nor detracts from, the volume. The authority for including "Meeting among the Mountains" must rest on Lawrence's letter to his agent, complaining about his publisher's refusal to print that poem and "Song of a Man Who Is Loved". For this second poem Lawrence argues powerfully,[2] but concedes,'"Meeting" I do not feel strongly about -- the other I do'.[3] The editors ignore the lukewarm support here, and the fact that Lawrence did not, as in the case of "Song of a Man Who Is Loved", incorporate "Meeting among the Mountains"

1. Lawrence, Look! We Have Come Through!, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1917).
2. Cf. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.852.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.521, 3 August 1917.

in Collected Poems. According to their reasoning, the poem was not included because of 'the painful memories associated' with it. The main factor leading to its present position in The Complete Poems seems to be the editors' conviction that it is a 'fine poem',[1] not to be hidden in the appendices; but their evaluation is open to dispute, and they surely have no authorial mandate for their action. Generically, "Meeting among the Mountains" is a cross between the observation of "Sunday Afternoon in Italy" and the ill-conceived allegory of "Ballad of a Wilful Woman". Thematically, with its knowledge of 'the dead Christ weighing on my bone', it can be enlighteningly compared to "Frohnleichnam". But one of the principle objections against its inclusion must be the uncertainty as to where it should be interpolated in the sequence.[2] Neither "Meeting among the Mountains" nor "Everlasting Flowers" fit happily in their present context. As for Lawrence's inclusion of "Everlasting Flowers", it must be accounted his one blunder in preparing the sequence for publication in Collected Poems. As David Holbrook has commented, the poem's sentimentality finds an echo in the jingling, greeting-card metre of its stanzas.[3] While it may be of psychological and biographical interest to know that Lawrence's thoughts reverted to his mother while living at

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.1009-10.
2. The poem is not included in the proofs for LWHCT (Ferrier, PMS 34), and there is no complete manuscript for the volume.
3. Holbrook, Quest for Love, p.343-44.

Gargnano, and that he planned a book of elegies as a sequel to Love Poems,[1] the insertion of "Everlasting Flowers" at this point in the sequence distracts the reader from its narrative progression.

A valuable part of Lawrence's narrative power is the accurate eye for local custom displayed in "Sunday Afternoon in Italy". A fusion of the travel sketches from Twilight in Italy with the sardonic dialect poems produces a bitter-sweet vignette of the embarrassments of Italian courting. But, as in Twilight in Italy, Lawrence presses his observation towards some speculatively mystical or anthropological conclusion. Each partner in the courting becomes a champion, a wreathed and anointed representative of his or her sex, a May-queen and May-king. Probably Lawrence finds, in this heightened distinction of sexual roles and the consequent intensification of the battle between the sexes, an illumination of his own intimacy with Frieda. The same powers of observation throw light, in "Giorno dei Morti", on his other love. Falling in two halves, the poem turns on a contrast. The traditional religious process-

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.189, 24 Feb. 1913. Abbie Findlay Potts, The Elegiac Mode: Poetic Form in Wordsworth and Other Elegists, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), points out that Ovid's Amores contains funeral dirges as well as love lyrics. Therefore, Lawrence's Amores might be the elegiac volume Lawrence was planning in 1913. With regard to the biographical interest of "Everlasting Flowers", it is noteworthy that the manuscript version (Ferrier, MS 26) closes with the exclusion of the mother:

> We have lost them all, and the darkness
> Alone is left of all
> The wonderful things I had for you.
> -- So the fall
>
> Of the latch through the night rings final.
> And on opposite sides of the door
> We are shut out from each other now
> For ever more.

These two stanzas were evidently excised from the poem only after the preparation of the proofs for New Poems, in which "Everlasting Flowers" first appeared. They were cut out by Lawrence himself in response to the demands of pagination in the volume; see Letters from D.H.Lawrence to Martin Secker, (Privately published, 1970), p.11, 13 Sept. 1918.

ion, with a certain ostentation and glamour, moves towards the cemetery; there the two parents stand, oblivious to all save the fact of their grief, that resists utterance in the traditional symbols. In "All Souls", the direct sequel, this real grief awakens the poet's guilt towards his dead mother:

> The candles burn on every grave.
> On your grave, in England, the weeds grow.

But the guilt is assuaged when he thinks of his own life as an offering:

> But I am your naked candle burning,
> And that is not your grave, in England,
> The world is your grave.
> And my naked body standing on your grave
> Upright towards heaven is burning off to you
> Its flame of life, now and always, to the end.

David Holbrook hastens to point out the Freudian symbolism of the candle-flame. To him it indicates 'incestuous urges' and 'fears of retribution' such as would accompany the poet's desire, supposedly here expressed, to offer his sexual experiences to his mother.[1] The poem is disturbing, but it may be as instructive to look at Lawrence's symbolism as at Freud's:

> At every moment we issue like a balanced flame from the primal unknown ... That is the first and greatest truth of our being ... [At] every moment, like a flame which burns balanced upon a wick, do I burn in pure and transcendent equilibrium upon the wick of my soul, balanced and clipped like a flame corporeal between the fecund darkness of the first unknown and the final darkness of the afterlife, wherein is all that is created and finished ...
>
> It is our business to burn, pure flame, between the two unknowns ... We must come into being in the transcendent otherworld of perfection, consummated in life and death both, two in one. [2]

As before, darkness is made to embrace an unwieldy range of imponderables. But it may be ascertained that Lawrence's symbol of the candle is designed to have a wider scope of reference than the purely

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1. Holbrook, Quest for Love, p.216.
2. Phoenix, p.695-96.

sexual. The focus is definitely on the flame -- 'it is our business to burn' -- and on the balance it preserves between the two darknesses which enclose its life. A similar balance appears in the poem, a stability not apparent in the numbed shock of Lawrence's early elegies, nor in his lyrics to Eros. Mother-love does not incapacitate the son as it did in "The Virgin Mother", where the young man is powerless to rise from the death-bed. Nor is it as enfeebling as in "Brother and Sister", where both are distracted from their own lives by a yearning towards the mother. In "All Souls" joy is to be had from the mere act of physical living; and the dependence on the mother suggested by the 'naked candle burning on [her] grave' is not, to Lawrence's awareness, Oedipally debilitating:

> I forget you, have forgotten you.
> I am busy only at my burning,
> I am busy only at my life.
> But my feet are on your grave, planted.

To Lawrence it is simple fact that the mother has a place in the son's psychological make-up that can never be expunged. Again, since it was her death that gave him imaginative access to a beyond, and since she became absorbed in that beyond by her death, the mother has a permanent place in Lawrence's metaphysic of the unknown. To balance this consciousness a fierce joy in life is needed. Moreover, as the quotation from the essay "Life" suggests, the intensifying awareness of death may itself be necessary for life to achieve a 'pure flame' 'in the transcendent otherworld'.

"Both Sides of the Medal" decides the battle of contraries set at odds in "Winter Dawn". Dry, discursive rhythms render the syntax, a series of didactic, rhetorical questions, yielding only two assertions -- 'since you love me/ to ecstasy/ it also follows you hate me to ecstasy' and 'It is not freedom'. Even this preaching is self-conscious:

.. am I not like Balaam's ass
golden-mouthed occasionally?
But mostly do you not detest my bray?

As an address to his reader, these lines are -- V.S.Pritchett has noted -- a good example of Lawrence's humour, where it might not perhaps be expected -- 'one of his numerous flashes of half-shy, half-defiant self-portraiture and self-criticism'.[1] The allusion has its serious side. Though the despised and bestial servant of Balaam, it is the ass who first sees the angel of the Lord, and who eventually transmits God's meaning to Balaam.[2] The ass is a self-deprecating and attractive form of Lawrence's demon, of that untaught inner self which, seeming obstinate and perverse, is seeking expression of the unknown, and is not to be ignored.[3] The allusion's other side is that this self is still an ass, and only 'golden-mouthed occasionally'. The ass's dual nature is, besides, the dual nature of the lovers -- at one moment an angel with a flaming sword, at the next a hateful and stupid beast. It is this hateful aspect that the man forces the woman to accept in "Lady Wife".

Both love and hate, Lawrence believed, were present in any relationship, the one necessitating the other. To seek pure love was the mistake of our age and civilization. Love was only a motive force or a kind of travelling, so that endless love was a delusion, involving endless dissatisfaction: 'what is the infinity of love but a cul-de-sac or bottomless pit?'[4] The aim of love and hate was their conjunction, in 'the realm of calm delight ... of pure centrality, pure absolved equilibrium'.[5] The metaphor here, in Women in Love and in "Both Sides

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1. V.S.Pritchett, Review of CP, Fortnightly Review, CXXXII (1 Oct. 1932), 534-35.
2. Numbers xxii, 21-33.
3. Cf. Letters, ed. Moore, p.688-90, 26-27 Jan. 1922.
4. Phoenix, p.152.
5. Phoenix, p.153.

of the Medal", is gravitational. Unless the human universe contains both attraction and repulsion, chaos results, 'A disarray of falling stars coming to nought', such as had dismayed the poet in "Song of a Man Who Is Not Loved". "Both Sides of the Medal" is more disturbing than Lawrence's prose essays in that it admits that even the 'balanced, eternal orbit' of love and hate must be hateful finally, as a restriction of freedom. Nevertheless, it allows, in Lawrence's view, the possibility of transcending into purer being, and of escaping the twilit chaos of unrelatedness:

> It is not of love that we are fulfilled, but of love in such intimate equipoise with hate that the transcendence takes place ... There is a transfiguration, a rose with glimmering petals, upon a bush that knew no more than the dusk of green leaves heretofore. There is new heaven and new earth, the heaven and earth of the perfect rose. [1]

Up to "Both Sides of the Medal" the battle of dualities which the lovers have embodied -- male and female, dark and light, beast and angel, love and hate, guilt and callousness -- has been sufficiently fought out, consummated and surpassed to allow them to achieve a second plateau of being, a heaven and earth quite different from that represented in the roses series.

The second series is composed of erotic nocturnes, creating a wintry, secretively glowing darkness that is the converse of the candidly sunny, summer fulfilment of "Gloire de Dijon". These two apotheoses resemble the two eternities posited in "The Crown", of light and darkness, with this difference: they are neither of them achieved by the will in pursuit of a self-projected ideal. The rhythmic impulse of the nocturnes depends on longer lines, often with dactylic feet, contracting into a single, shorter line, iambic or with a suggestion of spondees. The shorter lines, concentrating action, image and emotion, reinforce the

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1. Phoenix, p.693.

movement of the series, from the outer darkness inwards to the glowing hearth. The stanzas do not always command a perfect lyric purity of diction or symbol; but the erotic excitement is tautly maintained, especially when the language is at its simplest and most directly referential:

> Your shoulders, your bruised throat!
> Your breasts, your nakedness!
> This fiery coat!

The poems trace what seems the one act of love through several mystical nights or eves.

In "December Night", as in "Green", the apparatus for the sacrament is at hand, the wine and the flesh that is actual and living. Desire is the transubstantiating force or god. "New Year's Eve" ends with a paean to desire, but begins by reducing the scenario to light and dark:

> There are only two things now,
> The great black night scooped out
> And this fireglow.

Recollecting the candle-flame of "All Souls", the symbolic bareness prepares for a confrontation with ultimate realities and the unknown. The glow carries associations of germination, a womb or vulva. As the poem gravitates to this centre, the glow becomes not brighter, but a flickering interplay of light and dark. "New Year's Eve" creates the central disturbance of the series, describing its central act as one of death and destruction, not birth. The man becomes a medium to the 'ancient, inexorable God', Death. The ultimate desire entering the man is from this unknown, and to it he slays 'a silvery dove' of light, the woman and possibly a part of himself. Lawrence wishes to evoke through this violence that kind of sexuality which he termed 'reductive' or 'sensational': the background of darkness and death is one indication,[1]

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1. Phoenix II, p.377-78.

and another is the sacrifice of a dove. This was one of the rituals of Aphrodite,[1] a goddess whose worship Lawrence linked with reductive sexuality.[2] "Valentine's Night" goes some way towards confirming this process of reduction by depicting the woman as a flower returning to a bud, a woman to a virgin.[3] Unlike the simpler rose of the earlier series, the bud-like woman now knows 'good, evil, both/ In one blossom blowing'. As in "Frohnleichnam", the sacrament has involved sacrifice, but in "Birth Night" the death yields new life to the woman. Born from the man, like Eve from Adam, she has regained a paradisal state, in which she knows both good and evil, but not the sense of sin that had excluded her from Eden in "Why Does She Weep?" After much abstract symbolism of mystic birth and death, the poem returns to a specific imagery and a tenderness, which seem pledges of genuinely redemptive experience:

> You are lovely, your face is soft
> Like a flower in bud
> On a mountain croft.

A source of bewilderment in these lyrics is the transformation of values that death and darkness have undergone since the early poems in Look! We Have Come Through! There, darkness represented the underground of the grave and the literal death into which the mother had passed, drawing her son towards her. Here, darkness symbolizes a love experience so intense that it seems like death, but brings to pass new life. In "Manifesto", too, it connotes extreme erotic intensity, that defines the limits of the self. In "Craving for Spring" 'the living darkness of the blood of man' suggests an untapped level of spontaneous life within the self. A pattern of development exists in these symbolic uses of dark-

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1. See Ferrier, Unpublished thesis, Notes, p.107.
2. Twilight in Italy, p.42.
3. The ability to recover her virginity was one of Aphrodite's powers (see Graves, Greek Myths, I, p.68).

ness, but it is not adequately articulated. Each poem needs careful explication. In all of them, notwithstanding, darkness can be interpreted as the Laurentian 'unknown' -- forces which can be felt, but not known, as entering life from beyond life. The awareness of the unknown, awakened in Lawrence by his mother's death, is continuous with that potent and invigorating unknown, of which intense sexual experience brings awareness. Death, man's physical being, subconscious levels of spontaneity beneath the intellect, the maze of animating forces operating in the phenomenal universe, all can be equated with the unknown darkness; and the most important part of life is the point of contact between conscious life and this great, general unknown. The changing meanings of darkness in Look! We Have Come Through! enact the transition from the void that threatens to overwhelm Paul at the end of Sons and Lovers to the dark gods of the later novels. If the poems do not of themselves wholly clarify this transition, the importance of clarifying critically what 'darkness' means in a given poem is evident.

"Paradise Re-Entered" re-examines the lovers' claim of having transcended into Eden. Protracting the allusion to Genesis in "Birth Night", the poem shares the formal properties and limitations of the nocturnes; it summarizes the series and the whole sequence. The rite of passage in the poems of battle is symbolized with a new definition by the gamut of flame at the gate. The 'bickering fire' and the approach of death are reminders that the nocturnes themselves recapitulated, in their sexual action, this ritual passage. Now the lovers have emerged into the 'calm incandescence' aspired to in "Both Sides of the Medal". They look back 'on the withering roses' of their past triumph. As in "The Crown", however, the opposing 'eternities' of the roses and nocturnes must be consummated.[1] Although the lovers 'might have nested like

1. Phoenix II, p.371.

plovers/ In the fields of eternity', this prospect of static peace is rejected, sacrificed like the dove in "New Year's Night"; and they 'storm the angel-guarded/ Gates of the long-discarded/ Garden'.

Lacking any specific imagery, "Paradise Re-Entered" is a disappointing prospectus of the new 'Eden home'. "Spring Morning" and "History" give some hints as to its character. Looking back on a winter of suffering and struggle, "Spring Morning" is a reverdie, heralding the hoped-for regeneration of "Hymn to Priapus" and "Winter Dawn". For once Lawrence's powers of natural description failed him -- he borrowed the first stanza from Ernest Collings[1] -- and it is a weak poem to boast the line '-- We have come through'. "History" is a nostalgic lyric, recalling that time when love and hate were confused, not consummated, in an ash-grey limbo. The remainder of the sequence is dominated by a series of vers libre, non-narrative, discursive poems -- "Wedlock", "New Heaven and Earth", "Manifesto" and "Craving for Spring" -- which explore, rather like essays, the internal geography of Eden, increasingly from the perspective of the external, social world. Approaching Eden from different angles, these modulating interpretations become an almost narrative progression, moving towards new rifts and possibly new consummations.

"Wedlock" is the most attractive of the series of verse-essays, rejoicing in the newly won sexual interdependency and security of the lovers:

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1. See Letters, ed. Moore, p.159, 14 Nov. 1912.

How I love all of you! Do you not feel me wrap you
Up with myself and my warmth, like a flame round the wick?

And how I am not at all, except a flame that mounts
off you.
Where I touch you, I flame into being;-- but is it me,
or you?

That round head pushed in my breast, like a nut in its socket,
And I the swift bracts that sheathe it ...

But how lovely to be you! Creep closer in, that I am more.

Suffused by a joyous calm, it celebrates coming into being, without hardening emotion into dogma. The lovers can be 'a bonfire of oneness' in their sensual happiness, 'And yet all the while you are you, you are not me'. Even the question of motherhood lapses into unimportance. For the frightening unknown of mystery and death in "All Souls" is substituted the tangible, secure unknown of the wife's body; or rather, though the darkness still surrounds, the candle burns brightly now, with the wife displacing the mother as the central, balancing wick. Fears of dominance and withdrawal fade: 'How sure I feel, how warm and strong and happy/ For the future! How sure the future is within me'. This security finds sharper expression in "Song of a Man Who Is Loved". In the last stanza, justly praised by Barbara Hardy,[1] the abstractions sought by the man are realized in the body of the woman:

So I hope I shall spend eternity
With my face down buried between her breasts;
And my still hands full of security,
And my still hands full of her breasts.

Beyond this calm equilibrium, however, material fact and abstraction have fallen apart in chaos, a chaos reflected in the indeterminacy of modern physics and the devastation of modern war, 'that bounces and rattles like shrapnel'. The poem gives rise to two doubts. Have the lovers transcended into some perfectly secure and static state of being? -- Certainly

1. Barbara Hardy, "Women in D.H.Lawrence's Works", D.H.Lawrence: Novelist, Poet, Prophet, ed. Stephen Spender, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), p.98.

a major drive in the sequence and in Lawrence's desires is the need for stability and peace in relationship.[1] But equally prominent has been the theme of quest and the discovery that emotional rapport is a quick, fluid connection. Secondly, does the external society impinge on the lovers' world, or vice versa?-- "New Heaven and Earth" and "Manifesto" investigate these questions.

"New Heaven and Earth" focusses attention on the inner life of the individual, but its metaphors are drawn from the world of the Great War. The potent implication behind the metaphors is that the state of solipsistic somnambulance, under which the poet's former self laboured, is responsible, through the collective actions of an unawakened society, for the War. Unless a man has been reborn in the new world of consciousness, he will not perceive his individual distinctness from the old world, and will consent to the mass slaughter. Lawrence's solution to political ills is, as almost invariably, one of individual redemption: 'there will only remain that all men detach themselves'. Cynthia Asquith complained to her diary, 'He appears to think that I could stop the war, if only I really wanted to!'[2] Then, because the individual, residing within society, depends for his complete fulfilment upon society, there is the corollary plea for rebirth in the blood of all men in "Craving for Spring".

"Manifesto" focusses attention in the opposite direction, from overt social needs towards the dark imperatives of the inner life:

> To be, or not to be, is still the question.
> This ache for being is the ultimate hunger.
> And for myself, I can say "almost, almost, oh, very
> nearly."
> Yet something remains.

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1. Cf. Letters, ed. Moore, p.121, [? 15 May 1912]; p.179, 17 Jan. 1913; and Phoenix, p.446.
2. Lady Cynthia Asquith, Diaries, 1915-1918, (London: Hutchinson, 1968), p.95.

The desire for stillness and peace is superseded by the admission that complete being has not been attained:

> I want her to touch me at last, ah, on the root and
> quick of my darkness
> and perish on me, as I have perished on her.

As the woman had become the wick and centre of the man's physical being in "Wedlock", so he wishes now to become the centre of her being, the medium by which she knows the unknown. The tenor of the transcendence differs greatly, however. It is 'clear, burnished, isolated being' and a 'plunging upon sheer hard extinction'. It is difficult to believe that the man is not asking for a service rather than offering one. Anal contact seems to be implied.[1] But the reductive sexuality of 'sheer hard extinction' is only a prelude to a further state of being, 'the mystic NOW'. More disturbing than the anal overtones in "Manifesto" is the confession of a flaw in the security of "Song of a Man Who Is Loved"; for this opens the possibility of further phases of struggle, initiation and rebirth. Although the poem assures us 'Something shall not always remain', the impression left by Look! We Have Come Through! is that it must; that human life can never surpass itself permanently, even into that state from which, Lawrence believed, immortality in another world is projected. It seems preferable that a poem-sequence, tied so novelistically and naturalistically to patterns of experience, should end in such disequilibrium. Closing like a Laurentian novel on

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1. For discussion of anality in Lawrence's poetry, see G.Wilson Knight, Neglected Powers: Essays on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Literature, (London: Hutchinson, 1971), p.142-55; Jeffrey Meyers, "D.H.Lawrence and Homosexuality", London Magazine, XIII (Oct. - Nov. 1973), 68-98; Pritchard, Body of Darkness, pp.18-19, 47-49, 135, 146-47. This criticism distorts the balance and meaning of the poetry by selective quotation and innuendo. The poems and novels need to be read as aesthetic wholes, not as secretive codes dilating on minor forms of sexual perversion. They are not concerned with sexual technique, but with the emotions and deeper psychology of the wider range of behaviour and consciousness which Lawrence would term 'sexual'.

a note of uncertain hope, the restless prayer of "Craving for Spring" asks, not for any perfected being, but for truth to experience:

> Ah, do not let me die on the brink of such anticipation!
> Worse, let me not deceive myself.

The paradigm of Look! We Have Come Through! is a conflict of dualities, whose confrontation leads to the achievement of a transcendent state, from which new conflict and struggle emerges. Lawrence's 'art-speech' for this paradigm is best illustrated in "New Heaven and Earth". Here the beautiful transition from the black, sour, putrifying earth in part IV to the green, new world in part VIII perfects a colour motif, playing throughout the sequence. The seasonal pattern of regeneration (spread over four or five years) is, notwithstanding, of less prominence than the insistent use of biblical allusion and Christian metaphor. The unresolved period is like a battle, journey or exodus, and culminates in a confrontation with fiery Cherubim, the fires of Sodom, a sacrifice or crucifixion, or the trials of the Last Days. There succeeds 'a kind of death which is not death', an annihilation like 'the smoke-sodden tomb'. Finally comes a resurrection, the entry into the Promised Land or New Jerusalem, or the return to Eden. Parallel to the three stages of this typology, there is sometimes the impression of a religious conversion -- the period of sin and discord, the abrupt crisis and the accession of grace and harmony.

Lawrence was unembarrassed by the fact that the Christian, and explicitly Protestant symbols and doctrines of his childhood increasingly coloured and shaped the form and substance of his religious vision during the war years. His sexual and experiential creed echoes Protestantism's favourite texts: '"Ye must be born again," it is said to us ... we must be brought forth to ourselves, distinct. This is at the age of twenty or thirty.'[1] As for social redemption and 'the new world being

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1. Phoenix, p.433; and cf. John iii, 4-7.

born in us', he exhorts Bertrand Russell that 'Except a seed die, it bringeth not forth ... Our death must be accomplished first, then we will rise up ... We shall have to sound the resurrection first.'[1] Adamant for a new revelation, he complains of how 'In an age of barrenness' 'people glibly talk of epilepsy on the road to Damascus' and 'hold back from realizing what is told'.[2] In the poetry the integration of seasonal cycles and Christian symbolism with the motions of the inner life expresses nostalgia for a time when:

> The cycle of creation still wheeled in the Church year ... [and] 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 fulness, suffered on the cross, gave up the ghost, and rose again to unnumbered days, untired, having at least this rhythm of eternity in a ragged, inconsequential life.
> But it was becoming a mechanical action now ... [3]

Though not wishing to perpetuate Christianity, Lawrence is concerned, as a Romantic, to rejuvenate the sense of religious significance attendant upon the actions of daily life. To do so he is willing artistically to exploit his Christian heritage, turning to it for conceptual support, and draining from it the more than Christian energies invested in such concepts as initiation, sacrifice and apocalypse. With reference particularly to Lawrence's prediction of social apocalypse, Kermode has described him as a 'moral terrorist'.[4] It is not the place here to debate the contribution made by apocalyptic historiography to the major novels. But it can be asserted that, with reference to the emotional and sexual life of the individual, which is the predominant concern in the poetry, Lawrence's religious concepts are intensely evocative. He strikes at deeply responsive chords, when transmitting the

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.442, 9 March 1916; p.346, 29 May 1915.
2. Phoenix, p.672.
3. The Rainbow, p.280-81.
4. Frank Kermode, Lawrence (Modern Masters) (Bungay: Fontana/Collins, 1973), p.57.

desire and dread compounded in 'the three strange angels', or the self-surrender which must precede redemption:

> I touched her flank and knew I was carried by the current
> over to the new world in death ...

What makes "Manifesto" and "New Heaven and Earth" seem so passionate and yet disappointingly diffuse is this fierce concentration on the moment of religious crisis:

> He who would have his life must lose it ... [When] he reaches the shore, when he has traversed his known and come to the beach to meet the unknown, he must strip himself naked and plunge in, and pass out: if he dare. [1]

The poet who most resembles and contributes to Lawrence's obsessive concern with personal apocalypse, and his utilization of the psychic energies stored in traditional religion, is Shelley. It is the Shelley of Adonais who asks 'why fear we to become?', and urges our surrender to the wind that will carry us past 'the inmost veil'; who in "Ode to the West Wind" invokes the tumult to play on him like a lyre, to 'Be through my lips to unawakened earth/ The trumpet of a prophecy'; yet who hesitates on the verge, fearing the annihilation demanded by such possession. Shelley's ode is a pervasive influence towards the end of Look! We Have Come Through! The 'winged gift' of "Song of a Man Who Has Come Through" is a direct allusion to 'winged seeds', and the thistle-down and seed-balls of "Street Lamps" revert to the same source:

> Seed after seed after seed
> Drifts over the town, in its need
> To sink and have done;
> To settle at last in the dark,
> To bury its weary spark
> Where the end is beginning.

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1. Phoenix, p.409.

The complex of symbolism in "New Heaven and Earth", intermeshing winter, corpses, burial, the tomb and the resurrection of spring, can all be located in Shelley, if it is not his peculiar property; and the concept of autumn as a time of painful but necessary dissolution, a parturition, is found both in the ode and "The Sensitive Plant". "Autumn Rain" clearly confesses the debt. 'The plane leaves' are falling, as in the ode , and these suggest ashes of waste, 'the sheaves of dead/ men that are slain'. The fiery seeds are replaced by 'falling seeds of rain' or tears, as if grief and pain will bring new life, or support life through a time of arduous transition. It is evident that Lawrence thought of England as undergoing an autumnal death during the War,[1] and possibly he means to conjure the impression of descent into an underworld. He might be remembering Virgil's 'silent forest', where 'high-hearted heroes whose tasks in the body's life were done' gather on the banks of the Styx, 'numerous ... as the leaves of the forest which fall at the first chill of autumn and float down'.[2] It is Shelley's ode , however, that runs continually on his mind. "Craving for Spring" transmutes Shelley's doubt into passionate expectation:

> I wish it were spring
> cunningly blowing on the fallen sparks, odds and ends
> of the old, scattered fire,
> and kindling shapely little conflagrations
> curious long-legged foals, and wide-eared calves
> and naked sparrow-bubs.

In repeating backwards Shelley's prayer to the wind to 'scatter' his words like 'ashes and sparks' throughout the 'unawakened earth', Lawrence harks back to the awakening from winter of his own Osiris-self, in "Don Juan".[3]

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.278, [?9 Nov. 1915]; p.390, 1 Dec. 1915.
2. Virgil, Aeneid, VI, 305-12; see The Aeneid, tr. W.F.Jackson Knight, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1956), p.156. Lawrence read Virgil in translation in 1916 (see Letters, ed. Moore, p.421, [?3 Feb. 1916]; and cf. p.702, 30 April 1922).
3. Cf. Letters, ed. Huxley, p.279, 28 Nov. 1915.

In asking that 'the darkness turn violet with rich dawn' and in longing to know 'the living darkness of the blood of man ... purpling with violets', he looks forward to the rebirth of Adonis and Attis, not only in the natural world, but 'in the world of the heart of man'.[1] In the world of man as in the private world, the passage through the darkness of the death-experience should at length bring forth new, rosy life.

There has been enough sacrifice and terror; it is time for the trumpet of resurrection to call to all men: this is Lawrence's message at the end of Look! We Have Come Through! But what does he mean by the various states of being to which these times of trial lead? The significance of the moments of revelation can be best understood by comparing them with the suspended moments of another Romantic predecessor, Keats, and by appeal to the essay "Poetry of the Present", in which Lawrence distinguishes his own poetic aims from those of Keats and Shelley.

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1. See Frazer, Golden Bough, pp.10, 459.

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
  Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
    Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal -- yet, do not grieve:
  She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
    For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair! 1

We shall not look before and after.
We shall be, now.
We shall know in full.
We, the mystic NOW. 2

Lawrence, with Keats, has earned a reputation as a sensuous poet, especially gifted at representing tactile and kinaesthetic values. A comparison of Keats's sensuous feeling in Hyperion (II, 45) for a 'serpent's plashy neck' with the marginally more daring description in "Snake" of the reptile 'snake-easing his shoulders' serves to illustrate the poets' overlapping sensibilities. A debt to Keats is apparent in Lawrence's earliest work, in "The Death of the Baron", where the unification of various senses,[3] fused in turn with overtones of transience and death, is the particular legacy of "To Autumn". Keats's ode again helped to shape the well-known set-piece on September in The White Peacock: for Lawrence autumn is a season of 'blue mists'; it 'creeps through everything', creating an atmosphere of nostalgia and fruition, magically condensed in 'the pale bloom on blue plums'.[4] That 'bloom' is a brilliant gloss on the lines:

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1. Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn", 15-20.
2. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.268.
3. Cf. Richard H.Fogle, "Synaesthetic Imagery in Keats", Keats: A Collection of Critical Essays (Twentieth Century Views), ed. Walter Jackson Bate, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p.41-50.
4. The White Peacock, p.74-76.

While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble plains with rosy hue ...

The whole earth, in this creative insight, is seen as a ripe fruit. From the first Keats taught Lawrence how to compress a depth of sensory awareness into objects, consolidating their material presence.[1] He went on to learn the intensifying power of the Keatsian sensory paradox -- the shock when a soft rabbit hits a hard table.[2] Finally, both poets share a sensuous gift so pronounced that it seems to irradiate the worlds they move in. The opening lines of "The Wild Common" are akin to Keats's opening of a window on early summer:

The open casement pressed a new-leaved vine,
Let in the budding warmth ...

Like Lawrence's 'quick sparks on the gorse-bushes', 'the budding warmth' of the "Ode to Indolence" is more than an empathetic extension of the tactile senses. It gives a sudden awareness of their ordering and potential; it deepens momentarily the reach of introspective, physiological knowledge.

Close affinities underlie their work, and it is known that Lawrence absorbed the poetry of his predecessor, primarily from the generous and important selection in The Golden Treasury.[3] Further indications can be found in Lawrence's poetry that he knew other of the odes, and possibly The Eve of St Agnes. In addition, Lawrence occasionally

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1. See W.Jackson Bate, "Keats's Style: Evolution toward Qualities of Permanent Value", English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. M.H.Abrams, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p.344-46.

2. William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity, p.249, lists examples from Keats; Philip Henderson, The Poet and Society, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1939), p.175-76, from Lawrence.

3. Palgrave included "'Bards of Passion and of Mirth'", "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer", "'In a drear-nighted December'", "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", "'Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art'", "'When I have fears that I may cease to be'", "'Souls of Poets dead and gone'", "Ode to a Nightingale", "'To one who has been long in city pent'" and "'Four seasons fill the measure of a year'".

uses familiar tags from Endymion and "'I stood tip-toe upon a little hill'".[1] Having among his literary acquaintance two of the prominent Keatsian scholars of his day, in later life he read John Middleton Murry's Keats and Shakespeare and possibly Amy Lowell's mammoth biography.[2] Lawrence knew his Keats, and shared with him certain poetic aptitudes; but there remain large temperamental differences between the two. For instance, whereas both are supremely at home in a tactile universe, touch in Lawrence's poetry generally seems quick, nervous, electric and intuitive, while touch for Keats is slow and firm, adhesive, luxuriant and contemplative.[3]

Keats, with Lawrence, has attracted a reputation as a highly sexual writer, repressed, consumptive and feverishly morbid;[4] but again, this diagnosis fails to notice the immense differences between the two, in failing adequately to assess their work. In Keats, for instance, one detects an openness towards the insurgence of desire, absent from the tortured lyrics of the younger Lawrence -- a willingness to allow:

> .. all soft delight
> That shadowy thought can win,
> A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
> To let the warm Love in!

Contrariwise, Lawrence achieves a frankness and a wholeness of expression that were denied to Keats. Whatever the constrictions of his era and his problems with publishers and audience, there is in Keats a self-bowdlerizing impulse and an unpleasant coyness, epitomized in Endymion by

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1. E.g., Lady Chatterley's Lover, p.96.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.863, 4 Nov. 1925; and Foster Damon, Amy Lowell: A Chronicle, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1935), pp.668, 670.
3. See Christopher Ricks, Keats and Embarrassment, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), pp.91-92, 97-102, 138-39.
4. See Kenneth Burke, "Symbolic Action in a Poem by Keats", John Keats, Odes (Casebook Series), ed. G.S.Fraser, (London: MacMillan, 1971), p.108-09.

'the unchariest muse/ To embracements warm as theirs makes coy excuse', or in Isabella by:

> So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,
> And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme ...

Keats idealizes love and woman, idealizes them in Lamia with full knowledge of the fact that he is doing so; and this, in turn, brings a reaction of disgust. He focuses on pre-coital and post-coital states of feeling, eliding the sexual act itself. If desire sometimes hardens into a feverish stasis of unaccomplished love, as in "Ode on a Grecian Urn", then the mood succeeding it is almost invariably worse, as witness the melancholy and cheated exhaustion of "La Belle Dame Sans Merci". Allen Tate complains that Keats was able 'to face the moment of love only in terms of an ecstasy so intense that he should not survive it'.[1] With less exaggeration one might say that his idealization and his ecstasy reflect a limited range of erotic experience, and that, although this realm may seem at first to be worlds apart from Lawrence's sexual metaphysics, the notion that too intense experience left a knight-at-arms 'haggard and ... woe-begone' is taken up by Lawrence in The Trespasser. In "The Drained Cup" Lawrence updates and naturalizes "La Belle Dame".

For all his supposed repressions, Keats could create, at the centre of The Eve of St Agnes, two sexual images whose beauty remains untainted. The first is a woman's body, suspended in a momentary light that is half-religious, humanly warm and (if the reader will look with other eyes than Porphyro's) freed from a stultifying excess of desire. The second is the lovers' consummation, which (whatever one thinks of 'Solution sweet' as diction) seems to detach itself from the atmosphere of deception and superstitious fantasy surrounding it. As in Troilus and Criseyde, where Troilus crawls through a sewer to his rendezvous, and Pandarus dances about the lovers' bed in odious applause; and as

1. Allen Tate, "A Reading of Keats", Keats, ed. Fraser, p.156.

in Lady Chatterley's Lover, where Connie and Mellors resort to trickery and endure humiliation to escape the encroachments of a life-denying, industrial civilization; so in The Eve of St Agnes, the central act of union and the potentialities and beauty of the body become positive values, besieged and threatened by a hostile environment.[1] A clear divergence in sexual feeling does, however, exist when the works of Keats and Lawrence are set side by side. It is evident in the simple juxtaposition of the moonlit vision of Madeline, beautiful but heightened, tense with sensuous extremities, and the sunlit "Gloire de Dijon" with its warm naturalism and frankness.

As has been mentioned, Lawrence has been declared perverse for the combination of sexual feeling and pain found in his poetry; and Keats, too, has his accuser in William Empson, who draws attention to 'the pathological splendours' of the "Ode to Melancholy" -- 'a parody, by contradiction, of the wise advice of uncles'.[2] Unlike the psycho-analytical critics of Lawrence, Empson has wit on his side. But a more patient and plodding criticism would turn first to the overt theme of Keats's ode; that pleasure is necessarily perplexed by its 'neighbour pain' in the world of becoming,[3] and that our sense of beauty may be enhanced by an acceptance of its transience and frailty. As distinct from Lawrence, for whom pain could be superseded temporarily, after a period of trials, Keats divined mutability and suffering as the essence of all pleasures.[4] He lays emphasis on the pain that must be suffered, loving beauty; much

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1. Deception and superstition in The Eve of St Agnes, with Porphyro cast as the villain, are discussed by Jack Stillinger, The Hoodwinking of Madeline, and Other Essays on Keats's Poems, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), p.67-93.

2. Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity, p.250.

3. Lamia, I, 191-94.

4. Interestingly, in one sonnet where Keats does comply with Lawrence's paradigm for pain, he also employs the symbol of the phoenix: see "On Sitting down to Read King Lear Again".

more so than Lawrence, who believed that we lose the joy of experience, by failing to accept its transient nature -- by preferring 'a wreath of immortelles' to 'a bunch of pansies'.[1] As if enraptured with sorrow, Keats finds the final, subtle joy of beauty to reside in the fact that it 'must die'. Hence, through identification with the beautiful object, he who apprehends the beautiful gains an exquisite, aesthetic appreciation of death itself. Here is the finer point of Empson's (and of Lawrence's) criticism of Keats; though Keats himself, in the "Ode to Melancholy", partly succeeds in realizing and standing outside of the process of disintegration. In the clanging last line, in which submission to dissolution both exalts and reduces the poet to a cloudy trophy, Keats anticipates the career of the poète maudit; just as in the phrase 'wakeful anguish' he looks forward to much contemporary, 'confessional' poetry.

Keats's ready identification with the beautiful in solid, sensuously realized objects is his individual contribution to the Romantic epistemological dilemma. This ease is establishing a rapport with subhuman life --

> The setting sun will always set me to rights -- or if a sparrow come before my Window I take part in its existince and pick about the Gravel. [2]

-- has been compared by some critics with Lawrence's ability, in Birds, Beasts and Flowers, apparently to guide his reader into the inner consciousness of living things.[3] On closer inspection the similarity evaporates, leaving an important distinction. Keats's ideas on the epistemological relation of subject to object can be deduced from the passage in Endymion (I,777-815), containing the protagonist's self-questionings as to the whereabouts of true happiness. The answer, he

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.424.
2. Keats, Letters, ed. Gittings, p.38.
3. Hough, The Romantic Poets, p.171; Richard Wilbur, "Seven Poets", Sewanee Review, LVIII(1950), 134-37.

decides, lies 'In that which becks' the human consciousness to 'fellowship with essence'; and, unlike the traditional Platonic ladder to pure being, Endymion finds his road to 'oneness' and spirituality passing through sight, touch and hearing. The 'chief intensity', to which this path leads, is 'love', a love that seems at first to destroy the senses through excess, dissolving both self and the object in an ecstatic, metaphysical haze:

> .. at the tip-top
> There hangs by unseen film, an orbèd drop
> Of light, and that is love: its influence,
> Thrown in our eyes, genders a novel sense,
> At which we start and fret; till in the end,
> Melting into its radiance, we blend,
> Mingle, and so become a part of it ...

A second glance, however, uncovers a submerged sexual imagery, colouring our understanding of 'fellowship with essence'.

What is singular in Keats's tentative philosophy and wholehearted aesthetic is the necessity for the destruction, dissolution or effacement of the subject or self. It may have been Coleridge's discrimination between the Protean imagination of Shakespeare and the all-conquering, remodelling imagination of Milton,[1] which enabled Keats to formulate his criticism of Wordsworth's 'egotistical sublime', and to assert that the Shakespearean 'poetical Character' 'has no character' -- 'it has no self -- it is every thing and nothing'.[2] Though he could find some precedent in the 'cockled snails' of Venus and Adonis,[3] his own Protean faculty, applied to the subhuman world of living things and natural process, differs radically from Shakespeare's powers of dramatic characterization. But Keats's empathy does have an affinity with Lawrence's interest in animals and unsophisticated peoples, seen as the

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1. Coleridge, Biographia, p.150.
2. Keats, Letters, p.157.
3. Keats, Letters, p.40.

repositories of subhuman instincts, passions and forces -- a fact that Lawrence himself recognized in his essay "The Nightingale".[1]

Inspired by the rowdy nightingales around the Villa Mirenda, this essay scrutinizes the "Ode to a Nightingale", rather as if it had been submitted for inclusion in Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Beneath the journalistic, knockabout style Lawrence manages to conceal a discerning, though antagonistic critique. He takes Keats to be the prime offender in a long tradition of thinking the nightingale's song a 'plaintive anthem'. On the contrary, it is 'the most unsad thing in the world', 'Caruso at his jauntiest'. Closing with the text, Lawrence concedes Keats's recognition of the bird's 'full-throated ease'. His mistake lies in that 'he has to be "too happy" in the nightingale's happiness, not being very happy himself'. Lawrence concentrates on the lines beginning 'Here, where men sit and hear each other groan'. This, he feels, constitutes an unwarranted intrusion of the poet's private difficulties, his personality, in a poem ostensibly dedicated to getting 'over into the nightingale's world'. The poem falls short -- 'he is still outside' -- because the poet lacks any deep vitality in his own self to match the triumphant song of the bird:

> The nightingale never made any man in love with easeful death, except by contrast. The contrast between the bright flame of positive pure self-aliveness, in the bird, and the uneasy flickering of yearning selflessness, for ever yearning to be something outside himself, which is Keats ... How astonished the nightingale would be if he could be made to realize what sort of answer the poet was answering to his song. He would fall off the bough with amazement. [2]

Lawrence's aesthetic theory is pinned to the self and the self's vitality. He highlights the paradox that, precisely because Keats lacked a vital, fulfilled self, he was unable to write about the other self of the bird without filling it with himself, and with his own sadness. This should

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1. Phoenix, p.40-44.
2. Phoenix, p.43.

not to be taken as a final criticism of the ode; Lawrence has other uses for it in his own poetry. But, ending characteristically with an ad hominem criticism of the poet, Lawrence's analysis does remind us that Keats's theory of an identity-less poet is not only an aesthetic. It is also, in part, a refuge and an objectification of his own psychological needs[1] -- of his intense desire for fame coupled with an often crippling shyness and sense of inferiority, of his dislike of opinionated argument and longing for affection, and of his coming to terms with a Christian heritage whose influence he is sometimes assumed to have escaped. These conflicts, Lawrence would have said, have nothing to do with the vital demon of the inner self, or with nightingales.

Nonetheless, Keats might have granted Lawrence a portion of Negative Capability, and agreed that he met at least one of the requirements stipulated in the densely multiple meanings of this term;[2] for the self Keats wished to annihilate is far from the self Lawrence wished to assert. Keats's theory was, it should be remembered, precipitated by 'a disquisition with Dilke'. It was a defence of the creative imagination against the ratiocinative dogmatism of his 'Godwin-methodist' friend, whose reasoning Lawrence would have despised even more vehemently than Keats. Both poets wage war against the assurance of the exclusively rational self, stressing in their letters the need for the creative mind to relax conscious control, to allow an influx from deeper levels of consciousness. Keats writes --

> The only means of strengthening one's intellect is to make up one's mind about nothing -- to let the mind be a thoroughfare for all thoughts ... Dilke will never come at a truth as long as he lives; because he is always trying at it. [3]

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1. E.g., Keats, Letters, p.158.
2. See Keats, Letters, p.43.
3. Keats, Letters, p.326.

-- and Lawrence:

> You have striven so hard, and so long, to compel life. Can't you now slowly change, and let life slowly drift into you ... Not people, or acts, or things, or even consciousness: but the slow invasion of the vast invisible god ... It's the soul's own mystery.
> You must learn to abstain from the vice of 'knowing', when knowing is mere nothingness, not even an end in itself, because there's no end to it, like a bottomless pit: which swallows every human relation. [1]

An attempt to distinguish the strands of Lawrence's self-asserting yet selfless aesthetic from Keats's 'self-destroying' one has been made by David Gordon, who concludes:

> Lawrence proposed a central, or creative consciousness fluid enough to escape the habits of the mental-social consciousness but integral enough to be capable of normative judgement. [2]

For the moment it suffices to say that Lawrence's holding to an 'integral' yet 'fluid' and deeply vital self is the ground of disagreement between himself and Keats; whereas both concur that the mind should be left open to influences 'caught from the Penetralium of mystery'.

In his interpretation of Keats, John Middleton Murry takes this openness to inspiration to be a complete loyalty to 'immediate and unintellectual experience' and a 'submission of consciousness to unconsciousness': 'These are the Bible of the Mind, not its own constructions and vaticinations'.[3] At times Murry seems to be talking about Lawrence, as he understood him, more than about Keats - in his emphasis on the subconscious and on sexuality.[4] Plainly, Lawrence was concerned to sound deeper levels of consciousness than Keats could well be aware of. And

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.778, 9 Feb. 1924, and p.757, 17 Oct. 1923.
2. David J.Gordon, D.H.Lawrence as a Literary Critic, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).
3. J.M.Murry, Keats and Shakespeare: A Study of Keats' Poetic Life from 1816 to 1820, (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p.138.
4. Murry, Keats and Shakespeare, p.31.

though Keats does cry, 'O for a Life of Sensations rather than of thoughts!', this invocation to emotion precedes an enriched concept of:

> a complex Mind -- one that is careful of its fruits -- who would exist partly on sensation partly on thought -- to whom it is necessary that years should bring the philosophic Mind. [1]

In contradiction of Murry, the letters show Keats's repeated efforts at bridling his 'Sensations' with stern philosophy. The poems themselves give the immediate impression, not of a sudden inrush from the subconscious, but rather, as Douglas Bush says, of a classical impersonality.[2] It is only under analysis that they reveal the highly volatile and self-aware emotional life, transmuted with such a wealth of artistry and cold control. Although the two poets subscribe to seemingly similar axioms in poetic composition -- 'That if Poetry comes not as naturally as the Leaves to a tree it had better not come at all'[3] and that 'The Law must come new each time from within'[4] --- Keats is, in fact, alone in his dedication to stylistics and the perfection of form.

It was Keats the stylist who wrote all the early invocations to Apollo. When he reprimanded Shelley, asking him to 'curb [his] magnanimity and be more of an artist' and adding that he himself was 'pick'd up and sorted to a pip',[5] Shelley might have retorted, and Lawrence doubtless would have, that it was their express aim as poets to circumvent, as far as possible, the sorting and ordering, according to a predetermined intellectual system, of their creative inspiration. As is evident in his essays on the novel,[6] Lawrence always inveighed strongly against the cultivation of formal values for their own sake.

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1. Keats, Letters, p.37-38.
2. Douglas Bush, "Keats", Critical Essays, ed. Bate, p.13.
3. Keats, Letters, p.70; and see Richard Woodhouse, Notebook entry, English Romantic Writers, ed. Perkins, p.1247.
4. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.185.
5. Keats, Letters, p.390.
6. "The Novel","Preface to Maestro-don Gesualdo" and "German Books: Thomas Mann".

Yet he was fascinated by Keats's artistry, thinking of him, as his casual references prove,[1] as a classic type of the poet and the type of a classical poet. He was intrigued by the natural stylist and, for all the derisive use he made of them, haunted by certain of his lines -- 'Thou still unravished bride of quietness', for example.[2] What drew Lawrence to Keats was the sincerity of his poetry: he commented that when Keats says 'My heart aches', 'you bet it's no joke'.[3] Here then, was the marvel of a poetry of genuine emotion, that lingered 'on the brink of the unknown', and yet achieved a certain detachment and a high level of formal perfection. These would be high terms of praise in anyone's critical lexicon; they are in Lawrence's. It need come as no surprise that he includes Keats's odes among 'the poems which have meant most' to him.[4] Possibly this note of quiet admiration is the larger truth of his response to Keats.

Nonetheless, Lawrence did detect and violently repudiate one element in Keats's poetry. It was Keats's dedication to the artist's vocation alone, and to artistry for its own sake. After the appearance of Murry's critical study, and the receipt of what must have been a despairing letter from Murry, he replied:

> To kill yourself for what you've got to say, is never more than relatively important. To kill yourself, like Keats, for what you've got to say, is to mix the eggshell with the omelette. That's Keats's poems to me. The very excess of beauty is the eggshell between one's teeth. [5]

The playful metaphor is more concise than it seems. Lawrence finds in the poems an 'excess of beauty', which grates on him. It is the result

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1. Phoenix, pp.256, 594, 700.
2. Phoenix, p.187; First Lady Chatterley, p.62.
3. Phoenix, p.552.
4. Phoenix II, p.597.
5. Letters, ed. Moore, p.875, 4 Jan. 1926.

of an excessive concentration by the poet on what is extrinsic, the mere form of his art, to the detriment of the meat contained and the vitality conveyed. In Keats's commitment to art, to what he had to say and his way of saying it as distinct from the life he had to live, Lawrence finds a deathly element. The idea that a deathly exclusiveness is conveyed by art which concentrates on itself as artefact, is developed in an unpublished draft of the introduction to Pansies:

> A thing of beauty is a joy for ever, so long as it stays fresh. But to stay fresh it must keep its roots in good moist humus and the dung that roots love. This is true even of a Greek vase: or a Grecian urn, to put it Keatsily. If you can smell the dung of earthy sensual life from the potter who made the 'urn', you can still see the vase as a dark, pansily-winking pansy, very much alive. But if you only see an 'urn' or a 'still unravished bride of quietness', you are just assisting at the beautiful funeral of Keats and of all pansies ... [The] poor plucked preserved pansies that most people accept as beauty -- Botticelli, for example in the eyes of beauty-lovers -- they are sad things, corpse faces. [1]

Art, Lawrence implies, cannot afford to detach itself from the life which feeds it. Where that detachment takes place and art is self-consciously concerned with other art, it is possible that beautiful poems may be written about Greek vases, but their beauty will reflect a desire to escape from the conditions of human existence and an aspiration to transcend into an ideal, static realm of art. One might suspect Lawrence of only reading one half of the "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; yet his advertence to death indicates that he could see other elements in the ode, if he did not credit Keats himself with such insight. His real criticism of Keats is that aesthetic exclusiveness emasculates the wholeness and immediacy of which his art is capable. Beauty, says Lawrence, is always in need of fresh discovery and recreation, in art and in life. He expresses an exasperation with old, decaying concepts of the beautiful, an enthusiasm for injecting new naturalism and breadth into poetic tone,

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1. David Farmer, "An Unpublished Version of D.H.Lawrence's Introduction to Pansies", Review of English Studies, XXI (May 1970), 181-84.

and an impatience with inherited verse-forms. The unpublished introduction is a valuable foot-note to Lawrence's most important essay on poetry.

"Poetry of the Present"[1] needs to be read, not only in the context of the poetry, but with the added perspective of Lawrence's fundamental aesthetic concerns in the symbolist, 'philosophical' essays. As a statement of a poetic, it is at the furthest remove from, say, André Breton's "Surrealist Manifestoes", advocating specific methods for pre-conscious composition. It differs even from Wordsworth's "Preface", campaigning on a definite platform for change in diction and content. Its tradition is rather that of Shelley's Defense: it is a loosely philosophical and historical, suggestively symbolic treatise on poetry and the poet, promulgating spontaneous inspiration, and hence a more or less limited class of poetry. It is little concerned with the 'body and motion' of verse. Lawrence's recommendations in this vein are general. He favours 'direct utterance from the instant, whole man', to give an impression of immediacy, and the pruning away of clichés of phrase and rhythm, to divest utterance of habituated feelings. Confusion, discord and inconclusiveness may result, but these reflect 'the quality of life itself'. Look! We Have Come Through!, as the prior discussion of diction and narrative structure has suggested, provides examples of these dicta in practice. As to the technical verse-form of the new poetry, Lawrence ventures that it may be Whitmanesque, but can only be defined negatively. It cannot rely on old metrical forms, nor toe a 'melodic line' (as Conrad Aiken suggested),[2] nor dish up fragments of old forms according to new prescription. These kinds of poetry are based on mental abstractions, preconceived notions of the past or the future. The scanty

1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.181-86.
2. See Critical Heritage, ed. Draper, p.11-12.

pointers to the substance of the new poetry spring directly from Lawrence's metaphysic. In order to assess the poetic implications of the metaphysic, "Poetry of the Present" must be read symbolically, like a poem that can 'demonstrate in its own movement and texture the possibilities of which it speaks'.[1]

Valuable clues towards such a reading are the allusions to Romantic poetry -- to Shelley's "To a Skylark", Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale", Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" and Coleridge's "Kubla Khan". The reference to Coleridge is submerged, but it is nodal to the essay's unusual concept of time:[2]

> Give me the still, white seething, the incandescence and the coldness of the incarnate moment: the moment, the quick of all change and haste and opposition: the moment, the immediate present, the Now. The immediate moment is not a drop of water running downstream. It is the source and issue, the bubbling up of the stream. Here, in this very instant moment, up bubbles the stream of time, out of the wells of futurity, flowing on to the oceans of the past. The source, the issue, the creative quick.

Here are Coleridge's fountain, his 'sacred river' and 'lifeless ocean'. The 'dome of pleasure', no longer a permanent, artificial fixture, has become a water-lily or lotus that 'heaves herself from the flood, looks round, gleams, and is gone'. It is no more miraculous than its inherent life. But otherwise the symbol, which for Lawrence suggests both the living moment <u>and</u> art, has become more extreme, no longer reconciling the frightening antinomies of "Kubla Khan", It has been removed from its position 'midway on the waves;/ Where was heard the mingled measure/ From the fountain and the caves'. It now maintains itself in the 'discord and confusion' of the very point where the 'mighty fountain momently was forced'; and this, we recall, is 'A savage place', 'haunted/ By

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1. Adrienne Rich, "Reflections on Lawrence", <u>Poetry</u>, CVI (June 1965), 218-25.

2. For a valuable discussion of Lawrence's philosophy of time, see George Young Trail, "A Prologomena to the Poetry of D.H.Lawrence", Unpublished Ph.D., University of Missouri, Columbia, 1969, pp.83, 96-98.

woman wailing for her demon lover'. It is a place close to the elemental passions and the primitive subconscious. Lawrence calls these subterranean sources 'the wells of futurity', reversing Coleridge's scheme. He implies that knowledge of the future must be derived from its unforeseen issuing in the present, and that knowledge of the past inheres as well in present experience. But the wells are equally the darkness of the creative unknown, on which the flame of the self balances in "All Souls" or the essay "Life".

The reference to Shelley appears to distort even more the context of "To a Skylark". At first, the bird's 'profuse strains of unpremeditated art' may appear to be what "Poetry of the Present" advocates. But Shelley's praise for the lark is severely qualified. Lawrence borrows the lines in which Shelley contrasts the bird's ecstasy with the sadness of the human lot --

> We look before and after,
> And pine for what is not ...

-- in order to show that "To a Skylark" is dedicated to the very visionary humanity, which it seems to disparage. It is the bird's 'ignorance of pain' that lends it a seeming purity of expression, such as belongs, in truth, only to the visionary who conceives of a future state of being beyond mortal suffering:

> Waking or asleep,
> Thou of death must deem
> Things more true and deep
> Than we mortals dream,
> Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

It is not living in the present moment but dreaming of eternity that produces an unalloyed rapture of song. 'The past and the future are the two great bournes of human emotion',[1] and Lawrence accuses Shelley, in his concentration on human perfectibility, of having pressed beyond the

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1. Lawrence echoes as well the definition of man, 'Looking before and after', in Hamlet, IV, iv, 33-39.

bournes to envisage an ideal but lifeless other-world. This vision has a conclusiveness and perfection, which is reflected in the 'exquisite finality' of Shelley's lyrics: it is a 'perfection which belongs to all that is far off'. Dealing only with 'far-off things', he is able to avoid the confusion and inconclusiveness that attaches to the naturalistic representation of life. By contrast, 'Whitman truly looked before and after. But he did not sigh for what is not.' Lawrence's scheme for poetry does not exclude aspiration or nostalgia or even 'recollection in tranquillity'; but these should not go beyond the 'bournes of human emotion'; and art should principally recreate immediately apprehended experience, 'the sheer appreciation of the instant moment, life surging into utterance at the well-head'. D.S.Savage errs, therefore, in complaining that:

> Lawrence was thoroughly inconsistent in professing such ideas as his about "life" and continuing to practise a highly sophisticated form of artistic activity ... Lawrence himself, in the act of setting pen to paper, had already detached himself from this immediate moment of "life" and had, himself "only a hardened bit of the past, the bygone life", under his observation. [1]

Nowhere in "Poetry of the Present" does Lawrence profess anything so patently false about the composition of poetry. He focuses on the impression made by the poem, re-emphasizing, in his symbols for spontaneity and intensity, the Wordsworthian tenet that this impression should be one of freshness and 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings'.[2] The earlier and inferior drafts for Look! We Have Come Through!, preserved by Frieda Lawrence in "Not I, But the Wind...", stand as evidence of the process of revision and consolidation, to which the poems of this period were submitted, in order to evince this immediacy.[3]

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1. D.S.Savage, The Personal Principle: Studies in Modern Poetry, (London: Routledge, 1944), p.143.
2. Wordsworth, "Preface to Lyrical Ballads", Romantic Criticism, ed. Foakes, p.43.
3. Frieda Lawrence, "Not I ...", pp.42, 45-46.

In his very hostility, however, Savage isolates a distinctive element in Lawrence's poetic:

> [Where] the integral artist, unhampered by such a dogmatically fluid attitude to existence, does not feel obliged to restrict himself to one particular isolated moment of experience but allows his mind to range over unlimited complexities of experience, Lawrence restricted his mind to an arbitrarily selected fragment and endeavoured to transfer that directly to his art. Lawrence, exalting 'the insurgent naked throb of the instant moment', 'the seething poetry of the incarnate Now', to repeat his really atrocious jargon, is attempting to take a stand upon the immediate split-second of time in order to disavow all that is eternal, transcendent and absolute. It is because of this that his verse is attached documentally to the particular experience and fails to liberate itself from the circumstances which produced it, to become an integrated entity, a true work of art. It fails to organize itself upon a vertical centre.
>
> How utterly opposed is this attitude to that of the artist proper will appear from contrasting it with T.S.Eliot's description of the poet's mind as ... 'amalgamating disparate experience'. [1]

Lawrence eschews what Savage calls the 'vertical principle', the organization of experience according to an eternal and immutable standard,as an idealization and falsification. His poetry does not superimpose experience upon experience, or a weight of cultural allusion upon a single moment, in order to allow that moment to come freshly before us, revealing its own pattern and order, 'to get the emotion out in its own course'. The impersonality achieved by artistic self-effacement merely distracts attention to the artistry,[2] and enables the writer to set a falsifying distance between himself and his emotions. He loses objectivity on his subjectivity. Lawrence criticized Keats on these grounds. Savage is on the verge of recognizing the formal necessities that underlie Look! We Have Come Through! -- an autobiographical collection in which fragmentary lyrics, of a scrupulous and disturbing realism, are allowed to reveal their intrinsic pattern in sequence, without structur-

1. Savage, Personal Principle, p.143-44.
2. See Gordon, Lawrence as Critic, p.41-43.

ing according to extrinsic precepts.

Nevertheless, there remains, in "Poetry of the Present" as in Look! We Have Come Through!, a tension between transience and permanence, mutability and stability, immanence and transcendence. Lawrence describes the moment --

> The living plasm vibrates unspeakably, it inhales the future, it exhales the past, it is the quick of both, and yet it is neither.

-- as if to confer on it the quality of eternity in the very intensity of its knowledge of transience. The images for the moment -- 'the very white quick of nascent creation' and 'the strands ... all flying, quivering, intermingling into the web, the waters ... shaking the moon' -- interpret and are interpreted by the symbolic patterns of Look! We Have Come Through! In the poem-sequence Lawrence's paradigm for the moment is unashamedly orgastic:

> At last you can throw immortality off, and I see you
> Glistening with all the moment and all your beauty.

The moment is seen again in the glow-worm's 'intense, fusing triumph'. It has, moreover, an immortality of its own, the eternity of the moment which 'Adam spends with his face buried and at peace between the breasts of Eve'.[1] Allowing a lesion in our consciousness of time, the intense moment, of which orgasm is only a type, is axiomatic in Lawrence's metaphysic. The 'primal desire' is 'the desire to achieve a transcendent state of being', a transcendence that comes to pass in the moment when the self is fully achieved.[2] At one point, Lawrence even avers that the transcendent moment is independent of passing time; that the wind of time is illusory, whereas fulfilled life is absolute.[3] But in "Song of a Man Who Has Come Through", it is acknowledged that the self

1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.852.
2. Phoenix, pp.682, 403.
3. Phoenix, p.374-75.

is carried upon the winds of time and finds its transcendent moments in them; necessarily, since the moment is incarnate, and the transcendence is more accurately a discovery of immanence, in the 'primal loam' of the self and the other. Symbols for the achieved self come to incorporate darkness and light: time intermeshes with transcendence in the orgastic moment --

> Listen, the darkness rings
> As it circulates round our fire ...

-- and in the chosen symbol of the achieved self:

> Rose-leaves that whirl in colour round a core
> Of seed-specks kindled lately and softly blown
> By all the blood of the rose-bush into being ...

The rose, the hearth and the moon on the waters, embracing an 'interchange' of darkness and light, are symbolic extensions of the 'glinting web'.

The intense moment contains time, yet transcends time in its quality. It exists at the point where the unknown enters consciousness from 'the wells of futurity'. Achieving it, a man accepts the transient nature of experience, yet attains knowledge of something beyond the world of becoming. Lawrence attempts to convey how both these imperatives co-exist in the 'mystic NOW', a state where:

> we shall love, we shall hate,
> but it will be like music, sheer utterance,
> issuing straight out of the unknown,
> the lightning and the rainbow appearing in us unbidden,
> unchecked,
> like ambassadors.

Like many another testament of what is essentially religious faith, the passage testifies to passionate belief, but communicates little as poetry. Usually Lawrence relegates the expression of fixed aspiration to the field of religious effort, reserving the vicissitudes of experience for art.[1] In The Rainbow it is Lincoln Cathedral that symbolizes religious aspiration. The cathedral ultimately inhibits the self in

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1. See Phoenix, p.447.

its quest for flexible, self-determined fulfilment:

> Here in the church, 'before' and 'after' were folded together, all was contained in oneness ... And there was no time nor life nor death, but only this, this timeless consummation, where the thrust from earth met the thrust from earth and the arch was locked on the keystone of ecstasy.
>
> She wanted to get out of this fixed, leaping, forward-travelling movement, to rise from it as a bird rises with wet, limp feet from the sea ... [to] tear herself away like a bird on wings, and in the open space where there is clarity, rise up above the fixed, surcharged motion, separate speck that hangs suspended, moves this way and that, seeing and answering before it sinks again, having chosen or found the direction in which it shall be carried forward. [1]

The religious symbol of the cathedral falsifies the moment by freezing or locking aspiration 'on the keystone of ecstasy'. The self must escape from or smash old, static symbols of ecstasy. An organic, not an architectural image is needed to express the self seeking fulfilment in the moment; and "Poetry of the Present" corroborates the novel in its choice of a symbol for the self, and for the art that imitates it:

> The bird is on the wing in the winds, flexible to every breath, a living spark in the storm, its very flickering depending upon its supreme mutability and power of change.

Art must be truer to life than religion. It must not only symbolize aspiration towards 'Immortality, the heaven', this being 'only a projection of this strange but actual fulfilment/ here in the flesh'; it must also show the vicissitudes and difficulties of any fulfilment 'here in the flesh', and reveal in the 'incarnate moment' the interaction of time and eternity.

Time and eternity in Look! We Have Come Through! are resolved in the single image of "Moonrise". Sexual connotations are present in the simile of the bride and groom. The moon is the symbol of self-fulfilment, of intense, sensational experience. But, as the dark, interpenetrating waves imply, this aspect of the moon is understood best by

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1. The Rainbow, p.202-04.

looking on its immediately mutable reflection: it is momentary. It only becomes present and supreme, when we accept temporal 'lambent beauty' and an interplay of dualities. Then, acknowledging quickness in the moon's interrelating reflection, we witness:

> Confession of delight upon the wave,
> Littering the wave with her own superscription
> Of bliss, till all her lambent beauty shakes towards us
> Spread out and known at last, and we are sure
> That beauty is a thing beyond the grave,
> That perfect, bright experience never fails
> To nothingness ...

It need come as no surprise that "Moonrise" alludes to the opening lines of Endymion --

> A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
> Its loveliness increases; it will never
> Pass into nothingness ...

-- for Lawrence recognizes in both Keats and Shelley the apprehension of moments of eternal quality. He repudiates, however, their vision of these moments as fleeting glimpses of a static eternity, supposedly existing in the distant past or imagined future, and transcending the human present. There is sufficient evidence in Shelley's Defense of the accuracy of this interpretation. Poetry, for Shelley, 'arrests the vanishing apparitions that haunt the interlunations of life' and 'redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man'.[1] But Lawrence's insights and the example of his poetry constitute a more penetrating critique of Keats's poetry. In the rondeau, "Fancy", Lawrence knew of a parallel for his own fear of the withdrawal of love in "Mutilation":

> At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
> Like to bubbles when rain pelteth ...
> And the enjoying of the Spring
> Fades as does its blossoming;
> Autumn's red-lipped fruitage too,
> Blushing through the mist and dew,
> Cloys with tasting.

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1. Shelley, Complete Works, ed. Ingpen, VII, p.137.

Keats's despair at losing the moment of pleasure has a patently sexual aspect. As Murry pointed out, many of the memorable lines in the odes -- 'And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips/ Bidding adieu' or 'Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes' -- strike a similar chord.[1] His solution to the problem, 'Ever let the Fancy roam', is a license not so much to imagination as to pure fantasy:

> Let, then, winged Fancy find
> Thee a mistress to thy mind:
> Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter,
> Ere the God of Torment taught her
> How to frown and how to chide;
> With a waist and with a side
> White as Hebe's, when her zone
> Slipped its golden clasp, and down
> Fell her kirtle to her feet
> While she held the goblet sweet,
> And Jove grew languid.

In "'Bards of Passion and of Mirth'" fantasy is elevated into the realms of religious speculation: the great poets are imagined in an Elysium, where the sensuous beauty they had known on earth can be appreciated as eternal, philosophic truth. This was for Keats a 'favourite Speculation':

> that we shall enjoy ourselves here after by having what we called happiness on Earth repeated in a finer tone and so repeated -- And yet such a fate can only befall those who delight in sensation rather than hunger as you do after Truth -- Adam's dream will do here and seems to be a conviction that Imagination and its empyreal reflection is the same as human Life and its spiritual repetition. [2]

Seeking to eternize and idealize the moment of pleasure, in what Lawrence recognized as an act of religious aspiration, Keats has, in an interesting anticipation of The Rainbow, frequent recourse to architecture or artefacts for his symbols. In The Eve of St Agnes he pictures 'The carved angels, ever eager-eyed'. The most famous example is the Grecian urn itself. For the figures on the urn, love is:

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1. Murry, Keats and Shakespeare, p.114.
2. Keats, Letters, p.37.

For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
For ever panting, and for ever young --
All breathing human passion far above
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Allen Tate has surmised that his sculptural and 'pictorial method' may derive from 'a compulsive necessity in Keats's experience'.[1] Yet Keats himself perceived the impossibility of entirely snapping the 'Fancy's leash', of disconnecting beauty from actuality and sexual fantasy from the body of a man. For this Lawrence valued him, as indeed he did for his identification of the ideal and the sensual.

In "Poetry of the Present" the Keatsian ideal, represented by the nightingale, 'the voice of the past, rich magnificent', is distinguished from the Shelleyan ideal, represented by the lark, 'the voice of the far future, exquisite and ethereal'. These 'two eternities' correspond to the dual eternities in "The Crown" -- on the one hand the lion, representing the past, the beginning, the flesh, power and darkness, and on the other the unicorn, representing the future, the end, mind and spirit, love and light. Neither eternity alone yields fulfilment: only through pursuit of both can the self achieve consummation in the incarnate moment. Lawrence assigns to Keats 'the road down the senses into the utter darkness'.[2] He has discerned that pursuit of the ideal in Keats's poetry proceeds through the flesh and senses; that the ideal of love is confused or identified with the greatest erotic intensity. This is true of Endymion (I, 777-815), in which the 'chief intensity', arising out of sensuous communion, is at once erotic and spiritual. For Lawrence, pursuit of the sensual ideal is sensationalism or reduction. Anna and Will aspire to this ideal in The Rainbow, when they come religiously to worship the 'Absolute Beauty' in their bodies.[3] In the novel

1. Tate, "A Reading of Keats", Casebook, ed. Fraser, p.157.
2. Phoenix II, p.377.
3. The Rainbow, p.237.

this sexual extremism is linked, through Will's artistic interests, with fin de siècle aestheticism. Keats had called the speech in Endymion 'a kind of Pleasure Thermometer';[1] Lawrence in "The Crown" marked out the gradations on his own scale of intensities:

> [Only] the very powerful and energetic ego can go through all the phases of its violent reduction. The ordinary crude soul, after having enjoyed the brief reduction of sex, is finished there, blasé, empty. And alcohol is slow and crude, and opium only for the imaginative, the somewhat spiritual nature ... So that as the sex is exhausted, gradually, a keener desire, the desire for the touch of death follows on, in an intenser nature. [2]

The final intensity on this 'Pleasure Thermometer' is death; and it is plausible that the 'intenser nature', to whom Lawrence refers, may be, not just an archetypal Romantic or decadent poet, but specifically Keats. Lawrence's 'phases' run like a commentary on the sonnet "'Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art'", in which Keats rejects forms of otherworldly transcendence in favour of a protracted ecstasy of sexual love, 'Awake for ever in a sweet unrest'. But this ecstasy merges into one further intensity, which does seem to be truly eternal: 'And so live ever -- or else swoon to death'. Death is the end of the ladder of ecstasy:

> Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense indeed,
> But Death intenser -- Death is Life's high meed.[3]

Lawrence pounced on Murry's innocuous view of Keats -- 'true acceptance of death ... is acceptance of life, for death is the greatest fact of life'[4] -- as a distortion of Keats and an imbalanced view of life itself:

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1. Keats, Letters, p.59-60.
2. Phoenix II, p.398.
3. Keats, "'Why did I laugh tonight? ...'"
4. Murry, Keats and Shakespeare, p.126.

> Murry's Keats was quite good -- many thanks -- but oh heaven, so die-away -- the text might be: Oh lap up Shakespeare till you've cleaned the dish, and you may hope to swoon with raptures and die an early but beautiful death at 25.
>
> I'm sick to death of this maudlin twaddle and England's rotten with it. Why doesn't somebody finally and loudly say Shit! to it all! [1]

In Keats he detected a striving towards excessive formal beauty that was just one more rung on the ladder of intensities. His own view of death, after some vacillations, is distinctively not Keats's. Death is all around us, in the unknown, and a realization of this can enhance life; but in itself it is merely a passing beyond life, certainly not a consummation. The death extolled in Women in Love and Look! We Have Come Through! is a mystic or psychic death, enabling the renewed appreciation of life. Although the 'road down the senses' can contribute to such death and rebirth, sole pursuit of this road leads solely to death.

Lawrence's view of Keats is partial: he sees only the poet who sought to 'refine [his] sensual vision into a sort of north star which can never cease to be open lidded and stedfast over the wonders of the great Power'.[2] But critics less partisan than Lawrence have found the sensual strain in Keats's sensibility the most instinctive and poetically convincing.[3] Lawrence himself shared Keats's longing for the 'Bright star' of intense experience and for steadfastness. This can be seen in the images of concentrated brightness -- glow-worms, fire-flies and stars -- and of planetary conjunction in Look! We Have Come Through! In "Manifesto" and "The Crown"[4] he goes on to evoke sexual reduction in terms of successive waves of corrosive death and darkness. Lawrence's imagery for reduction suggests that he had understood the inverse, demonic aspect of the refining of sensual vision, as it is revealed in Keats's poetry;

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.865, 17 Nov. 1925.
2. Keats, Letters, p.101.
3. Douglas Bush, "Keats", Critical Essays, ed. Bates, p.15-21.
4. Phoenix II, p.377-78.

that he knew it was not only self-intensifying but 'self-destroying'.[1] In Introduction to These Paintings Keats is dubbed, along with Shelley and the Brontës, a 'post-mortem' poet: 'The essential instinctive-intuitive body is dead, and worshipped in death -- all very unhealthy'.[2]

Reading over this last sentence, one wonders what Lawrence's comment on Keats's Isabella would have been. Doubtless he would have interpreted this novella in verse symbolically, along the lines of his explication of the pornographic element in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre.[3] He would have noted how, through the machinations of the evil, capitalist brothers, Isabella is forced to worship the dead, decaying body of her lover. He would have commented how this derangement seems to be as much the consequence of the intense, feverish spirituality of their early love as of the brothers' intervention. Isabella brings to the fore a conjunction between intensely spiritual, intensely fleshly love and literal physiological decay. This conjunction recurs as a paradigm in other and better of Keats's poems, which Lawrence did know. In The Eve of St Agnes, for instance, superstition and quasi-religious idealization of the beloved bring Porphyro and Madeline together in a sexual union which neither of them recognizes as truly carnal:

> Into her dream he melted, as the rose
> Blendeth its odour with the violet ...

After this moment of spiritual and erotic intensity, they awake, like the lover in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", to a cold, undeceived, post-coital tristesse --'"No dream, alas!"' They flee the castle like romantic lovers, like phantoms, or like the spirit of ideal love forsaking the body. And the castle is left as a symbol of the corrupted body, a composite of nightmares, demons and disease, coffin-worms and corpses. The pattern of fev-

1. See Colin Clarke, River of Dissolution, pp.3-4, 24-28.
2. Phoenix, p.552.
3. Phoenix, pp.174, 176-77.

erish, religious desire, a suspended moment 'All breathing human passion far above', and a scene of desolation, is repeated in the "Ode on a Grecian Urn". Lamia performs a complex variation, with the dissolution (the metamorphosis of the serpent) preceding the intensity, as if to avert its consequences.

The paradigm of erotic idealization in Keats, followed by a sense of literal, physical decay, can be compared with the succession of events in Shelley's "The Sensitive Plant". The Plant's intense desire for love is rewarded by a time of spiritual union, symbolized as the mingling of scents; then, when the beloved object has passed away, autumnal disintegration sets in. Shelley's Conclusion is that the dissolution which succeeds idealization is unreal, a mere illusion of the senses:

> For love, and beauty, and delight,
> There is no death nor change: their might
> Exceeds our organs, which endure
> No light, being themselves obscure.

But for Keats that painful decay and the awakening 'On the cold hillside' were fundamental realities. They could be tested on the pulses. This contrast lies behind Lawrence's acute comparison of the two:

> .. the English delight in landscape is a delight in escape. It is always the same. The northern races are so innerly afraid of their own bodily existence, which they believe fantastically to be an evil thing ... that all they cry for is escape.
>
> It is easy in literature. Shelley is pure escape: the body is sublimated into sublime gas. Keats is more difficult -- the body can still be felt dissolving in waves of successive death -- but the death-business is very satisfactory. [1]

Lawrence betrays his critical sensitivity for the purposes of his polemic in that last clause. The 'death-business' is not wholly satisfactory to Keats, inasmuch as it is not only an ultimate intensity of experience, but also an actual, physical disintegration. These conflicting and int-

1. Phoenix, p.561-62.

eracting themes, of intensification and dissolution, have been separated by a close attention to Lawrence's critical responsiveness to Keats. Probably Lawrence himself principally derived them from, and applied them to, the "Ode to a Nightingale". In conclusion, it becomes possible to re-construct a more nearly complete, Laurentian reading of the ode than is found in his essay, "The Nightingale".

Keats is attracted to the bird and recognizes its 'immortality', because it expresses in its song its own complete self, its consummate being in the present.[1] There is evidence that Keats did recognize in animals an instinctive purposefulness and pure energy which was equivalent to the intense beauty, and hence the eternal quality, humanly expressed in art.[2] Where in Laurentian terms Keats errs is in attempting to fix the bird's song, to suspend and extend it over realms of time and space and experience, with which the bird, singing blithely in its incarnate moment, has no connection. The nightingale's song, intensely appreciated, becomes a symbol for other intensities -- for the aesthetic pleasure of poetry, for sexual love, and ultimately for death. The poet is attracted by this beauty and tries to identify with the bird, to fade with it into the forest. But immediately he attempts to do so, he is aware of an aching dissolution, 'as though of hemlock I had drunk'. To forget the body's life, or to extinguish it by an act of the imagination, is a painful process. In his present life the poet is beset by sickness and death, 'Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;/ ... Where youth grows pale and spectre-thin and dies'. He is tempted to escape the real world into an ideal fantasy-world, but he also remembers the inevitable end of such an escape. He does defiantly 'fly to thee', to the Queen-Moon and 'all her starry Fays', but this Endymion-

1. Phoenix, p.43.
2. Keats, Letters, p.229-30.

like aspiration is accompanied by a simultaneous descent through a deathly underworld. The poet feels himself approaching the richest intensity, Death, which is now doubly attractive, promising 'easeful' escape from a world of suffering and disease. Nevertheless, he has never been more than 'half in love' with death, having borne in mind the time when:

> Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain --
> To thy high requiem become a sod.

This is the great sadness of the "Ode", that Keats endures not only a process of dissolution, but of disillusion. He is constantly aware 'the fancy cannot cheat so well/ As she is famed to do'. The value Lawrence placed on the "Ode", and the understanding he reaped from its simultaneous revelation of aspiring intensification and descending dissolution, can be assessed by turning to Birds, Beasts and Flowers, to "Medlars and Sorb-Apples" and "Grapes", where once again 'the body can be felt dissolving in waves of successive death'.

> The final aim of every living thing, creature, or being is the full achievement of itself. 1

> Love is, that I go to a woman to know myself, and knowing myself, to go further, to explore in to the unknown, which is the woman, venture in upon the coasts of the unknown, and open my discovery to all humanity. 2

Bearing the epigraphs in mind, it might be said that the predominant theme in Look! We Have Come Through! is not marriage, nor the apocalyptic cycles of renewal, nor the incarnate moment, but the education of the intrinsic self, in contact with the unknown. The sequence's cycles of travail and coming through permit a penetration towards, and a maturation of, this self. The transcendency and the 'incarnate moment' are those times when an individual fully achieves this self. Ursula Brangwen stumbled intuitively upon knowledge of this, while examining single-celled organisms in a botany lesson:

> For what purpose were the incalculable physical and chemical activities nodalized in this shadowy, moving speck under her microscope? ... It intended to be itself. But what self? Suddenly in her mind the world gleamed strangely, with an intense light, like the nucleus of the creature under the microscope ... She only knew that it was not limited mechanical energy, nor mere purpose of self-preservation and self-assertion. It was a consummation, a being infinite, Self was a oneness with the infinite. To be oneself was a supreme, gleaming triumph of infinity. 3

Although Ursula achieved intellectual knowledge of the purpose of life in this revelation, it was a long time, and another novel, before she won through to full being in her own life. This intrinsic self cannot be accomplished through introspection and obedience to the command 'Know Thyself'; it requires active involvement with the human world and the

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1. Phoenix, p.403.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.318, 12 Feb. 1915.
3. The Rainbow, p.441.

phenomenal universe. As the poet discovers, a 'heave of effort/ At starting another life, fulfilled my own'. In "Humiliation" he feels keenly 'The burden of self-accomplishment!/ The charge of fulfilment'; and finds, to his chagrin, that his sense of his own identity and his potential for fulfilment depend on the woman to whom he has committed himself. Self-achievement through relationship forestalls egoism; for the self can only be fulfilled by a balanced 'conjunction' with another self, similarly fulfilled.

Upon completion of Look! We Have Come Through!, Lawrence was reluctant to submit the manuscript for publication, feeling 'bitterly passionate and tender about it'.[1] It was, indeed, a most self-revealing testament. Lawrence had pitted himself against what he regarded as 'showing off' in modern poetry—'something empty and noisy, as if ... to attract attention'[2] — and what he called 'posturing' in Amy Lowell's verse:

> If it doesn't come out of your own heart, real Amy Lowell, it is no good, however many colours it may have. I wish one saw more of your genuine strong, sound self in this book, full of common sense and kindness and the restrained, almost bitter, puritan passion. Why do you deny the bitterness in your nature, when you write poetry? Why do you take a pose? It causes you always to shirk your issues, and find a banal resolution in the end ... I hate to see you posturing when there is thereby a real person betrayed in you. [3]

Lawrence's attack is incisive. A person's true self is unexpectedly complex, unsentimental and uncompromising, much more so than an imagined self. Writing from this self may not be easy; it is an act of pitiless self-exposure, and may require the violation of traditional literary values, like 'resolution', or fashionable ones, like the Imagist predilection for colours. But unless one writes from this true self, a

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1. Letters, ed. Huxley, p.398, 18 Feb. 1917.
2. Letters, ed. Huxley, p.399, 28 Feb. 1917.
3. Damon, Amy Lowell, p.277-79, 18 Nov. 1914.

reader detects a manipulation, as if to project an untrue self. The nineteenth-century valuation of sincerity is taken a characteristic one step further. For Lawrence it becomes impossible to write, in poetry especially, without dealing directly with what is uppermost in the mind, or more importantly, without penetrating and confronting the fears and imperatives of the instinctual self. Accordingly, it becomes impossible to write without a contemporaneous effort in life to fulfil this self. He bypasses the dilemma of perfection of the life or of the work as a mistake. Devotion to art, in exclusion of life, merely deracinates the art. As for a man's life, 'that piece of supreme art':

> I see Van Gogh so sadly ...[He] said, do you remember -- about 'in the midst of an artistic life the yearning for the real life remains' -- -- [He should] have known a great humanity, where to live one's animal would be to create oneself, <u>in fact, be the artist creating a man in living fact</u> (not like Christ, as he wrongly said) -- and where the art was the final expression of the created animal or man -- not the be-all and being of man -- but the end, the climax. [1]

Drawn by the identification of life and art, sympathetic critics have been rather awed by Lawrence's painful capacity for truthfulness.[2] Richard Hoggart singled out what is at once brave and valuable in this truthfulness, with his praise of 'how much Lawrence forced himself to be <u>exposed</u> to his experiences, how consistently he refused to accept the second-rate compromise or the comfortable near-truth'.[3] As far as such things may be judged, there is as well a convincing timbre of honesty, an absence of braggadocio and a willingness to accept multiplicity and confusion, in the sexual poems. Adrienne Rich is just in her praise of Lawrence's 'rejection of the blandishments of false consistency, of turn-

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1. <u>Letters</u>, ed. Moore, p.327, [?1 March 1915].
2. <u>E.g.</u>, R.L.Mégroz, "D.H.Lawrence", <u>The Post-Victorians</u>, ed. R.W.Inge, (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1933), p.326; Frieda Lawrence, "<u>Not I ...</u>", p.52.
3. Richard Hoggart, "Lawrence's Voices", <u>Listener</u>, LXXII (29/10/64), 673-74. <u>Cf.</u> <u>Letters</u>, ed. Moore, p.286, 2 June 1914.

ing a good face to the world'.[1] Neither does he turn a contrivedly Satanic face to the world; his aim is redemption of the self, and the reader himself judges what 'blessedness' the lovers have achieved. Nevertheless, there should be conceded a certain thinness in the volume, making one aware of Lawrence as only a part-time poet. The speed with which the random and confused emotions of bereavement and love, represented in the introductory lyrics of Look! We Have Come Through!, are reduced to the analytical order of the later poems in the sequence, is a little disappointing. Yet even in the discursive verse-essays no hardening of concepts or complacency can be complained of.

For many of Lawrence's contemporaries, his style of earnest self-exposure proved too novel or embarrassing. It shocked in particular the sensibilities of the Times Literary Supplement reviewer. Citing "The Sea" and "Martyr à la Mode", and selecting quotations from "Mutilation" and "She Looks Back", he complained, justly on the grounds of his selections, of an excessive violence of expression, 'an unbridled loquacity' giving vent to 'quasi-tragic despairs'. To call the whole sequence, however, 'an excited morbid babble about one's own emotions which the Muse of poetry surely can only turn from with a pained distaste', betrayed more hysterical repudiation in the reviewer himself than balanced critical insight.[2] Lawrence reacted, in his own turn, with restrained irony. 'Poor Muse', he commiserated, 'I feel as if I had affronted a white-haired old spinster with weak eyes'.[3] As long as he offended contemporary taste, Lawrence could be certain that his insights were more than commonplace. In fact, the violent expression of the sequence is one of the characteristics of its tradition, which, as Kenneth Rexroth has suggested,[4] extends as far back as The Confessions of St Augustine. The

1. Poetry, CVI (June 1965), p.222.
2. TLS, No.827 (22 Nov. 1917), p.571.
3. Damon, Amy Lowell, p.438, 13 Dec. 1917.
4. Selected Poems, ed. Rexroth, p.4-5.

tendency of Christian spiritual autobiography, according to M.H.Abrams, is to internalize John's Apocalypse as a psychological metaphor. Especially in Augustine's Confessions, the experience:

> is one of chiaroscuro, discontinuity and sudden reversals, of 'two wills' locked in internecine conflict -- Armageddon translated into psychomachia -- and of savage, persistent and self-destructive suffering which culminates in the abrupt interposition of God to effect, at a specific point in time (Augustine's phrases are punctum ipsum temporis, confestim, statim), a new identity, described metaphorically as the end of the old creature and the beginning of the new: 'dying unto death and living unto life'. [1]

Inverting the roles of the flesh and the spirit, Lawrence's theme is the same 'hesitating to die to death and to live to life'.[2] He draws on and transvalues the metaphors, paradigms and psychic experiences of this long Christian tradition, to explore his own sexual autobiography. If anything, he falls short of the spiritual violence of Book VIII of The Confessions.

Lawrence's adoption of the form of the religious confession as a framework for a poem on the education of the self is as completely Romantic as his religious attitude of preservation-through-iconoclasm. The Prelude recollects the growth of a poet's mind, the hero being the imagination. Look! We Have Come Through! records the progression of a young man to balanced, sensitive manhood, the hero being sexuality. Both protagonists receive revelations of darkness and intense brightness: these are important stations along the road of their unfinished pilgrimages. Wordsworth learned morality from vernal woods; Lawrence's poetry induces a similar impression of openness to experience, of having derived its order from the order inherent in the life recorded. In Look! We Have Come Through! this sense of natural symmetry deepens from the experiential confusion of the lyrics to the analytical order of the verse-essays. This corresponds to a progression from an autobiographical

1. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.48.
2. The Confessions of St Augustine, Book VIII, 25.

figure, moving through a readily recognizable landscape, to an obscure and abstract self, existing in landscapes which are metaphors for various psychic states, symbolized with difficulty in terms of violent antimonies, death and life, light and dark, and vast natural forces. This progression, which had been foreshadowed in "Snap-Dragon" and "Love on the Farm", is a transition, in Laurentian terms, from personality to impersonality, from the conscious to the subconscious self. By recapitulating the sequence's plot, it can be seen how this transition comes about, and how the poetry copes with the formal demands made by the transformation.

Look! We Have Come Through! begins, in "Elegy", with the self debilitated by the mother's death. The poet is alienated from the corporeal world, and endures the same feeling of 'disseminated consciousness' as had terrified him in "Repulsed" and "Dolour of Autumn". The barrier between his own identity and a great collective self, of death and the unknown powers, is slight. Yet his communion with the phenomenal world is not enhanced by his knowledge of this unknown. The night seems empty, the daytime grey with a 'fritter of flowers'; only beyond 'the bounds' of the stars lingers the attraction of dark mystery. Relationship painfully restores a sense of the self, making new demands upon him. In "First Morning" he learns that the woman and he share the potential to renew the phenomenal world through their love, virtually to recreate it by refreshing their own wonder:

> The mountains are balanced,
> The dandelion seeds stay half-submerged in the grass;
> You and I together
> We hold them proud and blithe
> On our love.
> They stand upright on our love,
> Everything starts from us,
> We are the source.

In "Frohnleichnam" the reverse is true. Spring and morning reveal a phenomenal world that has its own powers of rejuvenation. By identifying

with the regeneration of life in the external world, the man and woman find a greater beauty in their love, extending beyond the sense they had of themselves. Lawrence strikes immediately to the heart of the pathetic fallacy, 'setting behind the action of his protagonists the terrific action of unfathomed nature'.[1] The metaphysics of the question do not concern him: since it seems at the peak of sexual love, we make contact with, renew and are renewed by the forces of 'unfathomed nature', it is so. The feeling is not fallacious but intuitive. Yet this felt alliance between the sexual and phenomenal world is open to abuse. On the one hand, the landscape might be reduced to a metaphor for sexuality, with no independent reality; on the other, a poet might escape into endless Wordsworthian landscapes, ignoring the human problems in the foreground.

The problem of imbalance is confronted in "In the Dark". The man divulges how:

> "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."
>
> "<u>But I am myself, I have nothing to do with these</u>."
> "Come back to bed, let us sleep on our mysteries.
>
> "Come to me here, and lay your body by mine,
> And I will be all the shadow, you the shine.
>
> "Come, you are cold, the night has frightened you.
> Hark at the river! It pants as it hurries through
>
> "The pine-woods. How I love them so, in their mystery of
> not-to-be."
> "-- <u>But let me be myself, not a river or a tree</u>."

It is appropriate that a poem about the subject/object balance should be cast in the form of a lovers' debate. As in "Elegy" and "Nonentity", the man is too ready to surrender his identity to universal forces and powers of darkness. The sense of power he gains by allying himself with the 'mystery of not-to-be' seems spurious and a little egoistic. The woman, by contrast, insists on the integrity of the self, and her anxiety to deny the dark powers suggests a repression of her own sub-

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1. <u>Phoenix</u>, p.419.

conscious. She believes herself to have 'nothing to do' with universal forces, but in fact she struggles against them, 'As if a bird in difficulty up the valley steers'. It is possible, however, through sexual interaction the lovers will mutually discover the natural, quick interchange between these two principles, of self and not-self. Tenderness as well as sex contributes to this balance. The man enjoins the woman to a sleep, that is a lapsing into unconsciousness, yet shows tolerance for her conscious, contained self. "In the Dark" does not simply probe a literary distinction, about the nature of the pathetic fallacy, the force which a natural metaphor can carry, or the extent to which the natural scene can be used to hint at sexuality. Lawrence has little use for such symbolism; he feels he can tell us that directly. The poem considers how an individual's sense of himself can be fallacious, too inclusive or too exclusive, too primly conscious or too atavistically pre-conscious, and how this can disturb his human relationships and his awareness of the phenomenal world. The poem makes the subject/object dichotomy a living problem. It shows the organic connection between our intercourse with our fellows and the ways in which, religiously and metaphysically, we look at the world. The polarity between the self and the phenomenal universe affects what passes between the lovers; and similarly, until the lovers can strike a true, quick balance between their intrinsic selves, in contact with the unknown, their view of the phenomenal universe is distorted.

Learning from the pain of intimacy, the woman recognizes, in "A Young Wife", dark forces she had previously refused to acknowledge. The man proclaims in "I Am Like a Rose" how the woman has given him confidence in his physical self:

> I am myself at last: now I achieve
> My very self. I, with the wonder mellow,
> Full of fine warmth, I issue forth in clear
> And single me, perfected from my fellow.

This new self asserts its own being, yet is sensitive to powers beyond itself; metaphorically, it combines both light and darkness like the smoking flame of a rose. Matching these self-discoveries, the lovers find the beauty of the phenomenal world enhanced in "River Roses"; but even this beauty fades before the 'glimmering/fear' and ecstasy of love-making. In "Roses on the Breakfast Table" the lovers admire the roses, but spend most of their attention on each other. This reverses a scene, noticed by Lawrence in Jude the Obscure, in which Hardy's lovers find beauty in the roses at a flower-show:

> The roses, how the roses glowed for them! The flowers had more being than either he or she. But as their ecstasy over things sank a little, they felt, the pair of them, as if they themselves were wanting in real body, as if they were too insubstantial ...
>
> But they had their own form of happiness, nevertheless, this trembling on the verge of ecstasy, when, the senses strangely roused to the service of the consciousness, the things they contemplated took flaming being, became flaming symbols of their own emotions to them.
>
> So that the real marriage of Jude and Sue was in the roses. Then, in the third state, in the spirit, these two beings met upon the roses and in the roses were symbolized in consummation ...
>
> They went home tremblingly glad. And then the horror when, because of Jude's unsatisfaction, he must take Sue sexually. [1]

Excessive, 'aesthetic' love of beauty in the phenomenal world, an 'ecstasy over things', may indicate a lack of certainty in the self, especially the physical self. Sue and Jude transfer all their sexual feeling into what they sense is the consummate being of the rose, because they lack the confidence to consummate their own physical selves. Their awareness of beauty in this external thing is disproportionate; they would find it no more beautiful than themselves, if they were sexually fulfilled; yet they falsify the rose itself, and themselves, by making it not simply a symbol, but a substitute for experience. An excessive reliance on symbols or natural descriptions, which have

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1. Phoenix, p.506-07.

instilled into them an intensity of feeling out of proportion to their human significance -- such as Lawrence found in Keats's poetry -- these are modes of composition which, for Lawrence, spring from and nurture unbalanced attitudes to life. In his own poetry he needed to develop a mode of expression, beyond either the confessional cultivation of the self or the effacement of the self through symbolism, that would faithfully reflect a sane balance between the self and the sexual other, and the self and the phenomenal world.

This dual, stereocentric polarity reappears in "Song of a Man Who Is Loved", where the poet admits:

> Having known the world so long, I have never confessed
> How it impresses me, how hard and compressed
> Rocks seem, and earth ...

The reality of the physical world, with its unrelenting consistency, can seem, in emotional defiance of Cartesian logic, to outweigh the reality of the consciousness that apprehends it. The self develops its sense of identity, and its emotional security, through interaction with all that is external to it. Sexuality, that confirms the self's joyous energy and physical presence, both defines the self's limitations and consolidates its knowledge of otherness:

> I am that I am, and no more than that: but so much
> I am, nor will I be bounced out of it. So at last I touch
> All that I am-not in softness, sweet softness, for she
> is such.

Supported thus, the self can sustain an interaction with the world and its unknown forces. Unsupported, it will see the world as a frightening chaos, like the gadfly of "Song of a Man Who Is Not Loved", dimly blown in the storm. Focused brightly in "Song of a Man Who Has Come Through", 'Like a fine, an exquisite chisel', the self creates order in chaos. It isolates the 'fine wind [that] is blowing the new direction of Time', and sustains a vivifying interaction with the unknown. The image of

flux becomes benign in interaction with the image of concentrated brightness. As M.L.Rosenthal has suggested, although this poem is replete with sexual overtones, it can also be read as an internal duologue, the third stanza representing 'the more timid side of the protagonist', and the fourth 'his self-correcting courage'.[1] The final voice speaks a Shelleyan exhortation: surrender self-possession; abnegate and submit the self to the unknown: 'Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!'. Like other religious creeds, Lawrence's is an intervolved system. It is difficult to believe unless one has faith; to have faith, one must believe. It is difficult to give way to the unknown unless one has achieved full, confident being; but to achieve being, one must have given way to the unknown.

This is the nub of Lawrence's conception of the self: to ensure its maturation and renewal, the self must surrender its autonomy to crises of death-like intensity. Like Keats on the steps of Moneta's temple, and like Augustine in the garden of his villa, the self must be prepared to die into life. In preparation for this final trial, it must be willing to accept (in "Both Sides of the Medal" and "Lady Wife") division and conflict within its own boundaries. To hold the self back from these crises produces the massive, social solipsism of "New Heaven and Earth", a perfectly stable universe in which birth and death have become stale negations. It produces a trance of horror in which the self can find no respite or oblivion, and no limitations to its omnipresence:

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1. Rosenthal, Modern Poets, p.165.

I was a lover, I kissed the woman I loved,
and God of horror, I was kissing also myself.
I was a father and a begetter of children,
and oh, horror, I was begetting and conceiving
in my own body.

At last came death, sufficiency of death,
and that at last relieved me, I died.
I buried my beloved; it was good. I buried myself and was gone.
War came, and every hand raised to murder; ...
It is good, I can murder and murder, and see
them fall,
the mutilated, horror-struck youths ...

This, for Lawrence, is the end-product of the personal psyche, that has refused to undergo the recognitions and crises of the quest for impersonality.

Neither does he mitigate the trials of educating an impersonal self, cognizant of otherness and the unknown. In "Manifesto" he depicts the world of that self, a bare, craggy landscape or a region of shattering, meteorological turbulence. It is like the flight of Keats's 'steeds jet-black' in Book IV of Endymion, or Gerard Manley Hopkins's mindscape:

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small
Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! creep,
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all
Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

Lawrence's realm of impersonality is defined in terms of life and death, being and extinction, pure abstractions and basic physical drives. The language for the most part has the 'stony directness' of statement, though occasionally resorting to religious symbolism -- a Manichaean dichotomy of devils and angels -- and to the terminology of the abstract sciences, astronomy, chemistry and physics. It presses towards a physiological, immanent ontology. For all the importance assigned to the otherness, this "Manifesto" of the impersonal self creates a private universe of religious abstraction, in which the 'simple, sensuous and

passionate' embodiments of poetry cannot be readily sustained.

Born into a generation when the depth psychology of Freud and Jung first became accessible to the literary imagination, and raised in a culture whose religious tradition emphasized conscience and the inner light, Lawrence felt a duty as novelist and poet, to give expression to the intrinsic soul and subconscious self. In the letter to Ernest Collings, usually cited as a crude illustration of Lawrence's anti-Victorian, anti-rational 'belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect', he pinpoints the increasingly focused region of his interest:

> I conceive a man's body as a kind of flame, like a candle flame, forever upright and yet flowing: and the intellect is just the light that is shed on to the things around. And I am not so much concerned with the things around -- which is really mind -- but with the mystery of the flame forever flowing, coming God knows how from out of practically nowhere, and being itself, whatever there is around it, that it lights up ... [Instead] of chasing the mystery in the fugitive, half-lighted things outside us, we ought to look at ourselves, and say 'My God, I am myself!' [1]

Lawrence's depreciation here of the object for the subject anticipates the direction in which his poem-sequence probes. The vivid, external scenes of the earlier novels and poetry are seen as a flight into what can be mentally known, as an evasion of the difficult problem of expressing what it is to be. At the same time Lawrence does not deny that he is surrounded by other selves than his own, in the human and natural worlds, and that his art must express their being. With Edward Garnett he expostulates on the need for a dramatic character to have 'internal form, an internal self'. 'In your work', he complains, 'women seem not to have an existence, save they are projections of the men'.[2]

1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.180, 17 Jan. 1913. This extract conveys an additional level of meaning to the single image of "Moonrise".
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.170, [Autumn 1912].

The letters trace his deepening preoccupation with the self, as it leads towards the abstraction and religious terminology of "Manifesto":

> I cannot help being very much interested in God and the devil -- particularly the devil -- and in immortality. I cannot help writing about them in the 'philosophy'. But all the time I am struggling in the dark -- very deep in the dark -- and cut off from everybody and everything. Sometimes I seem to stumble into the light, for a day, or even two days -- then in I plunge again, God knows where and into what utter darkness of chaos. I don't mind very much. But sometimes I am afraid of the terrible things that are real, in the darkness, and of the entire unreality of these things I see. It becomes like a madness at last, to know one is all the time walking in a pale assembly of an unreal world -- this house, this furniture, the sky and the earth -- whilst oneself is all the while a piece of darkness pulsating in shocks, and the shocks and the darkness are real. [1]

In "Manifesto" 'darkness pulsating in shocks' represents the trial of self-revelation of 'the mystic NOW'. This process of Keatsian dissolution is a stage in the quest for transcendence of the candle-like, physical self. It also conveys the distress of a man at grips with his subconscious self, for whom loss of contact with a substantial environment -- the 'walking in a pale assembly of an unreal world' -- has conjured up bitter memories of bereavement. The psychological distress entailed in Lawrence's voyage of self-discovery adds a poignancy to his claim, 'I shall find my deepest desire to be a wish for pure, unadulterated relationship with the universe, for truth in being'.[2] Although consolation was at hand in the sensuous communion he could enjoy with the phenomenal world, this was no longer an adequate relationship. For 'truth in being' Lawrence had to find some means of penetrating depths of the object equivalent to those he had sounded in the subject, in his own self.

A false subject/object polarity presented itself to him, through the literary fashion of his day, in the form of Imagism. The

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.329-30, [?15 March 1915].
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.467, 16 July 1916.

Imagists' concern for objectivity and for presentation in sensational terms fascinated Lawrence more as a psychic phenomenon than as an actual, poetic modus operandi:

> It is very surprising to me, now I have come to understand you Americans a little, to realize how much older you are than us, how much further you and your art are really developed, outstripping us by far in decadence and non-emotional aestheticism, how much beyond us you are in the last stages of human apprehension of the physico-sensational world, apprehension of things non-human, not conceptual. We still see with concepts. But you, in the last stages of return, have gone beyond tragedy, even beyond irony, and have come to the pure mechanical stage of physical apprehension, the human unit almost lost, the primary elemental forces, kinetic, dynamic -- prismatic, tonic, the great, massive, active, inorganic world, elemental, never softened by life, that hard universe of Matter and Force where life is not yet known, come to pass again. It is strange and wonderful. I find it only in you and H.D., in English ... Of course, it seems to me this is a real cul de sac of art. You can't get any further than
>
> 'Streaks of green & yellow iridescence
> Silver shiftings
> Rings veering out of rings
> Silver -- gold --
> Grey-green opaqueness sliding down'
>
> You see it is uttering pure sensation without concepts ... 1

It must have seemed to Lawrence no accident that Amy Lowell became Keats's biographer; for in her poetry and in Imagism he found that the worship of absolute beauty and the decadent 'ecstasy over things', which he had detected in Keats, had been carried one stage further into 'pure sensation without concepts'. Imagists inhabit that overwhelming 'hard universe of Matter and Force', which had been feared by the protagonist of "Song of a Man Who Is Loved", before he came to assert his own self and to recognize otherness. It is not only concepts that fail to intervene between these poets' sensations and their poetry, but any softening life from their intrinsic selves. Lawrence associates Imagism with an extreme effacement of the physical self before the object, suggestive of sexual imbalance, and with the psychic trauma of the Great War.

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1. Damon, Amy Lowell, p.387-88, 14 Nov. 1916.

The War made Lawrence himself aware of 'the amazing, vivid, visionary beauty of everything, heightened by the immense pain everywhere'.[1] In a short story, "The Thimble", he combined traits of introspective sensationalism, neurasthenic spirituality, sexual coldness and rigid self-possession in the portrait of a woman waiting for her disfigured husband to return from the trenches. All she can remember of her husband is a visual image:

> She could remember him with peculiar distinctness, as if the whole of his body were lit up with an intense light, and the image fixed on her mind. 2

Lawrence stresses the mechanical inflexibility of the woman's ways of seeing, and of relating to her husband:

> She sat obsessed, as if his disfigurement were photographed upon her mind, as if she were some sensitive medium to which the thing had been transferred. 3

To rid herself of the idée fixe of the husband's disfigurement, the woman must sacrifice this mode of perception and destroy her whole conception of herself. Paradoxically, because of what Lawrence would term the extreme decadence of his character's (or of Amy Lowell's) vision, collapse and regeneration seem imminent.

Kenneth Rexroth makes an aggressive but perceptive distinction between the Imagist verse of H.D. and Lawrence's poetry:

> The conflict in H.D. is hidden in herself. It is still there to this day, although her latest prose work has been the journal of a Freudian analysis. Her images are purified of conflict, then the intensity which has been distilled from the sublimation of conflict is applied from the outside ... What results is a puzzling hallucination of fact, a contentless mood which seems to reflect something tremendously important but whose mystery retreats before analysis.

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1. Cf. Letters, ed. Moore, p.310, [?31 Jan. 1915].
2. Phoenix II, p.54.
3. Phoenix II, p.59.

'Bad poetry', Rexroth goes on to say, suffers from 'synthetic hallucination and artifice'. True poetry 'is vision, the pure act of sensual communion and contemplation'.[1] Whereas H.D. writes out of a conflict within the self, transfiguring the object with an intensity of feeling that betokens a lack of resolution in the subject, Lawrence writes directly of a self resolving its conflicts, and hence establishing a balanced communion with the object. Certainly Lawrence did not seem ruffled by H.D.'s criticism of the manuscript of Look! We Have Come Through! -- that the poems were 'not eternal, not sublimated: too much body and emotions'.[2] He accepted their differences as poets, and without doubt appreciated the significance of H.D.'s demand for sublimation. He thought of Imagism of a manifestation of his age, and of a type of personality perhaps peculiar to his age. His own art aimed rather to comprehend the age than to be comprehended by it. "Frost Flowers" -- which he at one stage considered making the titular poem of the sequence[3] -- is Lawrence's most Imagist poem, because it is the poem in which he comprehends Imagism. His comparing the faces of the young women in the London crowd to --

> .. lavender crocuses, snowdrops ... Roman hyacinths,
> scyllas and yellow-haired hellebore, jonquils, dim
> anemones,
> even the sulphur auriculas,
> flowers that come first from the darkness, and feel
> cold to the touch ...

-- can itself be compared to Pound's prototype for Imagist poetry, the haiku "In a Station of the Metro":

> The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
> Petals on a wet, black bough.

Once, Lawrence recalls:

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1. Selected Poems, ed. Rexroth, pp.9-10, 11.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.505, [?9 March 1917].
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.531, [?3 Nov. 1917].

> [I] should have stood aside and made them way
> thinking that they, perhaps,
> had more right than I -- for who was I?

Now he senses in the radiance of their beauty an excessive, reductive intensity.[1] They have, in "Craving for Spring", that 'exquisite finality' that belongs to an arrested process of generation. Their beauty is not the spontaneous welling up of spring, but the false, sublimated radiance of the last corruption of winter, 'a loveliness I loathe'. He wonders 'what kind of ice-rotten, hot-aching heart must they need to root in!'

Lawrence rejected Imagism, though he had at the time no aesthetic to put in its place. After meeting with the Imagists in 1914, he had come away convinced of 'all the understanding and suffering and pure intelligence necessary for the simple perceiving of poetry'.[2] The stress laid on the schooling of an intelligence anticipates the subjective direction of Look! We Have Come Through! But Lawrence further realized that out of the penetrated depths of the self would have to come a new mode of perception of the object in depth, and that this 'simple perceiving' would in itself virtually constitute his new poetic act. At last in 1915 he made the breakthrough intellectually as to what this new perception might be, what its provenance was and what metaphors attached to it. The letter of explanation seems at first eccentric: its full context deserves quotation to establish the connections with his prior thinking and his poetry to come:

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1. Cf. Phoenix II, p.388.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.288, 31 July 1914.

I have been reading Frazer's Golden Bough and Totemism and Exogamy. Now I am convinced of what I believed when I was about twenty - that there is another seat of consciousness than the brain and the nerve system: there is a blood-consciousness which exists in us independently of the ordinary mental consciousness, which depends on the eye as its source or connector. There is the blood-consciousness, with the sexual connection holding the same relation as the eye, in seeing, holds to the mental consciousness. One lives, knows, and has one's being in the blood, without any reference to nerves and brain. This is one half of life, belonging to the darkness. And the tragedy of this our life, and of your life, is that the mental and nerve consciousness exerts a tyranny over the blood-consciousness and that your will has gone completely over to the mental consciousness, and is engaged in the destruction of your blood-being or blood-consciousness, the final liberating of the one, which is only death in result. Plato was the same. Now it is necessary for us to realise that there is this other great half of our life active in the darkness, the blood-relationship: that when I see, there is a connection between my mental-consciousness and an outside body, forming a percept; but at the same time, there is a transmission through the darkness which is never absent from the light, into my blood-consciousness: but in seeing, the blood-percept is perhaps not strong. On the other hand, when I take a woman, then the blood percept is supreme, my blood-knowing is overwhelming. There is a transmission, I don't know of what, between her blood and mine, in the act of connection. So that afterwards, even if she goes away, the blood-consciousness persists between us, when the mental consciousness is suspended; and I am formed then by my blood-consciousness, not by my mind or nerves at all.

Similarly in the transmission from the blood of the mother to the embryo in the womb, there goes the whole blood consciousness. And when they say a mental image is sometimes transmitted from the mother to the embryo, this is not the mental image, but the blood-image. All living things, even plants, have a blood-being. If a lizard falls on the breast of a pregnant woman, then the blood-being of the lizard passes with a shock into the blood-being of the woman, and is transferred to the foetus, probably without intervention either of nerve or brain consciousness. And this is the origin of totem: and for this reason some tribes no doubt really were kangaroos: they contained the blood-knowledge of the kangaroo.— And blood knowledge comes either through the mother or through the sex — so that dreams at puberty are as good an origin of the totem as the percept of a pregnant woman. [1]

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.393-94, 8 Dec. 1915.

The new mode of perception is the 'blood-percept', and the organizing seat of consciousness is the blood, that same physical self whose being, Lawrence had told Ernest Collings, was the greatest reality, and whose nature he had set out to explore in Look! We Have Come Through! Lawrence divides consciousness into blood-consciousness and the intelligence of the nerves and brain, a dichotomy reflecting the physiological distinction between the autonomic nervous system and the parasympathetic system of hormonal secretions. Despite the literalness which Lawrence, on occasion, attached to his subjective physiological meditations, the distinction between blood- and nerve-consciousness is best considered as an intuitive and even metaphoric one. Blood-consciousness is allied with the non-visual senses, especially with touch and the organic sensations of sexuality, and with basic instincts and drives. Metaphorically, it is linked with darkness, with the dark and hidden side of our knowledge which has been tyrannized by mental consciousness. But perhaps in some primitive peoples it is still prevalent; they can perceive the 'blood-being' of the objective world around them. 'All living things, even plants, have a blood-being.' Totemic tribes perceive the blood-being of their totem animal, or the mana of the living universe; and in doing so, they perceive a suggestive depth in the object, the object's spontaneous being, or the expanses of genetic and evolutionary time contained in the object. Any number of passages in Frazer's works could have stimulated the development of this theory or metaphysic of 'blood-consciousness'. But in view of the mention of totemism and 'dreams at puberty', the information compiled by Frazer on Australian and Red Indian beliefs and customs, with regard to animals, seems particularly pertinent:

> An Australian seems usually to get his individual totem by dreaming he has been transformed into an animal of the species. Thus a man who had dreamed several times that he had become a lace-lizard was supposed to have acquired power over lace-lizards, and he kept a tame one, which was thought to give him supernatural knowledge and to act as his emissary for mischief. Hence he was known as Bunjil Bataluk (Old Lizard). Another man dreamed three times he was a kangaroo; hence he became one of the kangaroo kindred and might not eat any part of the kangaroo on which there was blood; he might not even carry home one on which there was blood. He might eat cooked kangaroo; but if he were to eat the meat with the blood on it, the spirits would no longer take him aloft.
>
> In America the individual totem is usually the first animal of which a youth dreams during the long and generally solitary fasts which American Indians observe at puberty. He kills the animal or bird of which he dreams and henceforward wears its skin or feathers, or some part of them, as an amulet, especially on the war-path and in hunting. [1]

The taboos and magical powers surrounding blood in primitive superstition may have been another reason for denominating this physical consciousness 'blood-consciousness'.

Lawrence turns instinctively to the living world, and especially to animals, to search out the blood-being of the object. The letter anticipates the evocation of depth in the object in Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Yet the object, in the Coleridgian sense in which it is here used, embraces as well the world of human relations, and Lawrence attributes supreme blood-consciousness to sexual intercourse and the bond between a mother and child. Turning to the poetry, there appears a gap in its development -- the lack of any treatment of the human object in depth. Look! We Have Come Through! sounds the subject; but the development of the woman's self towards impersonality is for the greater part assumed as proceeding in parallel with the man's, on the same subjective basis. There is very little dramatic interaction between impersonal selves in Look! We Have Come Through! The only exception to

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1. J.G.Frazer, Totemism and Exogamy: A Treatise on Certain Early Forms of Superstition and Society, (London: MacMillan, 1910), Vol. I, p.49-50.

this is the little drama of "'She Said As Well To Me'". The poem starts on the level of common realism, with the woman teasing the man for his shyness, and expressing admiration for his body. The dialogue is not very naturalistic: the prolonged, formal similes, in which the woman tells of her joy in his body, betray her estimation of the man as a sexual instrument, administering to her god-like passion. The man feels 'trammeled and hurt'. To defend his individuality and shyness, he resorts himself to a series of analogies:

> 'You would think twice before you touched a weasel on a fence
> as it lifts its straight white throat.
> Your hand would not be so flig and easy,
> Nor the adder we saw asleep with her head on her shoulder,
> curled up in the sunshine like a princess;
> when she lifted her head in delicate, startled wonder
> you did not stretch forward to caress her
> though she looked rarely beautiful
> and a miracle as she glided delicately away, with such dignity.'

To elicit the respect, wonder and fear, which he feels is owed to the individual, physical self, Lawrence is forced to refer, beyond the human object, to the emotions aroused in a human subject by the purposefulness and instinct of a wild animal. Even within the free structure of "'She Said As Well To Me'", he encounters problems in descending from a simple dramatic moment, briefly to touch upon this potential, deeper level of interaction. Poetry, as Lawrence understood it, did not have the generic scope to accommodate both these levels of dramatic action -- the deeper, impersonal level, polarized against the demonstrable, overt plane of common realism. That Titanic effort of juxtaposition had to be left for what Leavis calls the 'dramatic poems' of the novels.[1]

It is of interest that Lawrence, like other writers of the time, derived a theory for a new kind of literature from J.G.Frazer's anthropological works. His concern to make contact with the object in

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1. F.R.Leavis, D.H.Lawrence, Novelist, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964) (First published 1955), pp.158, 123-24.

depth is equally a concern to restore a sense of religious mystery to the phenomenal universe -- a sense which seemed to linger among primitive peoples. His aim is the rejuvenation of the mythopoeic powers of the poet. This is accompanied by an aversion to the scientific outlook from which, in Keats's words, 'Glory and loveliness have passed away', and an atavistic nostalgia for an age of:

> .. the fond believing lyre,
> When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
> Holy the air, the water, and the fire ...

Neither Keats nor Lawrence seriously entertain the idea of a primitive reversion to such an age. Theirs is an attempt at opening fresh areas of consciousness and forging a new art. They share a subjective certainty in 'some untrodden region of [the] mind', and promise to project from this certainty an artistic vision that will destroy the accepted, objective world, yet create and constitute a credible reality in its place, 'With all gardener Fancy e'er could feign'. The ambivalence of that word 'feign' from the "Ode to Psyche" compresses much that has troubled modern efforts at reestablishing a mythic universe, capable of inspiring belief in defiance of a rationalistic age -- to which the poet belongs as surely as his audience. If one accepts Frank Kermode's interpretation of Moneta in The Fall of Hyperion as the stern, distant goddess of the mythopoeic faculty,[1] then the steps to her temple are more crowded this century, than ever they were in Keats's day.

Lawrence's use of anthropological motifs, especially the figure of the dying god, has already come under notice. In "A Doe at Evening" he combines his fascination in animals with his interest in anthropology. Deserting her fawn at the man's approach, the doe is associated with the woman, who had left her children. The doe's presence is keenly rendered as 'A fine black blotch/on the sky'. Watching her, the man becomes

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1. Frank Kermode, Romantic Image, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), p.8-9.

'a strange being': his intrinsic self is invoked, as in his intercourse with the woman. The suffering and crises of his relationship with the woman have matured in him a self that can lay claim to knowledge of the wild animal's being:

> Ah yes, being male, is not my head hard-balanced, antlered?
> Are not my haunches light?
> Has she not fled on the same wind with me?
> Does not my fear cover her fear?

The poem calls to mind contemporary accounts of the organization of totemic societies: on the arrival of a novice at the age of manhood, he undergoes a ritual trial from which he is 'born again as the sacred animal'. The poem drives towards the feelings of community and oneness with the living world which were thought to be the end of totemic ritual. So much Lawrence had learned from his reading of Jane Harrison's Ancient Art and Ritual,[1] one of the first books to arouse his curiosity in this direction. He commented on it:

> It just fascinates me to see art coming out of religious yearning -- one's presentation of what one wants to feel again, deeply. [2]

Probably he was referring to a passage in which the origins of both art and ritual are linked with the desire for natural regeneration:

> At the bottom of art, as its motive power and its mainspring, lies, not the wish to copy Nature or even improve on her ... but rather an impulse shared by art with ritual, the desire, that is, to utter, to give out a strongly felt emotion or desire by representing, by making or doing or enriching the object or act desired. The common source of the art and ritual of Osiris is the intense world-wide desire that the life of Nature which seemed dead should live again. [3]

Lawrence believed this impulse to co-exist as a force equivalent to 'the life of Nature', making possible a connection between the two. His poem

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1. Jane E.Harrison, Ancient Art and Ritual, (London: Williams and Norgate, 1913), p.8-9. pp.110-11, 46.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.234, [?26 Oct. 1913].
3. Harrison, Art and Ritual, p.26.

"Craving for Spring" is not only art but ritual, or art that seeks to incorporate the original religious force and passion of ritual. With its imperatives and parallel repetitions -- 'I wish', 'Come', 'Pray' -- it leads a passionate prayer or Dithyramb, pleading for the re-awakening of spring and the rebirth of Dionysos, Adonis or Osiris, in the living, phenomenal universe and in 'the living darkness of the blood of man' -- a prayer whose very passion seeks to participate as a motive force in the re-awakening:

> I wish it were spring in the world.
>
> Let it be spring!
> Come bubbling, surging tide of sap!
>
> . . . . .
>
> I want the fine, kindling wine-sap of spring,
> gold, and of inconceivably fine, quintessential brightness,
> rare almost as beams, yet overwhelmingly potent,
> strong like the greatest force of world-balancing.
>
> This is the same that picks up the harvest of wheat
> and rocks it, tons of grain, on the ripening wind;
> the same that dangles the globe-shaped pleiads of fruit
> temptingly in mid-air, between a playful thumb and finger;
> oh, and suddenly, from out of nowhere, whirls the pear-
> bloom,
> upon us, and apple- and almond- and apricot- and quince-
> blossom,
> storms and cumulus clouds of all imaginable blossom
> about our bewildered faces,
> though we do not worship.

> Bitter to fold the issue, and make no sally!
> To have the mystery, but not go forth! [1]

Early in 1917, having completed the manuscript of Look! We Have Come Through!, which he rightly regarded as his 'chief poems, and best' up to that time, Lawrence was convinced that he had 'reaped everything out of [his] old note-books'.[2] To Edward Marsh he confided the fear, 'Perhaps I shall never have another book of poems to publish: or at least for many years'.[3] Lawrence was forgetting, or had decided to suppress, the 'MS. of a tiny book of poems', which he had proposed to dedicate to Lady Cynthia Asquith.[4] Early in 1918, however, he was, by his own account, approached by the publisher, C.W.Beaumont, about the printing of just such a small collection:

> Beaumont worries me for a pretty-pretty book of verse -- I might rake one out and make a little money. [5]

He then revised his original manuscript, which came to comprise probably eleven new poems and seven early ones. The latter were extensively reworked so that all of the 'tiny poems' -- Lawrence habitually used the diminutive when referring to this collection and its contents -- touched in some way upon the war.[6] Already his ambivalent attitude to the collection had appeared. Reading between the lines, one finds him diff-

1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.160.
2. Ed. Nehls, I, p.411, 29 Jan. 1917.
3. Ferrier, Unpublished thesis, Unpublished letters, No.46, 29 Jan. 1917.
4. Letters, ed. Huxley, p.386, 11 Dec. 1916.
5. Letters, ed. Huxley, p.429, 'Thursday', 1918.
6. Ferrier, Unpublished letters, No.48, 18 April 1917.

ident about the quality of the verse, and embarrassed by its sentimental lyricism. Writing a second time about the dedication, he warned Cynthia Asquith that, while the 'little poems' were 'in their own way ... quite good', to him they seemed 'bitterly ironical' and 'a bit wicked'.[1] To Harriet Monroe he admitted, 'They may seem nothing in Chicago'.[2]

These were the origins of the volume, Bay. As he negotiated with Beaumont about publishing rights, Lawrence conceived the idea of producing 'other little books of poems like these. It strikes me as the best thing to do.'[3] Accordingly, he sent off for his early note-books, in safe-keeping at Lady Ottoline Morrell's, with a determination to 'root out a few [poems] from the old books -- and make a trifle of money'.[4] From the old note-books he rehabilitated some thirty-six poems, dating from the Eastwood and Croydon periods. Together with six later poems, these, in many cases revised beyond recognition as war poems or poems belonging to the aftermath of war, constituted his second collection. By May 1918 the manuscript had been completed. It was refused by Chatto and Windus, the publishers of Look! We Have Come Through! Martin Secker, who was eager to become Lawrence's publisher, accepted the manuscript and was largely responsible for its title, New Poems. Under his supervision the book was speedily published, by October 1918. Meanwhile Beaumont procrastinated, waiting for some obscure 'opportunity'.[5] Lawrence did not receive his copies of Bay, until after he had left England for Italy, in February 1920. His impatience at the delay and his misgivings about the poetry itself boiled over in abuse for the

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.544, 8 March 1918.
2. Letters, ed. Huxley, p.457, 6 Dec. 1918.
3. Ferrier, Unpublished letters, No.54, no date.
4. The Quest for Rananim: D.H.Lawrence's Letters to S.S.Koteliansky, 1914 to 1930, ed. George J.Zytaruk, (Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1970), p.137, 20 March 1918.
5. Letters, ed. Huxley, p.455, 26 Sept. 1918.

publisher and his product:

> 17 months he's been at it. But he's non compos. You should see his letters. He hasn't done a thing I want him. He's left out poems, he left out inscriptions, he left out everything ... Such a silly-looking book, I think it Bay, except its beautiful paper and print. But oh, dear, the silly little woodcuts, so out of keeping with the poems, some of which I think really beautiful and rare. [1]

With New Poems as with Bay, Lawrence had to work at overcoming his doubts, before he could assert the poems were 'beautiful and rare'. To Amy Lowell he all but apologized for the rhyming, traditional verse-forms in New Poems, admitting that the volume belonged, paradoxically, to his 'old self'.[2] Why, then, did he persist in having these two books published? The answer, improbable as it seems -- and yet the evidence is there in letters already quoted -- was that he needed the money. After the banning of The Rainbow Lawrence could not find a publisher for Women in Love, and magazine editors would not accept his long essays of 'philosophy'. His only creative outlet and his sole source of income was through poetry. His single publication in 1917 was Look! We Have Come Through!, a book which Cynthia Asquith remembers as figuring largely in Lawrence's finances for that year: 'all the money money he has in the world is the prospect of eighteen pounds for the publication of some poems about bellies and breasts which he gave me to read'.[3] In 1918 the situation became more acute, with his literary capital expended: his total assets were '£16-9-0 -- and not a penny due'.[4]

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, 619-20, 5 Feb. 1920. In fact, other copies of Bay than those sent to Lawrence did have the 'inscription' to Cynthia Asquith; and Lawrence almost certainly saw some proofs, though incomplete, for the volume. See Ferrier, PMS 41.
2. Damon, Amy Lowell, p.493, 5 April 1919.
3. Asquith, Diaries, p.356, 16 Oct. 1917.
4. Letters, ed. Huxley, p.430, 12 Feb. 1918.

Even the impoverished Koteliansky was attempting to lend him money.[1] Lawrence published and survived. Wars increase public consumption of poetry. But in the event Lawrence's financial venture lived up to traditional expectations about the viability of poetry. From Beaumont he received £10; from Secker £6-5-0.[2]

The wicked irony, for Lawrence, lay finally, not in the poetry itself, nor even in the petty reimbursement, but in the critical reception. New Poems, he noted ruefully, 'was much better received than "Look We Have Come Through". The press only spat on that.--'[3] At least one reviewer was comforted by the return to traditional verse-forms,[4] and the book received praise in America from Mark Van Doren and John Gould Fletcher.[5] But the Times Literary Supplement did its usual hatchet job,[6] and the New Statesman, looking with equal disfavour on Lawrence's work, published a negative review that was neither unfair nor impercipient:

> He writes in a tone of constant irritation rather than of passion or melancholy, a tone that suggests low vitality and exacerbated nerves; and at the same time he gives unmistakable evidence of visualising power and feeling for words. But he also shows signs of wilful gaucherie, awkwardness in versification, incongruities in the choice of phrases, which are apparently meant to give an air of sincerity to his supersubtle sensations ... In this wilderness of affectations the glimpses of genius he is still able to give in pictures of things seen grow rarer and rarer; and his whole talent is rapidly becoming a grimace. [7]

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1. Letters, ed. Zytaruk, pp.132, 133n., [21 Feb. 1918].
2. Ferrier, Unpublished letters, No.54, no date; No.66, 16 August 1918; Letters, ed. Secker, p.23, 9 April 1920.
3. Damon, Amy Lowell, p.493, 5 April 1919.
4. Unsigned composite review, Athenaeum, No.4638 (Feb. 1919), 65-66.
5. Composite review, Nation, CXI (13 Oct. 1920), 414-15; Freeman, I (21 July 1920), 451-52.
6. TLS, No.890 (6 Feb. 1919), 67.
7. Unsigned composite review, New Statesman, XII (14 Dec. 1918), 222-24.

With Women in Love just completed, and the esoteric universe of the philosophical essays crowding his mind, Lawrence brought little lightness of touch or freshness of vision to the writing and re-writing of poetry. School poems were made, rather ludicrously, to serve as war poems; in these his idiosyncratic ideas on the War and its effect on the individual were propagandized. The frail fabric of experience in the early verse collapsed and was deliberately distorted under a weight of pure concept, of metaphysic untested by life. This willingness to sacrifice the contrariety of experience for the inflexibility of didacticism was divined by the New Statesman reviewer: Lawrence's expression in these poems was, he said, 'becoming a grimace'.

Accurate adherence to personal experience had won for Lawrence an almost precocious freedom from influence in his early verse. In New Poems and Bay, where the poetry drifts away from an experiential basis, a secondary, literary quality invades. One of the titles which Lawrence had considered for New Poems was Chorus of Women,[1] evidently a reference to Euripides' Women of Troy. The poems are acutely conscious of their historical era, the aftermath of the Great War, and are punctuated by a motif of biblical cataclysms -- the Flood, the Passover, the Last Trump. Their use of Christian religious concepts, such as transubstantiation or anointing, is less the fundamental transvaluation of experience found in Look! We Have Come Through! and more the attempt to apply, by aesthetic means, religious intensity to projections of experience. Lawrence further contrived to introduce a Greek element, displacing the Christian.[2] At one point he divided the sections of "A Man Who Died", like a Greek tragic chorus, into Strophe, Antistrophe and Epode.[3] In "Late at Night"

1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.549-50, 18 April 1918.
2. Cf. Letters, ed. Moore, p.352, [?7 July 1915].
3. Ferrier, MS 26. One of the titles for the poem in that manuscript was "Choral Ode of One Woman"; in NP, where it was called "Bitterness of Death", the divisions but not their designations were retained.

the poet demands of the storm-shadows sweeping across his bed:

> Tall black Bacchae of midnight, why then, why
> Do you rush to assail me?
> Do I intrude on your rites nocturnal?
> What should it avail me?
>
> Is there some great Iacchos of these slopes
> Surburban dismal?
> Have I profaned some female mystery, orgies
> Black and phantasmal?

The reference is to Euripides' The Bacchae, and the poet himself is identified, not with Dionysus, but with Pentheus, the man of sorrow. In an earlier version he had wondered --

> Am I Iacchos of the smoky slopes
> So northern, lord of ecstasies
> To north-wild women? Can I teach
> North-Bacchic mysteries? [1]

-- seeing himself in Gerald Crich's role in Women in Love, as the type of the Teutonic races.

Contemporary influences also manifest themselves in the poems, notably a debt to H.D., whom Lawrence extolled in a letter to Edward Marsh: 'Don't you think H.D. -- Mrs. Aldington -- writes some good poetry? I do -- really very good.'[2] This might be dismissed as baiting the leading proponent of Georgianism with the leading exponent of Imagism, if affinities to H.D. were not present in the very structure of New Poems. Lawrence's disintegration of the early sequence into brief scenic fragments -- "Flat Suburbs, S.W., in the Morning", "Suburbs on a Hazy Day", "School on the Outskirts" -- can be laid at her door, as can other poems in which scenic description is little more than the evocation of a mood, usually of dissolution or despair, for which no experiential provocation is suggested. These are not true Imagist poems: they are too explicit in rendering an emotion; but they represent Lawrence's closest approach to the smallness of Imagist tenets. In Look! We Have Come Through!

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1. Ferrier, MS 26.
2. Ferrier, Unpublished letters, No.46, 29 Jan. 1917.

Lawrence had absorbed Imagism; in New Poems it threatens to absorb him, and the influence is wholly negative. It is at work, too, in some of the newly composed poems, from late 1916 or early 1917: "After the Opera" would not be out of place among Pound's Lustra, and a flippancy, unlike Lawrence's own, colours the imagery of "Town in 1917". The clipped description of "Tommies in the Train" --

> The sun shines,
> The coltsfoot flowers along the railway banks
> Shine like flat coin which Jove in thanks
> Strews each side the lines.
>
> A steeple
> In purple elms, daffodils
> Sparkle beneath; luminous hills
> Beyond -- and no people.
>
> England, O Danaë
> To this spring of cosmic gold
> That falls on your lap of mould!--
> What then are we?

-- encloses a classical allusion that is, for Lawrence, exceptional in being purely decorative and external to the poem's theme. Watching the landscape from the train-window, one of the soldiers -- it is his monologue we overhear -- feels that he is falling, in disintegration, away from the nonhuman world of hills, trees and flowers. Some of this poem is a reworking of ideas from "Excursion Train". But "Tommies in the Train" fails, not because of its secondary quality, but because of its triviality -- of rhythm, tone and allusion -- betraying the seriousness of the poet's intuition and warning. A more achieved art is needed to support this seriousness: "Tommies in the Train" conveys primarily the impression of a writer out of his métier.

New Poems and Bay exhibit a weakened poetic integrity, susceptible to attack from alien poetic influences. In 1915 Lawrence was accustomed to giving fortissimo recitations of Swinburne to entertain Lady Ottoline Morrell's house-parties;[1] in 1916 he twice asked for

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1. Ed. Nehls, I, p.408.

volumes of Swinburne to be sent him.[1] An element of satire did enter into these declamations -- it was 'a sign of great maudlin', Lawrence confided, to 'recite Swinburne'[2] -- but he did not escape the Victorian's resonant cadences in his own verse:

> In another country, black poplars shake themselves over
> a pond,
> And rooks and rising smoke-waves scatter and wheel from
> the works beyond:
> The air is dark with the north and with sulphur, the
> grass is a darker green,
> And people darkly invested in purple move palpable
> through the scene.

The first line, from an early poem, retains its own movement; then the Swinburnian rhythm and alliteration take command, with disastrous consequences. Moreover, as his praise of Swinburne's 'philosophic spiritual realization and revelation' testifies,[3] Lawrence absorbed the content of the poetry as well as the sound. In it he found an echo and refinement of some of Keats's themes. Firstly, the reductive intensity of experience, which Lawrence reckoned a component in the national desire for war --

> .. the war is, and continues, because of the lust for war in the hearts of people; and their worship of Ares and Aphrodite -- ("But a bitter goddess was born, of blood and the salt-sea foam.") -- both gods of destruction and burning down. [4]

-- was appreciated and exposed in the hymn to Love, the second choric ode of Atalanta in Calydon.[5] Secondly, Keats's intuition, as interpreted by Lawrence, of an almost physiological decay succeeding the quest for

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.454, [?30 May 1916]; ed. Nehls, I, p.406, 28 Nov. 1916.
2. Letters, ed. Zytaruk, p.66, 3 [Jan.] 1915. The letter quotes a quatrain, apparently from Swinburne, which has not been traced in his works. It may have been written by Lawrence as an imitation of Swinburne.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, 11 Sept. 1916.
4. Ferrier, Unpublished letters, No.44, 25 Nov. [1916].
5. Lawrence misquotes, conflating three lines from the ode: 'For an evil blossom was born/ Of sea-foam and the frothing of blood' and 'A perilous goddess was born'.

intensity, is re-interpreted in Swinburne's "In a Bay". Lawrence's "In Trouble and Shame", in which the poet wishes to pass through the bar of the sunset --

> I wish that I could go
> Through the red doors where I could put off
> My shame like shoes in the porch,
> My pain like garments,
> And leave my flesh discarded lying
> Like luggage of some departed traveller
> Gone one knows not whither.

-- has affinities with the opening stanzas of "In a Bay":

> Above the soft sweep of the breathless bay
> Southwestward, far past flight of night and day,
> Lower than the sunken sunset sinks, and higher
> Than dawn can freak the front of heaven with fire,
> My thought with eyes and wings made wide makes way
> To find the place of souls that I desire.
>
> If any place for any soul there be,
> Disrobed and disentrammelled; if the might,
> The fire and force that filled with ardent light
> The souls whose shadow is half the light we see,
> Survive and be suppressed not of the night;
> This hour should show what all day hid from me.

Swinburne's 'place of souls' resembles Shelley's 'abode where the Eternal are' and Keats's 'empyreal reflection' of the imagination: it is a heaven where the souls of poets reside. Keats, Shelley, Swinburne and Lawrence share a desire -- at least in these poems -- to transcend the flesh and the ills of this mortal coil; and for Swinburne, as for Lawrence, this transcendence may take place within this life at a time when the conflicting dualities of existence are consummated. Swinburne's transcendence, which enables communion with dead poets rather than the achievement of perfected being, even escapes the forlorn consequences attending Keats's imaginative flight with the nightingale:

But here, where light and darkness reconciled
Hold earth between them as a weanling child
Between the balanced hands of death and birth,
Even as they held the new-born shape of earth,
When first life trembled in her limbs and smiled,
Here hope might think to find what hope were worth.

Past Hades, past Elysium, past the long
Slow smooth strong lapse of Lethe -- past the toil
Wherein all souls are taken as a spoil,
The Stygian web of waters -- if your song
Be quenched not, O our brethren, but be strong
As ere ye too shook off our temporal coil;

If yet these twain survive your worldly breath,
Joy trampling sorrow, life devouring death,
If perfect life possess your life all through
And like your words your souls be deathless too,
Tonight of all whom night encompasseth,
My soul would commune with one soul of you.

Here, in 'the long/Slow smooth strong lapse of Lethe', the language of Keats's "Ode", the 'embalmèd darkness', can be heard modulating towards Lawrence's terminology for dissolution, the 'river of darkness' of Women in Love.[1] Swinburne's aspirations focus elsewhere, at least consciously. His beyond is emphatically a life after death, and the longed-for communion seems 'past... Lethe'. But it should be evident how far Lawrence could recognize his own preoccupations in Swinburne, what influence Swinburne may have had on Women in Love, and why he was eulogized for his 'philosophic spiritual realization and revelation'. It is because he expatiates on Keats and Shelley. Lawrence's interest in Swinburne can be deduced, not only from Women in Love and the philosophical essays, but from New Poems and Bay, in "Guards", "Sickness", "Noise of Battle", "Bread Upon the Waters" and "Autumn Sunshine", where the image of a flood of dissolution is developed. Symbols and themes in Bay, especially the notion of a momentary respite from the 'lapse of Lethe' in order that new life might spring forth, sufficiently parallel

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1. See Women in Love, p.192f.

those of "In a Bay" to suggest that Lawrence might have chosen his title with this poem in mind.[1]

The 'river of darkness' is one of many symbolic concepts in Women in Love which carried over into New Poems and Bay. "The North Country" generalizes the mechanization of the working man along with his work, as it proceeds in the Crich collieries of the novel. The ice-destruction of the northern races is the setting for "School on the Outskirts", "Ruination" and "Winter-Lull", and the soldiers of "On the March" are marching down the death-slope. Autumnal parturition, with its seeds and sparks, is at work in "Reality of Peace, 1916". In origin this poem was an expression of grief and anxiety at the mother's approaching death; subsequent revisions convert this grief into an effort at penetrating, through personal loss, a nation's bereavement in the War:

> .. all the myriad houseless seeds
> Moved on in the wind's resistless push
>
> Express one since a bitter mother of autumn
> Dropped me forth like an obscure fruit .... [2]

Although the connection was covered over in the New Poems version, this draft does clarify Lawrence's poetic need to relate events on the larger political and sociological plane to the facts of a private world of intense emotion. "Shades" represents a second attempt at connecting these worlds. But elsewhere, in "Going Back", "Attack" or "Bread Upon the Waters", he had to adopt a persona, speaking from outside his biographical self, to comment on the central events of the War years. "Reading a Letter" and "War-Baby" resort to an unspecific, commonplace sympathy, lacking the intimate intensity of the elegies or sexual poems. Particularly in the

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1. The title might, alternatively, refer to the tree, Laurus nobilis. The bay was sacred to Apollo, and the Romans awarded a garland or crown of the leaves to victors in battle or poets distinguished for their elegance. Counter to this, it should be noticed that the metaphors of the volume -- in "Guards", 'The wave of soldiers', or "Nostalgia", 'one smooth curve/Of easy sailing'-- point to the nautical connotations of the title. Cf. "Obsequial Ode", "Bread upon the Waters".

2. Ferrier, MS 26.

context of Lawrence's poetry, with its extreme canons of sincerity, these techniques seem unbearably like pretence. Yet the alternative was the detachment of a poem like "Reality of Peace, 1916", in which obsessive preoccupation with the metaphysic of Women in Love overwhelms the frail experiential foundations of the first draft. What remains is abstract, didactic, turgid. With no narrative or dramatic justification, the intensity of 'Mordant corrosion gnashing and champing hard/ For ruin on the naked small redoubt' is purely verbal, as is the landscape invoked, when no sensuous connection with it is maintained. The interest of most of these poems is secondary, as windows on the primary art of the novels. Successive revisions of "Guards", for instance, yield insights into the various phases of Lawrence's metaphysic: the 'glinting web' of the soldiers' co-ordinated drill becomes the blood-connection of The Rainbow, and this in turn changes to the 'darkened rencontre inhuman' sought by Rupert Birkin.[1]

For the most part New Poems and Bay fail to establish an objective correlative, either in autobiographical narrative, in the phenomenal world, or in a firmly attested social milieu. Two conspicuous exceptions are "Piano" and "Embankment at Night, Before the War: Charity". The 'beautiful and rare' lyricism, against which Lawrence had hoped to counterpoint the wicked spirit of irony produced by the War, resulted mostly in the W.H.Davies atmosphere,the overstatement and the bathos of "Twenty Years Ago", The uncertainty of tone in the last stanza --

> Yea, what good beginnings
> To this sad end!
> Have we had our innings?
> God forfend!

-- demonstrates a lack of sureness in verse satire. In himself Lawrence was all too certain England had had her innings, and the Englishman's 'God' could forfend very little. "Piano", by contrast, clearly focuses

1. MS 1, 48, Ferrier, MS 26, NP or CP.

lyricism -- 'Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me' -- and the bathos of sentimental phrases -- 'a mother who smiles as she sings' -- against a certainty of emotional knowledge -- 'the insidious mastery of song'. Lawrence regains his poetic element, because the emotion, nostalgia, has priority -- its 'glamour' eventually wins the day -- and because, relating to his mother, it is a private emotion, still tellingly present to him. He is able to place the scene -- 'hymns in the cosy parlour' -- with novelistic sureness, by making the reader aware of the 'cosy' sentimentality. The present, of 'the great black piano appassionato', and the past, with 'the boom of the tingling strings', are concretely evoked with precise, sensuous details. The symbolic paradigms of Women in Love are firmly kept in the background; yet 'the flood of remembrance', that is also a 'lapse of Lethe', dissolving manhood in the pangs of reminiscence, really does open vistas of speculation from the unlikely vantage of the novelettish diction. The enjambed lines in the last stanza, and the powerfully surging rhythm, with its expanding and contracting stresses, strongly reinforce the emotion. If the verse does owe anything to the mechanical variations of stress in Swinburne's long lines, it is made unmistakably Lawrence's own.

"Embankment at Night, Before the War: Charity" was drastically modified from the earlier version, "Brotherhood". Lawrence stripped away the poorly handled stanza-form of MS 1, and saturated 'the gift' of the poem with sexual connotations.[1] This innuendo seems to illuminate the shame and guilt of an act of charity rather than the sexual confusion of the young man; yet the overtones give the incident its power, to shock the young man into realization of his own ambivalent intentions. His wish to forget or rationalize this 'touch ... on the quick' will not be answered: his sensitivity demands a better solution. Despite the

1. See Smailes, Comments on the Verse of D.H.Lawrence, p.31-34.

skilful insinuation of 'accidental rhyme', rhythm and diction have the conversational ease of Ford Madox Ford's best vers libre, in "Antwerp", for instance, or "The Starling". But how much more vigorous than Ford's is Lawrence's verse, opening a new tangent of feeling at every turn of the line! He has successfully cut to the 'quick' of the emotion, justifying, in this instance, what he claimed of his powers of revision. His use of the pathetic fallacy is unusually simple, but highly effective. The young man slinks on with 'the furtive rain'. Afterwards 'the street spilled over splendidly/ With wet, flat lights' brilliantly suggests a 'soul ... in strife', becoming aware of its own superficialities. "Embankment .. Charity" is perhaps the only poem in which a development takes place -- in the sinuous definition of the free verse -- from the verse of Look! We Have Come Through! to that of Birds, Beasts and Flowers.

For a handful of other poems in New Poems and Bay we can be thankful. Lawrence's verse would lack some of its achievement without "Gipsy", "A Man Who Died", "Passing Visit to Helen", "The Little Town at Evening", "Going Back" and "On That Day". But these two volumes as a whole dilute the quality of his verse, and have obstructed appreciation of its acutely personal character. As arranged in Collected Poems, they obscure the line of the autobiography and the development of the poetry. It did not seem to occur to Lawrence to suppress the volumes when collecting his poems -- they were, after all, critically respectable -- but the history of their preparation for Collected Poems differs from that of Love Poems and Amores. The latter books were revised so extensively that Lawrence found it easier to retype the contents himself.[1] Bay was too tiny to worry him, but he asked the publisher, Secker, to send a typescript of New Poems so that he could 'alter them a bit'.[2] On 'Friday'

1. Letters, ed. Secker, p.97, 11 Jan. 1928.
2. Letters, ed. Secker, p.98, 17 Jan. [1928].

in January 1928 he mentioned that the typescript had not yet arrived; this was probably 27 January.[1] Subsequently, on 3 February 1928 he thanked Secker for the typescript, with the aid of which he had now assembled the first volume of Collected Poems.[2] Lawrence completed his alterations to New Poems in under a week, therefore, and a comparison of texts shows that his revisions were indeed minor. Some titles were changed and single words altered, two lines were omitted and the punctuation modified in places. Lawrence's reluctance to revise New Poems and Bay can be attributed not to satisfaction, but lack of interest.

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1. Letters, ed. Secker, p.99, 'Friday'.
2. Letters, ed. Secker, p.100, 3 Feb. 1928.

VI i THE BUSH WHERE GOD SINGS

> If we look for God, let us look in the bush where he sings. That is, in living creatures. Every living creature is single in itself, a ne plus ultra of creative reality, fons et origo of creative manifestation. Why go further? 1

> ..he, who feels contempt
> For any living thing, hath faculties
> Which he has never used ... 2

With Birds, Beasts and Flowers Lawrence reaches maturity as a poet. A review of one aspect of his poetry which has not been examined in detail -- the technical development of his verse towards maturity -- will help substantiate this claim.

Lawrence refused, throughout his poetic career, to adhere to strict metrical form. From his earliest compositions, "Campions" and "Guelder Roses", he seldom if ever tried to restrict himself within a perfectly regular scansion. Even when the verse-pattern is regular, in "Tease", "Mystery", or his experiments with the triolet and rondeau, some irregularity is allowed to creep into the stanzas. It is time, nevertheless, to dispose of the invidious supposition that he was merely incapable of writing metrically. Let it be confessed that it is all too easy to write badly in perfect metre; but that metrical form can be a support to the poet, a basis on which to refine his thought and expression. Lawrence rejected this support: the note-books offer no evidence of his attempting to refine his expression on the last of a metrical norm. Whereas it is a truism that to write well in metre is supremely difficult, as difficult as to write well in looser stanzas or in vers libre, Lawrence held that too many poets of his own day turned towards the support of traditional metres and away from

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1 Phoenix, p.708

2 Wordsworth, "Lines Left upon a Seat in a Yew-Tree", 52-54.

the challenge of a freer poetry. The neat stanzas of "Flapper" he deemed suitable for ladies' albums; "Tease" he thought of as a 'jingle' -- 'a teasing bit, merely -- nothing serious'. [1]

The effects created in the early poetry -- "Tease" is exceptional in this respect, as an attempt at satire -- were set apart from the dignity, sharpness or ease of expression conveyed by fully mastered traditional forms. Lawrence entertained a dislike for conventional forms as such, commenting on Rachel Annand Taylor's metrics, in one of his first pieces of critical writing:

> Mrs Taylor is, indeed, an exquisite craftsman of verse. Moreover, in her metres and rhythms she is orthodox. She allows herself none of the modern looseness, but retains the same stanza form to the end of a lyric. I should like more time to criticize the form of this verse. [2]

As an exponent of 'the modern looseness', Lawrence subsequently found time to elaborate his criticisms. He censured Eleanor Farjeon:

> I think I like [your] sonnets best. But there is a tendency for anybody in writing the Shakespearean sonnet, to become facile. It is a form that lends itself to facility. But there is dignity and beauty and worth in these sonnets. I wish you had never read a line of Elizabethan poetry in your life, and then we might have had pure utterance from you. [3]

Traditional form was a false pis aller, in the acceptance of which a poet evaded the responsibility of individual expression. Further evidence of Lawrence's attitude to conventional verse is contained in the essay, "Introduction to These Paintings", in which Lawrence probed the reasons for Cézanne's allegedly bad drawing:

> He could draw. And yet in his terrifically earnest compositions in the late Renaissance or baroque manner, he drew so badly.

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1 Fraser, In the Days of My Youth, p.135; Letters, ed. Boulton, p.87, 29 March 1911.

2 Phoenix II, p.219

3 Letters, ed. Moore, p.344, 18 May 1915.

> [His drawing] was so bad because it represented a smashed, mauled cliché, terribly knocked about. If Cézanne had been willing to accept his own baroque cliché, his drawing would have been perfectly conventionally "all right", and not a critic would have had a word to say about it. But when his drawing was conventionally all right, to Cézanne himself it was mockingly all wrong, it was cliché. So he flew at it and knocked all the shape and stuffing out of it, and when it was so mauled that it was all wrong, and he was exhausted with it, he let it go; bitterly, because it was still not what he wanted. [1]

Lawrence's best insights into Cézanne's art arise from displaced autobiography:[2] for Cézanne's 'bad drawing' we should read Lawrence's 'rotten form' in his poetry.[3] What is claimed here, for the early poetry, is a deliberate derangement of inherited conventions, reduced to clichés by the passage of time, in an effort to achieve fidelity to an individual vision. All the evidence points to the justice of this claim with respect to the intentions of the early verse, and as an assessment of its artistic worth, it is judicious. It also helps to explain the painful, exhaustive inwardness of some of these poems.

Lawrence's loosening of these forms and his first attempts at vers libre were guided by a principle of mimesis, simple imitation of movement or sensation. This mimetic principle was extended in ways which may be understood by reference to Wordsworth's "Preface to Lyrical Ballads". According to Herbert Read's interpretation of Wordsworth's poetic, the images and feelings recollected and compressed

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1 Phoenix, pp.572, 576.

2 See Del Ivan Janik, "Toward 'Thingness': Cézanne's Painting and Lawrence's Poetry", Twentieth Century Literature, XIX (1973), 119-27.

3 Letters, ed. Moore, p.93, 19 January 1912.

in a poem cause excitement or pain, which may go 'beyond its proper bounds'. Metre has a regulating influence, introducing an element of stability, 'an over-balance of pleasure' or an air of ideality:

> [The] tendency of metre [is] to divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition.[1]

Lawrence described his own early poetry as 'harsh and jarring ... very real and painful'. He accused 'Sweet-Williamish' Wordsworth of turning to 'sweet and pure' Nature to avoid the hazards of idealizing actual people.[2] This is not Lawrence's criticism at its most perceptive; but it is a cry for a new realism. The metrical crudities and rhythmic hardness of the early verse are an intentional reproduction of the clumsiness, harshness and pain. They venture on a new honesty and bare realism, reproducing an over-balance of pain, and introducing a degree of aesthetic disharmony to suggest this.

"Discord in Childhood" imitates rhythmically a storm's violence, the parents' violence and the plunging heart-beats of a child. The lines chant, their heavy stresses interspersed with variable numbers of unstressed syllables. They can be scanned according to the preface of Gerard Manley Hopkins's Poems (1876-1889):

> Outside the house an ash-tree hung its terrible whips,
> And at night when the wind rose, the lash of the tree
> Shrieked and slashed the wind, as a ship's
> Weird rigging in a storm shrieks hideously.

The short poem rediscovers sprung rhythm. As in Ted Hughes's poetry, the violence implicit in the heavy controlling stress of Hopkins's metre is turned to thematic advantage. But Lawrence did not so much discover sprung rhythm, as chance upon an appropriate rhythm, emerging from a long process of slight adjustment of syllables. It was a fluke, brought

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1 Wordsworth, Romantic Criticism, ed. Foakes, p.41-42; and see Herbert Read, The True Voice of Feeling: Studies in English Romantic Poetry, (Faber: London, 1953), p.39-41.

2 Phoenix II, pp.95, 449.

on by attentive response to the inner ear. Even then, the first stanza is better realized than the second. Lawrence lacked the scholarship and obsessive patience which enabled Hopkins to develop from a rhythm a new metrical principle. In the event, lack of a metrical principle told against Lawrence's early verse. Although he could strike off fine lines with an individual movement -- the opening lines of his poems which were usually preserved unchanged through successive revisions -- he could not construct a whole poem from discrete lines. He lacked a standard against which to revise his verse. The final version of "Dreams Old and Nascent/ Nascent", its original metrical niceties subdued to a straggling poulter's measure, testifies to how poor an ear Lawrence could bring to this last, 1927-28 rescension of his verse. His words on Cézanne -- 'he let it go; bitterly, because it still was not what he wanted' -- are apposite.

His arguments against metre, as Edward Marsh brought him to formulate them, are based on a fallacy. He wrote to Marsh:

> I think more of a bird with broad wings flying and lapsing through the air, than anything, when I think of metre ... It depends on the pause -- the natural pause, the natural lingering of the voice according to the feeling -- it is the hidden emotional pattern that makes poetry, not the obvious form ... It is the lapse of feeling, something as indefinite as expression in the voice carrying the emotion. It doesn't depend on the ear, particularly, but on the sensitive soul. And the ear gets a habit, and becomes master, when the ebbing and lifting emotion should be master, and the ear the transmitter. If your ear has got stiff and a bit mechanical, don't blame my poetry. That's why you like Golden Journey to Samarkand -- it fits your habituated ear ... I can't tell you what pattern I see in any poetry, save one complete thing. [1]

Sympathy can be given to the projected integration of form and content in the 'sensitive soul'. Understanding can be extended to the equation, in the case of Flecker, of metre with mechanical rhythm. But it must

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1 Letters, ed. Moore, p.242-44, 19 November 1913.

be insisted that Lawrence has confused two separate principles in the English accentual tradition. He has exalted the spoken rhythm of the verse to the exclusion of the metrical pattern on which that rhythm is based, and from which it plays continuous, subtle variations. As James McAuley states,[1] traditional verse is created from the interaction between speech and a regular pattern, between rhythm and the expectation created by metrical scansion. A great poet achieves an individual resolution of this interaction, and in the variations played upon the metrical norm is able, either intuitively or through intellectual control, to suggest further, sub-rational significances.

Forfeiting metre, Lawrence encounters the problems of organic self-expression:

> I think you will find my verse smoother -- not because I consciously attend to rhythms, but because I am no longer so criss-crossy in myself. I think, don't you know, that my rhythms fit my moods pretty well, in the verse. And if the mood is out of joint, the rhythm often is. I have always tried to get an emotion out in its course without altering it. [2]

Though he does not deliberately manipulate his rhythms -- he has no metrical basis against which to adjust them -- he does aim at adapting them to the poem's mood. Mimesis was practicable when describing overt actions and sensations, and even fear and pain; but it is intensely more difficult to imitate in verse-movement the covert reactions of emotion. As his endless rescensions prove, the ideal of spontaneously assimilating rhythm to emotion cannot be achieved, without succumbing to what R. P. Blackmur calls the 'expressive fallacy'[3] --

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1 James P. McAuley, A Primer of English Versification, (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1966), p.22 f.

2 Letters, ed. Moore, p.221, 18 August 1913.

3 Blackmur, The Double Agent, p.106f.

spontaneous utterance of emotion, coupled with the assertion that this expression is formally definitive of the emotion. Lawrence never made this assertion or composed under this illusion. He avers a creed of getting the '<u>emotion</u> out in its course without altering it', not the <u>expression</u> of the emotion, which might need endless alteration. He adds, 'It needs the finest instinct imaginable, much finer than the skill of the craftsmen'; and he affirms the need for constant refining towards this elusive ideal.

Nevertheless, one of Lawrence's reasons for turning to more open stanzas and to <u>vers libre</u> was simply that, lacking the technical fluency of Shelley, he found them easier. Moving with a new ease in these forms, he hoped to allow access to spontaneous inspiration. Jessie Chambers recalled his enthusiasm for Francis Thompson's essay on Shelley, and how 'he liked to apply some of it to himself'.[1] One of the passages in question must have been:

> We have among us at the present day no lineal descendant, in the poetical order, of Shelley; and any such offspring of the abundantly spontaneous Shelley is hardly possible, still less likely, on account of the defect by which (we think) contemporary poetry in general, as compared with the poetry of the early nineteenth century, is mildewed. That defect is the predominance of art over inspiration, of body over soul.

It requires little imagination to see Lawrence proposing himself as the offspring of the Shelleyan tree.

That inspiration was a fact of his poetic experience is manifest in "Craving for Spring", where the forceful, rapid sweep of the verse transport both poet and reader. The poem is a success, and yet it seems effortless, an overflow of pleasure as the pent emotions of war-time find an outlet in momentary optimism, in gratitude for the ever-accessible, ever-renewed life of Nature. The poem makes

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1 E.T., p.119; Delavenay, II, p.689

2 Francis Thompson, <u>Shelley</u>, ed. George Wyndham, (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1925), pp.23-24, 26.

comprehensible Lawrence's confident identification of his creative powers as an artist with the regenerative life in the natural world. The love of Nature and the twinges of doubt of the 'sensitive soul' -- quite distinct from any deliberate craftsmanship -- of themselves seem to have imparted the necessary form.

In Look! We Have Come Through! the effort to write a completely free verse brought Lawrence to the realization that, as long as poetry was an act of communication, using the structural pattern of language, vers libre must be a liberation only from conventional, accentual patterns. In their stead the writer of free verse took a fresh obligation, the discovery or innovation of a principle of organization for every new poem. 'The Law', Lawrence decided in retrospect, 'must come new each time from within'. His poem-sequence wrestled with the difficulties of interrelating form with content. It is one of the flaws of "She Looks Back" that it does not interrelate, in a slack narrative, the various images which it chances upon; one of the faults of "Manifesto" that its rigidly rhetorical progression takes such an unconscionably long time to get to the point; one of the failures of "New Heaven and Earth" that its catalogues seem suspiciously like generalizations, and its loose parallelism like self-indulgence. Yet in parts of these poems there can be seen evolving a principle of poetic growth: it proceeds by parallel modification and by meditation on a few images or symbols, such as the pillar of salt in "She Looks Back".

Handling as its theme freedom of expression in compliance with impulses entering the individual from beyond his conscious self --

> I would be a good fountain, a good well-head,
> Would blur no whisper, spoil no expression.

-- "Song of a Man Who Has Come Through" is as free as any verse Lawrence ever attempted. To an extent, the poem's law does emerge

successfully from within. The swiftly modifying clauses, phrases and adjectives convey the adaptability, and the predominance of hard vowels, especially i, the delicacy, quickness and toughness, needed to negotiate in 'The fine, fine wind'. Yet the short sentences and exclamations are curiously inappropriate to the theme. In a paean to fluidity, this residual grammatical structure becomes an arbitrary, obstructive element. Lawrence apparently felt the need to add a further static element in the enriching but retarding, mythological and biblical allusion.[1] The density of allusion is uncharacteristic of his verse. It is, considering his theme, not a satisfactory resolution of the claims of immediacy of expression, as against those of complexity and richness. These strictures may seem too exacting; but it was Lawrence himself who was so acutely aware of the wholeness of a poem's form and theme that he could see no 'pattern ... [in] poetry, save one complete thing'.

A comparison of the images of flux (the wind) and stasis (the self or the moment) in "Song of a Man Who Has Come Through" with parallel passages from The Rainbow and "Poetry of the Present" brings to light a growing tendency in Lawrence's developing poetic. In the poem the self's aspiration is to be carried in the flux. In The Rainbow choice and self-determination are more prominent.[2] In the essay the self is able in its intensest moments to sustain itself athwart the stream, its stasis bringing it into vivid interaction with the flux. From Look! We Have Come Through! "Poetry of the Present" has evolved towards the different concept of creativity that produced Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Creativity is now located in the self's various levels of interaction with the chaos surrounding it. There

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1 For an appreciative explication of the allusion, see Smailes, Some Comments on the Verse, p.28-29

2 The Rainbow, p.203-04

is a new appreciation of singleness and individuation in living things, and a depreciation of the collective unknown or anima. The individual life is the fons et origo of that anima; it is the quick of the fountain. The metaphysical centre of the poetic lies not so much in flow and freedom as in the 'sensitive soul', engaged in issuing life and expression from its relationship with other living selves. The poetry looks both within and without in its search for 'the mystery of the inexhaustible, forever-unfolding creative spark ... the incarnate disclosure of the flux'.

A dialectic between subjective and other selves, between inner and outer worlds, does constitute a formal principle in Birds, Beasts and Flowers. The volume is vividly realistic in its outward vision of the phenomenal world, but in its poetic voice it is introspective. In content it is impressionist, in technique expressionist. These contraries organize both theme and method. Critics have hinted that the vers libre is, in some as yet undefined way, regulated by the tone of the poet's speaking voice;[1] and Archibald Young, in a valuable article on "Snake", has offered these thoughts on the free verse:

> The significant point of the poetry, then, falls less upon what Lawrence calls the perfect consummate state, and more upon the nature of a mind that might be aspiring to it. It is, therefore, an immediate dramatic presence, rather than a formally remote condition that tends to control this poetry. [2]

Combining these points, it might be conjectured that the formal organization of Birds, Beasts and Flowers resides in a drama of speaking voices, a complex internal dialogue supplementing and correlating with a dialectic between subject and object. Critiques of two poems, "Fish" and "Peach", will illustrate and elaborate these ideas.

"Fish" presents a test-case for Lawrence's dialectic of

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1 E.g., Richard Hoggart, The Listener (29 October 1964), 673.

2 Archibald M. Young, "Rhythm and Meaning in Poetry: D. H. Lawrence's 'Snake'", English, XVII (Summer 1968), 41-47.

subjective and outer worlds, by taking for its object a creature so totally unsympathetic. In addition, the poem takes up an apparently unpromising line of enquiry into fish-consciousness, emphasizing the very limitations (and hence, possible powers of concentration) of a being to whom 'So little matters'. Dating from before the Flood and undisturbed by it, the fish has no covenant with Jehovah. The heightened biblical language recalling the cataclysm is cut short by the limited perspective of the fish itself: it's 'all one' from that point of view. Fish-wit, like fish-consciousness, is dry. Yet 'all one' further hints at the fish's total communion with the water, a oneness which we have already shared, having felt 'the waters wilt in the hollow places'.

Its oneness renders the fish 'aqueous', or rather 'sub-aqueous', in that it exists below the surface and is one phylum among other forms of aquatic life. Hence, too, the fish is 'submerged' rather than merged with its element. Although it moves in harmony with the water, 'wave-thrilled' -- the change here from 'water' to 'wave' introduces the concept of marine motion, creating, as it were, the kinesis of the fish -- nonetheless, it is also 'thrilled' in the sense of 'excited': it possesses a separate consciousness registering these thrills. The heaving motion, reproduced in the juxtaposed verbs and the balanced patterns of alliteration --

> As the waters roll
> Roll you.
> The waters wash,
> You wash in oneness ...

-- is something that does matter to the fish. For the present we appreciate the animal's remarkable 'oneness' with its element. If it never merges with this, it never emerges from it. The washing in oneness of the fish has religious overtones of a purification or baptism

that is also an endless communion. Yet this rapt sensual absorption in the water excludes any detached knowledge of it. The fish will 'Never grasp' its state, intellectually or sensually. It cannot hold the water that holds it; it has no organs for prehensile contact. This portion of the poem is a profound verbal meditation, the connotations of each word leading by association to the next, yet the process of association governed by contemplation of the living object.

Piscine touch must be different from our own, concentrating all sensation and life along the flanks. The phrase 'sluice of sensation' elides the part played by the water -- the sluicing water must precede the sensation -- in order to attend to fish-consciousness; but the elision also suggests how the fish receives life from its environment. The whirl of water becomes the 'whorl' of its tail. 'Water wetly on fire in the grates of ... gills' goes beyond pleonasm and paradox: the water is absorbed, becoming wetness, which is in turn converted to the fire of life and sensation. 'Grates' puns on the anatomy of the gills, a fire-grid for supporting the living fire. Finally, 'flush' brilliantly combines connotations of the fluid motion of the water, the warmth of flame and the dawning blush of the blood's consciousness. Absorbing life or movement in its element, the fish distinguishes its life and itself from the element. Its separate identity crystallizes in 'Fixed water-eyes'. This brilliantly wrought set of associations enacts the creation of a self.

All the fish's sensation is tactile, 'One touch'. Its environment is a blissful womb, wholly enclosing and hence limiting: it is only touch. The water is even the sexual partner of this alien being that -- one notes the effectively transferred epithet -- 'ejects his sperm to the naked flood'. No question arises of the fish being a phallic <u>symbol</u>: considered as an object in depth, its experience <u>is</u>

phallic. Yet it is infantile as well. A grim numbness surrounds the fish as it lies '<u>only</u> with the waters' :

> No fingers, no hands and feet, no lips;
> No tender muzzles,
> No wistful bellies,
> No loins of desire,
> None.

After the richness of 'One touch', 'None' strikes home with added force. Lawrence seems to enter the fish's consciousness, through a kind of sensory projection, defining its sensory faculties by absence and nullity. Nevertheless, it remains alien to us: what sensuality is present to the fish must be of an extremity beyond our experience.

Animal poems were a moderately common Georgian genre, as witness the poems by Davies, Hodgson and Monro in <u>Georgian Poetry, 1913-1915</u>. The 'metaphysic' of these poems, and the calibre of their appreciation of animals can be summed up in one line from Davies's "The Hawk": 'My mind has such a hawk as thou'. An exception is Rupert Brooke's "The Fish", which Lawrence would have known from its inclusion in <u>Georgian Poetry, 1911-1912</u>. What makes Brooke's poem original and an important source for Lawrence's animal poems, is his taking seriously the effort of imagining what, without anthropomorphism, an animal's consciousness might be. As with Lawrence, Brooke makes much of the interaction between the fish and its environment, and in these passages his influence on Lawrence's poem seems to be direct:

> The kind luxurious lapse and steal
> Shapes all his universe to feel
> And know and be; the clinging stream
> Closes his memory ...
> And all's one,
> Gentle, embracing, quiet, dun,
> The world he rests in, world he knows,
> Perpetual curving.

Lawrence may have borrowed from him the technique of sensory projection by means of a simple inventory of organs present and absent.

Contrasting the poems, however, the superiority of Lawrence's is evident, primarily because of the spare exactness of his language and thought. By comparison Brooke's verse is simply crude, and his tendency to douse the fish in vague Keatsian epithets -- 'joy is in the throbbing tide,/ Whose intricate fingers beat and glide/ In felt bewildering harmonies' -- replaces the lyric exactness of Lawrence's vision with poeticisms. Lawrence, we feel, is developing "Fish" to its necessary conclusion; but Brooke, having conceived the idea of fish-consciousness, flounders out of his depth.

Lawrence's diction is precise, exciting and capable of intense local compression. Addressing his subject, 'But oh, fish, that rock in water', he plays on 'rock' as verb and noun, the one implying its integration with the water, the other its separateness. T. A. Smailes notes a similar pun in "Sicilian Cyclamens" --

> And up the pallid, sea-blenched Mediterranean stone-slopes
> Rose cyclamen, ecstatic forerunner!

-- where 'rose' can act as adjective or verb.[1] In this instance, too, the juxtaposed semantic fields elicit a pattern reinforcing the theme. The pink cyclamens, flowering progressively up the slopes, picture the dawn of a new Mediterranean civilization. Sharpness of image is focused by the compression of language in 'Corvetting bits of tin in the evening light'. Like the description in "Bat", of twilight threaded by 'Wings like bits of umbrella', the image expresses Lawrence's love of 'the proud instinct which makes a living creature distinguish itself from its background'.[2] The nonce-word 'Corvetting' suggests the martial insensitivity of a metal war-vessel or <u>corvette</u>, and <u>curvet</u>, the frisking leap of a horse. We might also find in the word some hints of <u>cavorting</u> 'joie de vivre/ Dans l'eau', of little <u>curves</u> as the fish 'Sway-wave', and of glinting minnows like small <u>carved</u>

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1 Smailes, <u>Some Comments on the Verse</u>, p.38

2 <u>Sea and Sardinia</u>, p.130

parings of metal. Surely, then, James Reeves is wrong to assert that Lawrence 'had not the craftsman's sense of words as living things, as an end in themselves'.[1] It is true that he has little time for purely verbal nuances, for language pursued for its own sake. His connotations denote. To abstract words from their denotative function would be, for Lawrence, to destroy them as living things: the end of words is to refer us to the wonder of what they signify. Connie Chatterley is Lawrence's spokeswoman, when she repudiates Clifford's attraction to flowers because of the poetry written about them, and not because of the flowers:

> 'The nodding violet! -- Do you know, I don't think we should care half so much for flowers if it weren't for the lovely things poets have said about them.'
>
> She stopped suddenly. Was it true? It was only half true. The things the poets said had indeed opened doors, strange little doors to the flowers, through which one could go. But once passed through the poet's gate, the flowers were more flowerily unspoken than ever. [2]

"Fish" progresses by intensive contemplation of its object, a contemplation whose ramifying semantic associations need constantly to be co-ordinated and pruned. The verse is spontaneous in that it traces the contours of the developing thought, but it is not therefore the product of rapid improvization. Rather, the verse records a continuous, refining attention to the object and the language used to describe it. The thought is pared to its sinew, yet it does not proceed according to logic or an extraneous set of precepts. It leaves behind the track of its own progress. Lawrence's explanation of 'the continual, slightly modified repetition', which is common to his style in prose and poetry, can be accepted:

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1 Selected Poems, ed. Reeves, (London: Heinemann, 1967), p.1.

2 The First Lady Chatterley, p.46. The quotation is from A Midsummer Night's Dream, III, i, 250.

> The only answer is that it is natural to the author: and that every natural crisis in emotion or passion comes from this pulsing to-and-fro, which works up to culmination [1]

R. G. N. Salgado has used the different kinds of grammatical and conceptual parallelism found in the Bible to classify specimens of parallelism in Lawrence's verse.[2] But such forms of repetition, and of modification within a set grammatical structure, are common to many bodies of primitive verse, and to the oral-formulaic mode of composition. Their presence in Lawrence's poetry only indicates that parallelism did indeed come naturally to him. Though plainly influenced by his evangelical upbringing,[3] he is, in using these structures, revealing the basic patterns of his thought rather than imitating Hebraic verse.

Criticism of the poetry, however, has too often refused to follow closely the intriguing movement of Lawrence's thought as laid bare in these poems. Perhaps because of the lack of superficial difficulty, critics only too willing to reconstruct the mosaic of associations in The Waste Land, have remained unaware of comparable funds of meaning in Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Free association, which was supposed to account for their composition, might only account for the cursory reading they have been given, and for the willingness to ignore or dismiss difficulties. In part, the reason for this neglect, not to be confused with unpopularity, can be laid with the poems. At the furthest extreme from Eliot or Pound's deliberately elusive pastiches, the technique of modification, with its overlapping or tacking of concepts, gives an illusion of rather labouring, linear progress. The poems do progress, but on several fronts; they

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1 Phoenix II, p.276.

2 Salgado, Unpublished thesis, p.304-11.

3 See Apocalypse, p.57

proliferate, or to use a favourite Laurentian term, unfold. Even when the verse descends to what appears a bathetic slackness or a playful rejection of the demands of concision --

> Food, and fear, and joie de vivre,
> Without love,
>
> The other way about:
> Joie de vivre, and fear, and food,
> All without love.

-- it is not treading water. Almost musically, new themes are announced and established, and an important new section of the poem broached.

By such means the technical repertoire of traditional verse is increased to cope with the challenge of vers libre. Another means is the variable line-length, the integrity of which Lawrence uses and so defines in various ways. Tom Marshall has surmised that the short lines in the first section of the poem are imitative of the fish's zig-zagging movement or the waves' swaying;[1] but this simplistic typographical mimesis seems unlike Lawrence. The short lines are better adapted to convey the contemplative function of individual words and their associations with the object. Lawrence suggests the fish's limitations and the rocking movement of waves by the division of his lines; and in 'Himself all silvery himself' he represents the creature's self-contained identity. Rhythm is a further means of suggesting connections and disconnections. Sometimes a line is rhythmically mimetic: 'Then gay fear, that turns the tail sprightly, from a shadow'. The poem can boast other lines of such traditional skill as, 'To speak endless inaudible wavelets into the wave', where the two patterns of repeating syllables echo the alternation of the waves. This variety of tone and movement, integrated in

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1 Marshall, Psychic Mariner, p.138-39.

a single poem, is a feature of Lawrence's mature style. Alongside traditional lines can be found the laconic colloquialism of 'What price his bread upon the waters?' There is a slang sexual reference in the tag from Ecclesiastes (xi, 1), that looks back to the fish's 'silent passion';[1] but the adage also introduces food into the fish's cramped horizons, and gestures towards the creature's risking of itself and its self-exposure, the 'gay fear' it enjoys in the sea. The change in movement of the verse helps to signal a change in direction of the thought.

So introduced, the second section of the poem protracts the change of rhythm, gradually lengthening the lines, which become less compact with stress and emphasis. Correspondingly, our view of the fish is corrected, modified and expanded. It assimilates food, not just the life of the water; it has a definite emotion, fear, and polarizing this drive, a savage joie de vivre; and it is not utterly solitary but swims in schools, suspended by a kind of magnetism. Finally, it is not submerged all its life: it can spring away from the water with a coquettish curvet, 'like a lover', before sinking back into oneness. But such love is 'loveless', inhuman and un-Christian and from before the Flood, 'Beautifully beforehand with it all'. This second section is discursive, lacking the intensity and concentration of the first. Yet the passage can be accepted as part of the economy of Lawrence's poetry:

> As a matter of fact, we need more looseness. We need an apparent formlessness, definite form is mechanical. We need more easy transition from mood to mood and from deed to deed. A great deal of the meaning of life and of art lies in the apparently dull spaces, the pauses, the unimportant passages. [2]

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1 Cf. Complete Plays, p.214.

2 Phoenix, p.248.

These strictures on the novel apply equally to a poem of the length of "Fish". It cannot be all high point, like Keats's Hyperion. Pacing is needed to allow a natural ebbing of the thought, exploring and filling in earlier concepts, before pushing forward again.

The poem falls roughly into five sections. The third narrates a few loosely interwoven experiences, catching sight of a water-snake in the Anapo (a river in south-east Sicily), watching a pike during a boating excursion on the Zeller Lake, catching a fish and regretting it. Interspersed with these encounters, a fourth section exclaims on the numinous otherness of the fish, moving outside the range even of intuition, and enforcing the limitations in human consciousness:

> His God stands outside my God.
> . . . . .
> And I, a many-fingered horror of daylight to him ...

A final section tries to specify this numen.

The fish has been successively more clearly differentiated: at last a specific fish appears, in a sharp, memorable simile:

> A slim young pike, with smart fins
> And grey-striped suit, a young cub of a pike
> Slouching away below, half out of sight,
> Like a lout on an obscure pavement ...

The image has the visual exactitude of Marianne Moore's vignettes, capturing a chameleon, 'with a tail/ that curls like a watch spring', or a jerboa --

> pillar body erect
> on a three-cornered smooth-working Chippendale
> claw -- propped on hind legs, and tail as third toe ...

-- or a paper nautilus:

> .. close-
> laid Ionic chiton-folds
> like the lines in the mane of
> a Parthenon horse ...

But Lawrence is wary of the exact image. He shares with Ursula Brangwen

a discomfort over a visual image, anthropomorphic or artificial, that threatens by its finish to exclude awareness of the alien life of a creature.[1] The anthropocentric vision is blind to depth in the object:

> But watching closer
> That motionless deadly motion,
> That unnatural barrel body, that long ghoul nose ....
> I left off hailing him.
>
> I made a mistake, I didn't know him,
> This grey, monotonous soul in the water,
> This intense individual in shadow,
> Fish-alive.

Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine acts as a pendant to Birds, Beasts and Flowers in the same way as "Poetry of the Present" was a sequel to Look! We Have Come Through! In the essay "Him with His Tail in His Mouth" Lawrence dwells on the multiplicity of life and the need to recognize a 'fourth dimension' in living things.[2] In effect, he sets out a procedure for writing an animal poem. Writing in his own person about a Rhode Island Red hen -- that reminds him of plush upholstery -- he would begin:

> Oh my flat-footed plush armchair
> So commonly scratching in the yard -- !

But this poem would only reveal my own limitations. To be fully human the poem would have to explore imaginatively the hen's and even the rooster's point of view. It would have to evaluate the relationship, 'the third thing, the connaissance', between man and creature. Finally, it would have to acknowledge something in the bird beyond rapprochement, some sanctuary of intrinsic being, if it still exists in a domestic animal. The creature's numen, inviolable and unknowable, must be accepted -- 'perhaps the last admission that life has to wring out of us'. It is the secret

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1 See Women in Love, pp.298, 275, 146.

2 Phoenix II, p.427-35.

life has, and can wring out of us; and it is the secret life must wring out of us, to be life.

These phases of recognition are present in "Fish". In the whole poem one would not be without the limited human response, to the 'grey-striped suit', nor the lyric connaissance of the 'gorping, water-horny mouth,/ And ... horror-tilted eye,/ His red-gold, water-precious, mirror-flat bright eye'. The man's awareness of the fish and his intimation of the fish's awareness of him culminate in a realization of otherness which contains a strong component of religious fear:

> I saw, dimly,
> Once a big pike rush
> And small fish fly like splinters.
> And I said to my heart, there are limits
> To you, my heart;
> And to the one God.
> Fishes are beyond me.

Having let us feel ourselves the fish's intimates, Lawrence now denies that we have known anything. The retraction draws a religious threshold, making the living presence beyond that threshold still more immediate and frightening. In "Pike" Ted Hughes refers to the horrible but awesome limitation of the fish. He senses a deeper 'dream' animal, 'Darkness beneath night's darkness had freed,/ That rose slowly towards me, watching'. By contrast an American poet, James Dickey, adopts animal masks, becoming the creature of his fancy without any cognizance of barrier or trespass. Consequently, the reality he utters through the animal seems little more than ventriloquial, and the adoption of animal form a form of self-extension. 'Nasty anthropomorphic lust', Lawrence would have termed it,[1] an imperialism of the spirit. Both Lawrence and Hughes, in enforcing a limen or taboo in the animal that is not to be violated, create a

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1 Phoenix II, p.456

powerful sense of animal presence.

However, despite his protestations, 'I only wonder/ And don't know', in Shelleyan spirit Lawrence continues to probe and worry the presence behind the veil. What are the nuances of the numen? He returns to the singleness of fish, 'their pre-world loneliness,/ And more than lovelessness'; he touches on their constant voyaging, their constantly being outsiders; he reminds us of food taboos, associated with their white meat. The reference to 'Cats, and the Neapolitans' should not be dismissed as an aside. A partial explanation for this passage may lie in Twilight in Italy, where cats and Italians (since the Renaissance) are reckoned both to lust after reductive, phosphorescent sensation.[1] But Studies in American Literature, the composition of which overlapped in time the writing of Birds, Beasts and Flowers, offers a more satisfactory answer. The passage is an equation in Lawrence's psychic chemistry, this chemistry being a scientific-cum-religious system which aims at giving 'the true correspondence between the material cosmos and the human soul'. Life exists as an unstable equilibrium between the extremes of the material elements, with the sun at one pole and the moon at the other. This equilibrium or system of measures is divided, after Heraclitus, into 'the way up' and 'the way down'. Cats and Neapolitans are 'Sulphur sun-beasts', inclining to 'the way up', that side of the balance controlled by the sun and manifested in sulphur, carbon and volcanoes. The counterbalancing lunar elements are salt, phosphorus and the sea. 'Cats and the Neapolitans/ ... Thirst for fish as for more-than-water' because they need the

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1 Twilight in Italy, p.42.

salt and phosphorus to maintain their life-balance.[1] The system may seem more than eccentric; but more will be said of the significance and ramifications of psychic chemistry in due course.

Having denied the fish's affinities with the god of the Hebrews, Lawrence mentions, in the brief last stanza, that it was the symbol used by the early Church for Christ:

> In the beginning
> Jesus was called The Fish ....
> And in the end.

Lawrence knew from his reading that the Church made no mystical or qualitative connection between the fish's attributes and Christ's; that 'fish' in Greek was a kind of rebus for the initials of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.[2] Indeed, as Beryl Rowland notes, the Church discouraged ideas of 'direct transference' between animals and sacred figures.[3] But Lawrence could not long allow this intriguing connection to subsist at the level of a cryptogram. Talking in "The Crown" of 'the phosphorescence of corruption, the salt, cold burning of the sea', he adds 'there was some suggestion of this in the Christ of the early Christians, the Christ who was the Fish'.[4] This supplies the subjective or esoteric transition from 'Sulphur sun-beasts' to Christ. The last stanza avers that, the Christian era being now at its close, it is necessary to search out a new

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1 The Symbolic Meaning, pp.177, 181, 182; Studies in Classic American Literature, p.137.

2 Mrs Henry Jenner, Christian Symbolism, (London: Methuen, 1910), pp. xiv, 31-33. For Lawrence's comments, see Letters, ed. Moore, p.304, [? 19 December] 1914.

3. Beryl Rowland, Animals with Human Faces: A Guide to Animal Symbolism, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1973), p.xvi.

4 Phoenix II, p.403.

mystical principle, as the early Christians did at the end of the pagan era. This interpretation can be confirmed by reference to a second essay, "The Proper Study". Christ is the fish because he alone ventured past the shores of human experience, taking the risk of casting the bread of himself upon the waters. But his followers have made this unknown known, and a new adventure in consciousness is called for:

> We are in the deep, muddy estuary of our era, and terrified of the emptiness of the sea beyond. Or we are at the end of a great road, that Jesus and Francis and Whitman walked. We are on the brink of the precipice, and terrified at the great void below.
>
> No help for it. We are men, and for men there is no retreat. Over we go.
>
> Over we must and shall go, so we may as well do it voluntarily, keeping our soul alive; and as we drown in our terrestrial nature, transmogrify into fishes. Pisces. That which knows the Godliness of the End ...
>
> There is a sixth sense ... Jesus had it. The sense of the God that is the End and the Beginning. And the proper study of mankind is man in his relation to this Oceanic God. [1]

'And in the end' ends on a note of question. The religious imperatives of "Fish" are not simple. The man content to --

> .. stand at the pale of [his] being
> And look beyond, and see
> Fish, in the outerwards,
> As one stands on a bank and looks in.

-- is obeying one imperative, a defining of the human and a reverence for the threshold of the other. But a second imperative is the transcending of limitation, to become something more than human, and hence fully, adventurously human. In this spirit Richard Somers, repudiating and repudiated by human society, turns towards the cold energy of the sea:

> He wanted to be cold, cold, and alone like a single fish, with no feeling in his heart at all except a certain icy exultance and wild fish-like rapacity. '<u>Homo sum</u>!'

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1 <u>Phoenix</u>, p.721-22; and <u>cf</u>. <u>Etruscan Places</u>, p.151.

> All right. Who sets a limit to what a man is? Man is also a fierce and fish-cold devil, in his hour, filled with cold fury of desire to get away from the cloy of human life altogether, not into death, but into that icily self-sufficient vigour of a fish. [1]

The foregoing analysis distorts the conclusion of "Fish" by its detailed exposition, making it appear pedantically esoteric and to be interpreted only by reference to other texts. It would seem to lend support to the opinion that Lawrence's poetry is 'insufficiently organized artistically -- rather the raw material of poetry ... than poetry itself' -- the verdict of Aldous Huxley, first expressed in a letter to T. S. Eliot, and possibly gaining currency from there.[2] The last stanzas do have more the air of beginning a poem than ending it. But they are effective. Even the psychic chemistry, left unexplained, attaches to the fish's substance vague, magical affiliations, throwing about the creature an aura of superstitious mystery. Any prejudice against the poem's lack of resolution, against the off-hand tone of the lines, opening new tangents rather than settling for reasonable explanations is the result of thwarted expectations. 'And in the end' is an open-ended ending. Re-awakening religious awe, the conclusion is attuned to the theme, 'only wonder/ And don't know'. The reader finds himself again at the point of re-entry into the fish-world. The organization of the poem moves surely and exactly to this point.

Other examples of this architectonic, arising from and subtly reinforcing content, can be discerned in other of Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Starting from the 'Thick, smooth-fleshed silver' of the

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1 Kangaroo, p.140.

2 Letters of Aldous Huxley, ed. Grover Smith, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969), p.334, 24 April 1930.

trunk, "Bare Fig-Trees" follows different trains of symbolic thought, suggested to it by the trees' sensuous outlines. Religious and political implications are sketched out; the poet returns to the sensuous presence of the tree; then sets out again. The questions raised are not answered, nor the implications resolved: a weird, democratic, 'Wicked fig-tree, equality puzzle' remains. The poem's morphology has been uncannily like the tree's. Much of "Almond Blossom" is devoted to reproducing the stages of its miraculous stepping forth, again and again, from the iron of December; and much of "Sicilian Cyclamens" to hymning a successive opening of dawns on the Mediterranean. "The Evangelistic Beasts" consistently displays this overall structural principle. From the first line of "St Matthew" a 'remorseless logic' of statement, contradiction and qualification is pursued in a search for certitude. Concurrently the poem constructs a restless cosmology out of heaven, the abyss and, suspended between them, middle-earth. The paraclete and lark belong to the air, the bat and fish to the deeps, and Matthew the man, in thought and act, is a traveller between the two. "St Mark"'s structure depends on a knowledge of the monuments of Venice.[1] We start at the Cathedral of St Mark with its figures of all four evangelists displayed on the pendentives; or alternatively in the Cathedral plaza, with its tall column surmounted by the winged lion. The column may remind us of 'the inaccessible pillar of light' on which the Lamb descends, and then of the uplifting of the lion on the 'wings of the morning'. Although the fable ranges far from Italy, we are carried back to

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1 See Kenneth Innis, D. H. Lawrence's Bestiary: A Study of His Use of Animal Trope and Symbol, (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), p.67; Poems, ed. Pinto, p.1014; Poetry of the 1920s, ed. Sydney Bolt, (Longmans, 1967), p.251.

Venice, looking still at the old stone lion:

> .. his paw on the world
> At Venice and elsewhere.
> Going blind at last.

"St Luke" resembles the fable of Watt's discovery of steam-power. From the moment we learn that the bull is a furnace, or worse a volcano, and that 'the narrow sluice of procreation' through which he pours his fire has become 'Too small a vent', the tension begins to mount. In the event, the casual last line, suddenly and unexpectedly expanding the allegorical significance -- 'The bull of the proletariat has got his head down' -- releases this tension. We comprehend abruptly how the bull's pent energy will be unleashed. The allegory of "St John" remains unfixed and fluid. John is at once apostle, author of the fourth gospel, and of the Book of Revelation. His eagle, the Hebrew symbol for the spirit,[1] merges with the Paraclete, distinguishes itself from the dove, and becomes at last the phoenix. The first half of the poem traces the ascent of the 'mind-soaring' eagle, scorning the earth and outpeering the sun; the second its descent to 'dung-whitened Patmos'. But in John of Patmos' Revelation can be found relics of the astrological beasts of the Chaldaeans. In the Chaldaeans' animistic cosmology and in their eagle, Lawrence sees signs of a saner relationship between man and his cosmos:

> "Oh put them back, put them back in the four corners
> of the heavens, where they belong, the Apocalyptic beasts.
> For with their wings full of stars they rule the night ..."

The eagle's dirty white nest symbolizes the end of the era of the spirit. But in the dirt are seen vestiges of ash, of fire, from which the eagle, phoenix-like, may remount the heavens in Chaldaean

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1 Jenner, Christian Symbolism, pp.41, 151.

forms.[1] Lawrence defeats expectations of a simple balance, introducing 'a new conception of beginning and end'.

The ending of "Fish", with its confident, if unorthodox, structural mastery, demonstrates the larger organization of Lawrence's mature poetry. It illustrates the dialectic of subject and object, and the evolution of a meditative verse-form from this dialectic. "Peach" is grounded in a dialectic between poet and reader, and in an interweaving of the poet's own voices to make up an internal dialogue, a comic dramatic form. Internal dialogues are a feature of Lawrence's poetry, from "End of Another Home Holiday" to "Song of a Man Who Has Come Through" and "The Ship of Death". Sandra Gilbert has pointed out the prevalence of a form of conversational address to the reader or the animal itself in Birds, Beasts and Flowers.[2] Since neither is in a position to answer, it is in the interplay of voices within the poet's own dramatic voice that the formal foundations of the vers libre are to be uncovered.

"Peach" is a dramatic monologue, the reader standing in as auditor. It differs from the characteristic Browning monologue, where the speaker reveals himself, by revealing the auditor to himself: the reader may prefer to consider it a monologue addressed to some other, silent character. But the playful, self-deprecating humour makes it difficult to resent the speaker's shrewd assessment of character. In particular, Lawrence can be observed playing

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1 For a description of the phoenix, see Phoenix, p.382. Medieval tradition tended to identify the phoenix with the eagle. The eagle was said to renew himself by flying into the sun, and then dipping himself in a fountain. See Jessie Poesch, "The Phoenix Portrayed", DHLR, V (1972), 203

2 Sandra M. Gilbert, Acts of Attention: The Poems of D. H. Lawrence, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), p.132-34.

delightfully with the conventional expectations of an author of banned books, who is also an inverted Puritan. The drama operates on several levels. Bantering conversation shades into sexual innuendo. Lyrical description enters a symbolic plane, where subconscious desires and social presuppositions are probed. The naturalism of the dramatic sketch is maintained throughout, but between the opening quip and the repeated offer at the end, the peach stone has acquired deeper connotations.

Three widely differing tones of voice are adopted by the speaker, and these tones roughly correspond to three dramatic levels. The first is the lyrical tone in which the natural object is evoked; the second ironical, colloquial, even flippant; the third moralistic and hectoring. Different rhythms and formal devices attach to these tones. The evocation at times is almost incantation, the verse slow-moving, heavily stressed and divided into short lines. Grammatical structure is simplified, to repeated interrogatives in this case. This modifying parallelism seems peculiarly appropriate to Lawrence's sensuous meditations. The loose structure is tightened by patterns of alliteration and assonance: 'Why so velvety, why so voluptuous heavy?' The lines of impish colloquialism are by contrast quick-moving, in a pure, deflating prose rhythm. Whereas the former lyricism was in response to the peach, the prose asides are directed to the reader. Finally, the vein of moralizing oratory produces a longer, discursive, somewhat Whitmanesque line. Questions become rhetorical in this voice; moral and philosophical comment is overt; but the poet seems to talk as much to himself as to any listener. The artistry of "Peach" lies in the playing off of each of these voices against the other. None predominates. None can be identified with the poet's. Lyricism is punctured by, 'I am thinking, of course, of the peach before I ate it'.

Or, becoming conscious of possible cynicism, lyricism veers into lewdness. Then, just as this is getting out of hand, the Puritan enters with his preachment:

> Why was not my peach round and finished like a billiard ball?
> It would have been if man had made it.

But a mercifully ironical devil must chip in, 'Though I've eaten it now'. Another grace is that, while the horror of humanity -- of stonings, gouged hearts and sex-destroying abstraction -- is not forgotten, it is referred to obliquely, never overturning the comic balance. The delight in the natural object and the potentially bitter contrast of this communion to human relations are kept within the bounds of an urbane wit. It is the note on which the poem begins, a friendly sophistication. But to understand the poem's symbolic resonances, one must look to the lyrical natural pietas.

The poem tells where to look, into the 'Blood-red, deep' heart of the peach, depths where the gold flesh is interknit with the red stone and its fibre. A second image is conjured -- 'Somebody's pound of flesh rendered up' -- but the allusion to The Merchant of Venice is not intensive. It does call to mind a conflict between the values of competitive commerce and the frailty of human love, that yet has a resilient toughness. Antonio's sacrifice might conceivably be compared to the peach's, giving its flesh for the seed's nurture. But the allusion is most effective as a sensuous image. An almost fleshly empathy is developed for the peach, for its 'deep' succulence and the weight of its pound of flesh. The mock blasphemy of the throw-away line, 'Heaven knows how it came to pass', leaves in the air the question how it did come to pass, this weight sky-suspended. Then there is the marvellous intuition of the dark, close corrugations of the stone as being secretive. The stone's impenetrability must

veil a penetralium; its hardness must be 'hard with the intention' of keeping mysteries. This is more than just a verbal play, for the seed is the intending component of the tree. The 'secret' is a major theme of Birds, Beasts and Flowers, and its significance in "Fruits" is dilated upon in the epigraph to that section:

> For fruits are all of them female, in them lies the
> seed. And so when they break and show the seed, then
> we look into the womb and see its secrets.

The clue to the secret lies in the not-too-occult interpretation of the seed and of the fissure which issues the seed. In "Figs", for example, the secret has been profaned by being made a public spectacle:

> Every fruit has its secret
> . . . .
> Till the drop of ripeness exudes,
> And the year is over.
>
> And then the fig has kept its secret long enough.
> So it explodes, and you see through the fissure the scarlet
> . . . .
> Like a wound, the exposure of her secret on the open day.
> Like a prostitute, the bursten fig, making a show of her
> secret.

But having said so much of the sexual character of the secret, the secret has not been learned or exposed. It can only be experienced, or else profaned. It remains a mystery.

Deliberation continues on the peach's aerial origin and earthy weight. Weight is suggested onomatopoetically by the mouthful of 'This rolling, dropping, heavy globule'. The fruit had its origin in fragile blossom, a 'shallow-silvery wine-glass on a short stem'. Peach-blossom is of course pink, 'a beautiful sensual pink' to Lawrence.[1] Here, however, he draws attention to the translucence of the petals, making the blossom seem all the more the scion of light and air, and its transformation into the fruit the more incongruous

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1 Phoenix, p.51.

and miraculous. (Perhaps, too, one is at liberty to imagine the wine-glass filled with rosé.) In making us wonder how this odd fruition came to pass, Lawrence leads us back to the sexual nature of the flower and fruit. But while we make the obvious connection, the poet is already making another humorous aside. "Peach" hides its tonal artistry: so much is suggested apparently so casually. Fruit, heart, flower and cup compose a potent symbolic configuration, with nuances of sacrifice, the Eucharist, the magical chalice or grail fertilized by a sword, and fertility rituals generally. The easy, well-modulated handling of these symbolic overtones shows the maturation the poetry has undergone from "Song of a Man Who Has Come Through" to "Peach". Most modern poets would be able to work similar configurations into the texture of their poetry. Lawrence's skill lies in piecing together this understructure at the same time as maintaining a witty dramatic surface and arousing religious wonder at a living thing. This process is not often overtly religious. But the puzzlement and wonder at 'silvery peach-bloom' introduces the reader to the same imaginative plane as this full-length description of almond-blossom from Sea and Sardinia:

> ..beautiful they were, their pure, silvery pink gleaming so nobly, like a transfiguration, tall and perfect in that strange cradled river-bed parallel with the sea. Almond trees were in flower beneath grey Orosei, almond trees came near the road, and we could see the hot eyes of the individual blossoms, almond trees stood on the upward slope before us. And they had flowered in such noble beauty there, in that trough where the sun fell magnificent and the sea-glare whitened all the air with a sort of God-presence, they gleamed in their incandescent sky-rosiness. [1]

Lawrence creates and tests his lyricism in the poetry in an atmosphere of wit and satire. Yet he jokes, not to express ridicule, but joy.

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1 Sea and Sardinia, p.165.

The wine-glass of the blossom is a useful prop or stage-direction, with the help of which it is possible to reconstruct a mise en scène for the poem. It is an out-door dinner-party. Since Ken Russell adapted passages from "Figs" for his film of Women in Love, he will perhaps forgive the critic of the poetry for lifting a clip from his film. Predictably, the Laurentian protagonist dares to eat a peach. Predictably, too, he is eloquent, his discourse on the nature of things becoming tinged with sexual insinuation. He is crude, suggestive, provincial. A current Midlands slang usage of 'peach' has just the anatomical reference he applies to it.[1] Then, turning to Hermione -- we would not have him look at us at this juncture -- his tone abruptly changes to the outraged Puritan. He berates the modern idealist-materialist nexus, seeking to exterminate sex, and seal up all peaches for use as billiard-balls. This is the fanatic we know all too well, from the memoirs. Yet at the same time he is eating a peach. Somewhere in the course of the poem the peach is eaten. Isn't each haranguing, rhetorical question punctuated with a bite, until 'I've eaten it now'? We can hear him doing it, accumulating mouthfuls of lovingly protracted vowels:

> Why the groove?
> Why the lovely bivalve roundnesses?
> Why the ripple down the sphere?
> Why the suggestion of incision?
>
> Why was not my peach round and finished ...

Aware of his own susceptibilities, Lawrence plays on his auditor's. A reader may find in himself a resistance to admitting the cleft, with all that sensuous meditation on it entails. The Lawrence-Birkin of "Peach" is 'a changer'. He is like a peach-stone, there being something impenetrable, impervious yet fluid, in his rapid combination

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1 Cf. The First Lady Chatterley, p.156

of lewdness, fun and high seriousness. Yet the humour is not detached or supercilious. He offers himself, a good-humoured scapegoat torn by the same problems, to our wrath.

In the fine blend of satire and self-caricature, it is a mistake to locate Lawrence in any one of his voices. They are not masks but attributes; yet Lawrence is, in addition, the artist co-ordinating these voices. From their interaction and the subject/object dialectic he creates the poem. The voices are formal units in "Peach": if not determined, they are shaped and modulated by the sonic qualities normally thought of as constituting a metric, by rhythm and internal rhyme, assonance and alliteration. Only hesitantly could this vers libre be called a metric. The patterns of rhythm and sound are, however, subtly and organically tied, not so much to theme as to the tone of voice. These tones are then interwoven into the composite expressionism of the poem. Birds, Beasts and Flowers shows a mature artist fashioning a technique out of a complex expressionism; for only by means of complete self-expression can the 'act of pure attention', or total impression, be rendered.[1] Possibly, in a detailed analysis of Birds, Beasts and Flowers, other voices than these would be admitted to the fold. Frequently the unsuccess of individual poems can be attributed to the dominance of one voice. "Figs" has too much of the moralist about it. The long, derisive fable of "St Mark" flags. It may be that "Almond Blossom" sustains for too long an unbroken lyrical note. Set beside these, "Peach" is a small but decided success. The most accomplished poems, "Snake", for instance, or "Cypresses", do share the tonal agility of "Peach".

A last clue to the volume's formal properties can be obtained by examination of the biographical and chronological evidence

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1 See Etruscan Places, p.153

relating to the poetry, and by a comparison of the poetry with the contemporary prose. The chronological evidence consists of letters, a note-book from the Frieda Lawrence Collection,[1] containing a rudimentary business diary and drafts of certain poems, three of them dated, a memoir by Rosalind Popham, and finally the locations appended by Lawrence himself to the poems. The evidence has been assembled by Tedlock, Moore and Sagar.[2] Apparently because Lawrence locates "The Mosquito" in Syracuse, Sagar thinks this was the first poem to be written, in late April 1920. "Snake" and a handful of shorter poems belong to the summer of 1920;[3] but the majority of the poems were composed during the autumn and winter of 1920-21 at San Gervasio and Fiesole, and at the Lawrences' villa, Fontana Vecchia, in Taormina. Sagar dates "The Evening Land" between April and July, 1921: "Fish" in July or August; and the poems set in Florence, "Bat" and "Man and Bat", in September. The Perahera in Kandy, described in "Elephant", took place on 23 March 1922;[4] "Kangaroo" may have been set down in Australia; and the final group of poems was composed in the autumn and winter of 1922-23. "Spirits Summoned West" could have been the last poem committed to paper. Lawrence assembled and revised the poem early in February 1922, taking care to ensure the accuracy of the final text.[5] Improvements were made

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1 Ferrier, MS 54.

2 E. W. Tedlock, The Frieda Lawrence Collection of D. H. Lawrence Manuscripts: A Descriptive Bibliography, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1948), pp.87-93, 98, 100-01; Moore, Intelligent Heart, pp.273, 282-83, 289, 309; Keith Sagar, The Art of D. H. Lawrence, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp.118, 130, 142.

3 See ed. Nehls, II, p.43, 1 June 1920.

4 Letters, ed. Huxley, p.541, 25 March 1922.

5 Letters, ed. Moore, p.739, 10 February 1923; Ferrier, TSS 57 and 58 are evidence of this care.

made even on the proofs.[1]

Rosalind Popham's memoir recalls how Lawrence stayed at the Villa Canovaia, San Gervasio, in the autumn of 1920:

> While he was there he wrote "The Evangelistic Beasts", the tortoise poems, "The Pomegranate", "The Peach" and "The Figs". Sometimes he came to Fiesole, where I was now living, climbing by a steep track up through the olives and along the remains of Fiesole's Etruscan walls, and arriving rather jauntily, carrying something peculiar and humorous -- a salamander or a little baby duck as a pet for the children ... It was here that several other poems were suggested -- "Cypresses", for example. I remember very well meeting with the Turkey Cock, the swart grape, and the sorb apple, and how Lawrence spoke of these things as we were walking among the farms and the country lanes above Fiesole. [2]

In view of what has been said of a dialectic between speaker and auditor, it is interesting to find a conversational origin for some of the poems. More interesting still is the suggestion of a period of discussion, a procedure of simmering, saturation and lixiviation, before the poem is finally decanted. The letters and the prose tend to confirm this presumption about the mode of composition. Early in 1920, while staying in Capri, Lawrence's thoughts were veering back to the early Mediterranean civilizations. The narcissus flowers among the rocks aroused his elegiac feeling and nostalgia for Greece;[3] the rocky coast brought memories of Ulysses and 'a lost self, Mediterranean, anterior to us'.[4] Soon he was looking southwards, where 'Ulysses' ship left the last track in the waves'.[5] There he discovered Sicily's flowers: 'a tiny blue iris as high as your finger ...

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1 Ferrier, PMS 60.

2 Ed. Nehls, II, p.49.

3 Letters, ed. Moore, p.605, 4 January 1920.

4 Letters, ed. Moore, p.617, 25 January 1920.

5 Letters, ed. Moore, p.623, 13 February 1920.

The world's morning -- that and the wild cyclamen thrill me with this sense'.[1] Later, thinking back on his first impressions, he described Sicily as:

> .. the dawn-place, Europe's dawn, with Odysseus pushing his ships out of the shadows into the blue. Whatever had died for me, Sicily had then not died: dawn-lovely Sicily, and the Ionian sea ... /The/ sun rose with a splendour like trumpets every morning, and me rejoicing in this dawn, day-dawn, life-dawn, the dawn which is Greece, which is me. [2]

The impressions are crystallized at last in "Sicilian Cyclamens", where a civilization is seen becoming conscious of itself and of beauty, while the 'Dawn-pink' cyclamens unfold around it:

> Greece and the world's morning
> Where all the Parthenon marbles still fostered the roots
> of the cyclamen.

The dawn may have had a further personal significance for Lawrence, symbolizing a sense of wonder, renascent in the sunny Mediterranean, after the misery of war-time England. The germ of Birds, Beasts and Flowers lay in this dawn of wonder and opening of a new world. The effort to recapture the beauty of the 'dawn-sea' seems also to have been the originative impulse of Last Poems.

The process of gestation which lies behind "Sicilian Cyclamens" can be seen again in various letters describing the Perahera in Kandy.[3] In the last of these letters Lawrence returns with renewed interest to the symbolic potential of the procession. He sees in the Prince of Wales a type for the white, idealist, Christian consciousness, 'a little glum white fish ... Narcissus

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1 Ed. Nehls, II, p.34, 31 March 1920.

2 Phoenix, p.328.

3 Letters, ed. Huxley, p.541, 25 March 1922;
Letters, ed. Moore, p.696-97, 24 March 1922; p.699, 3 April 1922; p.700, 10 April 1922; p.701, 30 April 1922.

waiting to commit black suicide'. The elephants and devil-dancers become creatures from the primordial past, 'a glimpse into the world before the Flood'. The symbolic suggestions are drawn together in "Elephant", the ideas of natural aristocracy and demoniacal jeering are expatiated on, and an introduction with salaaming elephant and postscript with fireworks display are added. These supplement the central symbols: within massive, moving, bestial darknesses, the primitive dancers unveil a secret in their dark eyes; and above, the Prince floats like a 'pale little wisp' of consciousness, nervous and insubstantial. The poem's composition must surely have followed this epistolary turning over of ideas and clarifying of symbols. It is not intended to hold up "Elephant" as a paragon of the poetry; its procedure is more one of accretion than selection; but it is an instance where the means of insight has been preserved into the process of accumulation and deliberation which underlies the poetry. From this glimpse into the poet's mind a picture may be reassembled of a mature artist, dealing with his familiar concerns, bringing into exact and satisfying configuration the images of his present and the symbols of his past experience.

VI ii

> That which is whole, torn asunder,
> That which is in part, finding its whole again throughout
> the universe. 1

> "Why dost thou smile so at me?" inquired Hester, troubled at the expression of his eyes. "Art thou like the Black Man that haunts the forest round about us? Hast thou enticed me into a bond that will prove the ruin of my soul?" 2

Birds, Beasts and Flowers fallsinto two parts, the poems written in Europe, including some about a hypothetical America, and the poems actually written in America. The latter will be considered as a kind of concluding chapter to the volume. For the former, the chronology shows that they were composed mainly within a period of eighteen months, from spring 1920 to autumn 1921, and the majority were set down in only six months of that period. Among these poems, then, one would expect to find a cohesion in symbolism and theme. This expectation is further stimulated by the grouping into sets of poems, "Fruits", "Trees", "Flowers", and so on. The sets and their attached epigraphs hint at interrelationships between poems. Connections between the sets themselves begin to appear, and an overall organic unity in the whole volume eventually emerges. It is in the first section and the first poem, "Pomegranate", that the clue to this principle of organization can be gathered.

"Pomegranate" begins, in mid-conversation, with a good-humoured outburst on the infallibility of poetic intuition or the sensitive impression. Some relaxed reminiscences follow. The poet

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1 Poems, ed. Pinto, p.367

2 Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, (London: Dent, 1906), p.95

has seen the fruit at various stages of its propagation in different parts of Italy. As he recalls its ripening, he concentrates on the process of growth itself.[1] It seems miraculous, a 'crown of spiked green metal/ Actually growing!' At last he finds a fully ripened specimen:

> Now in Tuscany
> Pomegranates to warm your hands at;
> And crowns, kingly, generous, tilting crowns
> Over the left eyebrow.

The rich colour of the fruit is finely communicated by the hyperbolic conceit. It is like a brazier full of fire or life, and from its fulness able to transmit an overflow of life. The generosity and largesse seem kingly. The royalty lies not in institutionalized power, but in the perfect assurance of a thing that is itself without reference to others, and yet is able to issue life to others. Perhaps this is the aristocratic rightness that the poet arrogates as belonging to the poetic impression. The luxury with which the pomegranate is associated in the Song of Solomon may contribute to Lawrence's and the reader's sense of it as 'one of the lords of life'. To the ancient pagan world, as well, it was the fruit of Dionysus,[2] a recollection that adds to its regal attributes.

While the pomegranate's crown seems male, this is also its fissure, carrying a female suggestiveness. As in "Peach", the poet wonders naively why the mind would rather avoid these associations. At the same time with alarming speed he expands the significance

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1 The enigmatic reference to Syracuse in line 4 may have to do with the island's stone quarries or latomies. Cf. The Lost Girl, p.325.

2 Frazer, The Golden Bough, p.512.

of the rupture in the leathery skin. Suddenly the fruit's warm colour is transmuted into 'setting suns'; its spherical shape becomes the whole sky, slit by dawn or sunset. The fruit and the seeds glimpsed through the slit represent the whole principle of mutability, of transience and regeneration, which the mind would have reduced to static abstraction:

> For all that, the setting suns are open.
> The end cracks open with the beginning:
> Rosy, tender, glittering within the fissure.

The juxtaposed images of the fruit, the fissure and the seeds, and of day, sunset and sunrise, are fused in 'glittering, compact drops of dawn'. These are the seeds. But the split sphere has one more transformation to undergo:

> For my part, I prefer my heart to be broken.
> It is so lovely, dawn-kaleidoscopic within the crack.

The heart, the central physical and emotional self, enjoys and endures its own crises of death and rebirth. Hence it apprehends fully the world of flux and new life, which the mind murders to dissect. The heart does not discriminate, but it does understand, intuitively, by impressions. By compression the symbolism has breathed new life into the dead metaphor of a breaking heart. The Protean symbol of cyclical change, the fruit-day-heart, does not rest here, however. It is expanded through other poems, breaking open to issue other patterns and images, 'dawn-kaleidoscopic'. The very mobility of the symbol or race of images expresses motile life.

One of the lines from "Pomegranate", 'The end cracks open with the beginning', is an improvement from an earlier version, 'The last day fissured open with tomorrow'.[1] The earlier draft indicates

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1 The Dial, LXX (March 1921), 317-18.

how germane to the cycles of growth in Birds, Beasts and Flowers is the paradigm of apocalyptic renewal in Look! We Have Come Through! and Women in Love. The model of cyclical growth and decay can be extended outside the life of Nature and the emotional heart to the rise and fall of societies and civilizations. In "Figs" the seasonal ripening of the fruit is comparable to 'The year of our women'. The fig is taken as a type for covertness and modesty, because its flowers are hidden within a fleshy receptacle, which is sometimes mistaken for the unripe fruit. Sometimes assigned a Persian origin, the tree is one of the oldest of known cultivated plants; from ancient times it has been an important crop to the peoples of the Mediterranean. Hence, it is described as a 'Mediterranean fruit':

> Folded upon itself, enclosed like any Mohammedan woman,
> It's nakedness all within-walls, its flowering forever unseen ...

That, in Lawrence's opinion, is 'how it should be, the female should always be secret'. But, because modern woman is prepared to assert her rights and her sexual being, she must belong to the last phase of her greater year, when:

> .. the fig dies, showing her crimson through the purple slit
> Like a wound, the exposure of her secret, on the open day.

A flash of grim humour briefly intrudes, in the vignette of the modern Eve stitching fig-leaves 'to adorn the bursten fig'. It may have been suggested by Hester Prynne's needlework in The Scarlet Letter. But for the most part the tone of "Figs" is hectoring and didactic: 'The year of our women is fallen over-ripe', and they 'won't keep', 'Ripe figs won't keep ... won't keep, won't keep ... won't keep'. The paradigm of decay is explored in subtler poems than this. Still, the preachment of "Figs" does explicitly develop some connotations of the fruit's fissure, as an uterus, a womb, or in its final throes,

a wound.

"Bare Fig-Trees" translates the model of fruition from "Fruits" to "Trees". The 'Thick, smooth-fleshed silver' of the tree goes some way towards recalling the golden skin of the pomegranate. But it is in the new shoots of life that the affinity emerges between the fruit's fissures and the tree's twigs:

> With marvellous naked assurance each single twig,
> Each one setting off straight to the sky
> As if it were the leader, the main-stem, the forerunner,
> Intent to hold the candle of the sun upon its socket-tip,
> It alone.

Like the pomegranate, the fig is sacred to Dionysus, and in the shoots is an intimation of the god's birth from Zeus' thigh, in 'Every young twig/ ... issued sideways from the thigh of his predecessor'. Shoots and seeds both contain, symbolically and biochemically, the sun's energy; but whereas the seeds lie waiting in the vulvic fissure, the phallic shoots rise up to the sun. Lawrence's paradigm for growth, if it includes the processes of fruition and seeding, is not exclusively vegetative. His "Cypresses", 'supple, brooding, softly-swaying pillars of dark flame', certainly have a phallic reference. It is probably on account of its phallic moon --

> Come up, thou red thing.
> Come up, and be called a moon.

-- that "Southern Night" is grouped among "Trees". Plagued by 'northern memories', possibly of the War, the poet foresees the 'Bitter-stinging white world that bore us/ Subsiding into this night'. The moon's rising is a sexual atrocity committed on the darkness, yet the cataclysm that it portends may allow the springing of new life. The assault on the night's hymen of stars is an initiation, possibly into a new age of consciousness.

The Protean symbol of the cleft sphere or interrupted cycle

is not yet exhausted. The inclusion of "Peace" among "Fruits" is as deliberate as the grouping of "Southern Night". Earlier Lawrence had defined peace as 'the condition of flying within the greatest impulse entering us from the unknown'.[1] His concept of peace would symbolize itself rather in molten lava than in the hardened tufa slab that formed the doorstep to his villa. The mason who had carved 'Pax' on this slab must have conceived of peace as lifeless, static security; whereas Lawrence's 'heart will know no peace/ Till the hill bursts'. The fruit-day-sun symbol is extended to include the volcanic shell of Mt Etna; the fissure and seeds correspond to the ejection of:

> Brilliant, intolerable lava,
> Brilliant as a powerful burning-glass,
> Walking like a royal snake down the mountain towards
> the sea.

The eruption is a 'royal' self-fulfilment, like the overflowing kingliness of the pomegranate. Again, the lines invite comparison with "snake", where the reptile, emerging from the earth, comes to seem 'Like a king in exile'. An underlying implication in this poem is that the world created by the voices of the poet's education is already tense with the rumblings of a new dispensation. Yet in the longing of the heart for catastrophe in "Peace" a certain cruelty is admitted. It is a cruelty aggravated by the repressive fear with which change has been resisted, and its recoil brings a moment of nostalgia for lost worlds:

> Naxos thousands of feet below the olive-roots,
> And now the olive leaves thousands of feet below the
> lava fire.

"Turkey-Cock" develops this volcanic imagery. The bird's lustrous plumage 'Seems like the black and glossy seeds of countless

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1 Phoenix, p.669.

centuries', yet the poem wonders if, after all this time, they still hold the potential for revival. The bird's colouring is modelled on a blast furnace as much as a volcano. Its 'wattles are the colour of steel-slag which has been red-hot/ And is getting cold'. Blake's "The Tyger" had been thoroughly fired in the furnace of creation, but Lawrence doubts whether his turkey has undergone the crisis of renewal. It seems the avatar of 'raw, unsmelted passion, that will not quite fuse from the dross'. 'Every great locality expresses itself perfectly, in its own flowers, its own birds and beasts', is Lawrence's creed.[1] He hopes to find in the turkey the aboriginal daimon of America, since that spirit may hold the clue for the regeneration of Europe. He does see in the bird 'A raw American will, that has never been tempered by life', as well as other qualities that attract and repel him. But the element of impurity, the lack of royalty in the turkey, leaves him uncertain. The dross may be domestication; for Lawrence's imaginative sympathy and his honorific titles of 'royal' are reserved for wild creatures. His response to the bull of "St Luke", to which the turkey is specifically compared, is equally equivocal. The bull is a constricted furnace or volcano, 'With cavernous nostrils where the winds run hot' and a heart that rumbles ominously. Domestication has constrained him 'to pour forth all his fire down the narrow sluice of procreation', but this is 'too narrow'. The repercussions become an allegory for political uprising. Domestication implies human intervention: the turkey is the bird of the Aztecs, the bull the beast of the modern working class, led by its nose. The symbolic complex with which Lawrence surrounds 'the bull of the proletariat' parallels Shelley's symbolism in Prometheus Unbound. But the political and historical

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1 The Symbolic Meaning, p.30.

implications which Lawrence foresees, transferring his model of cyclical growth into the sphere of human affairs, are very different from Shelley's.

In compliance with the policy of "Peace", Lawrence's sympathies lie with the revolutionary faction. Although his historical sense of revolution embraces the concept of endless recurrence, nonetheless, at the end of an old cycle he eagerly welcomes the catastrophe that inaugurates the new:

> I long to be a bolshevist
> And set the stinking rubbish-heap of this foul world
> Afire at a myriad scarlet points,
> A bolshevist, a salvia-face
> To lick the world with flame that licks it clean.

But he sees nowhere among the Sicilian socialists those traits of lordship and bright, eruptive anger that should herald in the new age of consciousness:

> No salvia-frenzied comrades, antennae
> Of yellow-red, outreaching, living wrath
> Upon the smouldering air,
> And throat of brimstone-molten angry gold.

The <u>socialisti</u> compare invidiously with the ancient, aristocratic flowers they wear. Lawrence's political views did not lack silliness. They suffered from that very abstraction against which he inveighed. Readily open to criticism,[1] in "Hibiscus and Salvia Flowers" his understanding of current political trends may seem ludicrously superficial and schematic, blinkered by simplistic historiography.

Historiographical schemata figure importantly in Lawrence's thought, but he did take some care in <u>Movements in European History</u> to work out his ideas in detail. His approach in this school textbook to his immensely complex subject was without dogmatism or schematismm.

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1 See Henderson, <u>Poet and Society</u>, p.185

History is said to have an undetermined morphology, although patterns of departure and return can be seen in past events. Looking back on the unity of the Roman Empire, Lawrence guessed:

> Now the circle has almost been completed again. Europe seems to move towards the institution of one vast state ruled by the infinite numbers of the people -- the producers, the proletariat, the workmen. [1]

His view of European history is not unrealistic; nor did his prediction that the 'one vast state' would demand a martial leader lack prescience. But it should be insisted that it is almost invariably misleading to align Lawrence's social manifestoes with left or right, communist or fascist, or any other point of the standard political compass. They spring from such totally different precepts and imperatives. For this reason his political theories remained always a combination of baseless abstraction and unexpected shrewdness. Even in "Hibiscus and Salvia Flowers", which, rather than enunciate a creed, fights shy of any commitment, some of this shrewdness is apparent. One reason for rejecting socialism seems to be the poet's snobbish distaste at the comrades' 'Sunday suits and yellow boots'. But he dwells on these details as manifestations of a dull, cabbage-like streak in these men, in their politics and aspirations. Bolshevism seemed likely to turn out boring, as boring as was the prospect of endless '<u>socialisti</u> v. <u>fascisti</u> squibbing', which Lawrence predicted for Italy.[2]

The historical and political paradigm in <u>Birds, Beasts and Flowers</u> is one of apocalyptic recurrence. The Last Days of our Christian era are, as always, at hand, but the succeeding new heaven and earth will be as liable to apocalypse as the old. The phoenix is the type of this recurrence:

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1 <u>Movements in European History</u>, p.294

2 <u>Letters</u>, ed. Moore, p.644, 2 March 1921; and <u>cf</u>. <u>Phoenix II</u>, p.563 : 'Now I no longer believe very deeply in Socialism, because I am afraid it might be dull ...'

> The poor old golden eagle of the word-fledged spirit
> Moulting and moping and waiting, willing at last
> For the fire to burn it up, feathers and all,
> So that a new conception of the beginning and end
> Can rise from the ashes.
>
> . . . .
>
> Phoenix, Phoenix,
> The next is in flames,
> Feathers are singeing,
> Ash flutters flocculent, like down on a blue, wan
> fledgeling.

Of course, this 'conception of the beginning and end' is not very new. As historiography it owes a good deal to Lawrence's youthful mentor, Carlyle:

> For us, who happen to live while the World-Phoenix is burning herself, and burning so slowly that, as Teufelsdröckh calculates, it were a handsome bargain would she engage to have done 'within two centuries', there seems to lie but an ashy prospect. Not altogether so, however, does the Professor figure it. 'In the living subject', says he, 'change is wont to be gradual: thus, while the serpent sheds its old skin, the new is already formed beneath. Little knowest thou of the burning of a World-Phoenix, who fanciest that she must first burn-out, and lie as a dead cinereous heap; and therefrom the young one start-up by miracle, and fly heaven-ward. Far otherwise! In that Fire-whirlwind, Creation and Destruction proceed together; even as the ashes of the Old are blown about, do organic filaments of the New mysteriously spin themselves ... ' [1]

Nor does Lawrence's concept of recurrence force him into a sociologically progressive position. In "Purple Anemones" the dark flowers are new, phallic shoots sent up in spring to pursue the escaped bride of the underworld. They are despatched by 'Dis,/ The dark one./ Persephone's master.' Persephone and Demeter, 'Those two enfranchised women', need to be returned to a sense of duty, of the husband's rights. Persephone, '<u>The bit of husband-tilth she is</u>', still has a male chauvinist for a husband. More adroit and amusing in its tone, "Purple Anemones" is as sexually reactionary as "Figs". For Lawrence the model of recurrence is remarkably apolitical and non-doctrinaire in its intellectual consequences. There is little

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1 Carlyle, <u>Sartor Resartus</u>, p.183

political or historical specificity in its application in Birds, Beasts and Flowers. As Lawrence hinted in the introduction to Movements in European History, historical schemata are not so much a means of accurately and truthfully ordering known facts, as of relating random events to the inner, emotional life, the heart of "Pomegranate". As he proposed elsewhere in the book, the modern concern should be less with the 'material conditions of life' and more with 'the inward satisfaction the deep spirit demands', with a religious activity that will usher in a new era of consciousness.[1]

In the poetry Lawrence turns to the suggestively undocumented past, to relate this to his subjective experience. In "Sicilian Cyclamens" he is stirred to unembarrassed flights of lyricism by the Edenic 'world's morning', when Mediterranean civilizations rose up in prehistory. The darkness preceding this awakening was split by light. The cycle is now split by a metaphorical weapon, the knife-like light playing across the Mediterranean, brandished in the exposed eyes of the savages. After this Oedipal wounding the savages see for the first time the 'dawn-rose' cyclamens. It seems that, because Lawrence is free to create his own story, he is better able to enrich awareness of the flower, adding a temporal dimension to perception. He attaches to the flowers' coloration a symbolic or even mystic significance, which it can still bear in the modern world. The flowers become 'little living myths'.[2] Veering away from verifiable historical and scientific data, but adhering to concrete perceptions and intuition, the poems recreate a religious vision that begins to answer 'what the deep spirit demands'. Hence, in Mornings in Mexico

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1 Movements in European History, pp.xxvi-xxviii, 272; and cf. Kangaroo, p.111

2 Twilight in Italy, p.88.

Lawrence considers replacing scientific evolution by an ancient Aztec schema of recurrent change, which seems to answer better the facts of intuition and experience:

> Myself, I don't believe in evolution, like a long string hooked on to a First Cause, and being slowly twisted in unbroken continuity through the ages. I prefer to believe in what the Aztecs called Suns: that is, Worlds successively created and destroyed. The sun itself convulses and the worlds go out like so many candles when somebody coughs in the middle of them. Then subtly, mysteriously, the sun convulses again, and a new set of worlds begins to flicker alight ... the little humming birds beginning to sparkle in the darkness. [1]

A subjective cosmology can enhance communion with the objective world. The cycles of Birds, Beasts and Flowers are perhaps more Heraclitean than Mexican;[2] but they are noticeably more pagan and less Christian than in Look! We Have Come Through! They are in continuous, overlapping flux, for all man does to arrest or ignore them. Coming through or transcendence in these cycles at the moment of crisis is still a factor in Lawrence's metaphysic, but is now firmly anchored in incarnate experience. "Almond Blossom" is a hymn to such fleshly transcendence, as it is represented by the blossom itself.

Bursting from the iron of the almond-trees' boughs, the 'Sore-hearted-looking' blossom engages the human heart in response. Products of the iron age, the trees raise memories of the War. They jut from the earth like 'iron hooks', 'rusty swords' 'hacked and gone black', and 'iron implements twisted, hideous'. Yet iron is a protective armour: the tree is 'dawn-hearted', despite the iron that has entered its soul during long ages of exile. An autobiographical

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1 Mornings in Mexico, p.12-13

2 Cf. John Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy, (London: Black, 1908) (Second edition), p.163.

element is detectable. The tree's origins are uncertain; possibly it spread from central Asia. But its exile is not so much geographical, to Lawrence, as temporal. With old roots in 'the ancient southern earth whence the vases were baked, amphoras, craters, cantherus, oenochoe, and open-hearted cylix', the tree is forced to take on the appearance of the present age; yet there is promise of a new age in its blossoms' openness. 'Snow-remembering', the tree retains 'Some memory of far, sun-gentler lands'. Through the iron age of winter it has carried an unbroken pledge of renewal. As the first Mediterranean tree to put forth blossom, the almond-tree has been traditionally associated with regeneration. Aaron's rod and Hermes' caduceus were made of almond wood. Recent history adds a human poignancy to what is perceived as an act of self-exposure and -fulfilment on the part of a :

> .. fragile-tender life-body,
> More fearless than iron all the time,
> And so much prouder, so disdainful of reluctances.

It is a spontaneous act, proceeding from a core of selfhood within the tree:

> Unpromised,
> No bounds being set.
> Flaked out and come unpromised,
> The tree being life-divine,
> Fearing nothing, life-blissful at the core ...

In the assurance of the blossom a new quality, not simply royal but divine, is manifest. The mystic chemistry underlying its godhead can be analysed. The tree 'knows the deadliest poison, like a snake/ In supreme bitterness'. Prosaically, the kernels of the bitter almond contain an oil and an enzyme which, under hydrolysis, yield prussic (hydrocyanic) acid. (It is this substance which has the bitter almond odour, dear to detective stories.) Yet this very poison, redolent of the end of the old cycle, holds the magical

principle by which the old is made new. From bitter iron steps forth the 'honey-bodied beautiful one'. Its blossoms are 'fish-silvery': cast forth upon the air, they foretell a new era. Nevertheless, the obscurer reaches of the psychic chemistry fail to convey the wonder and pathos as adequately as Lawrence's purely sensuous response to the blossom, a perception not so much visual as visceral and sexual:

> Soundless, bliss-full, wide-rayed, honey-bodied,
> Red at the core
>
> . . .
>
> Open,
> Open,
> Five times wide open,
> Six times wide open,
> And given, perfect;
> And red at the core with the last sore-heartedness,
> Sore-hearted-looking.

Lawrence's compound adjectives -- 'dawn-hearted', 'Sword-blade-born' -- resemble the epithets by which the attributes of classical gods were specified. Their function in "Almond Blossom" is to designate the flowers' 'God-presence'.[1] The god immanent in the blossom is Christ, but Christ as a vegetation-god, with the emphasis taken from suffering and placed on resurrection and wholeness:

> Oh, give me the tree of life in blossom
> And the Cross sprouting its superb and fearless flowers!

Winter with its bitter cup is Gethsemane to the tree. Its sacrifice is a necessary prelude to fulfilment. But the Cross itself becomes a bed of consummation, as in certain patristic commentators,[2] and Christ is identified with the bridegroom, as so often in the New Testament. The coming of the bridegroom, who 'in a great and sacred forthcoming steps forth, steps out in one stride/ A naked tree of blossom', develops the image of "Moonrise". Both derive ultimately from Psalm xix. Other parallels can be drawn with Look! We Have Come Through!, notably with "Craving for Spring". The 'blood of man ...

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1 Sea and Sardinia, p.165

2 Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p.45.

purpling with violets' there, is here the blood that 'ripples with untellable delight of once-more-vindicated faith'. The plea of "Craving for Spring" --

> Come quickly, and vindicate us
> against too much death.

-- has been answered in "Almond Blossom", a paean responding to the earlier dithyramb. In this way the simple earlier motif of the dying god is woven into the symbolic complex of Birds, Beasts and Flowers, where God-presence is witnessed emerging from growing, living things. The climax of the paradigm of cyclical regeneration is presented in Tortoises: it is this series which explicates the subtlety of Lawrence's organic model and mythic thought.

The series begins with "Baby Tortoise", the young reptile having just heaved free of its broken egg. Its first action in its new world, the garden, cracks open a new cycle of individual life. The 'first bite at some dim bit of herbage' is a momentous opening of the 'little mountain front' of its face. Inside gleams the vulnerable pinkness of fresh life, 'Soft red tongue and hard thin gums'. The baby tortoise unites the superhuman fearsomeness of Etna with the poignancy of fragile almond-blossom. We must recognize the unconscious heroism of this adventure into chaos by an 'Invincible fore-runner', 'No bigger than my thumb-nail'. Lawrence plays on the Latin testudo, meaning both tortoise and a military formation of linked shields. The 'little Titan' is a hero, but does have a chink in his armour. Unlike the inhumanly finished and limited fish, the adult tortoise has been:

> Dragged out of an eternity of silent isolation
> And doomed to partiality, partial being,
> Ache and want of being,
> Want,
> Self-exposure, hard humiliation, need to add himself
> on to her.

Emerged from a fish-like eternity of isolation, the tortoise exemplifies the beginnings of warm-blooded sexuality. Lawrence is on a fairly firm scientific footing. The chelonia do not belie their primordial, saurian appearance. Fossil remains occur from the Triassic period, with no certain antecedents, and these early forms are little distinguished from modern species. Tortoises are a window into the zoological past. Birds, Beasts and Flowers frequently appeals to the concept of evolutionary time, and even to the evolution of one species from another: only the mechanism of Darwin's theory, natural selection, is rejected. Thus a temporal depth is found in the living object. Not just at its individual birth, but in the context of evolutionary time the tortoise represents a new dawn, a 'first bell sounding/ From the warm blood, in the dark-creation morning'. Its warm-bloodedness and sexual incompleteness, seeming a cruel travesty, have guaranteed a progression and unfolding of other life. "Tortoise Shout" recounts the story or mythos of this unfolding.

Sound is added to the symbol of the cleft cycle. The 'eternity of silent isolation' of the fish-world is broken by the tortoise's:

> First faint scream
> Out of life's unfathomable dawn,
> Far off, so far, like a madness, under the horizon's
> dawning rim,
> Far, far off, far scream.

This first noise, 'Breaking the silence of the seas', to quote Wordsworth in a not completely alien context, is sufficiently warm-blooded to touch the human heart:

> A far, was-it-audible scream,
> Or did it sound on the plasm direct?

It is sexual division, linking the pomegranate and tortoise with the human heart, that unifies the Protean symbol, offering the clue as well

to the unanswerable secret. The 'pink, cleft, old-man's throat' of the tortoise screaming in coition is a forerunner of human sexuality. Hence, it is felt to be an origin and equivalent of the symbols of human experience and religion, of the torn veil, Osiris's bull rent in pieces, and the crucifixion. Coming full circle, it is equivalent to the cracked-open dawn of the pomegranate, through which was glimpsed the Dionysian principle of sacrifice and regeneration:

> The pomegranate which sprouted from Dionysus' blood was also the tree of Tammuz-Adonis-Rimmon; its ripe fruit splits open like a wound and shows the red seeds inside. [1]

Christ, Osiris and Dionysus are merged into one, but not into a simplistic vegetation-god. Sexuality and fertility predominate in this climacteric moment, but the commonly accepted meaning of 'sexuality' must be widened to accommodate Lawrence's meaning.

"Tortoise Shout" sets out to answer the question asked by the doubting mind in "Pomegranate", and repeated here:

> Why were we crucified into sex?
> Why were we not left rounded off, and finished in ourselves,
> As we began ...

Sexual function provides one answer: the propagation of the higher animals and plants could not proceed without this division. The almond blossoms, painfully opening themselves in the cold air, allow the almonds to ripen; and sexual reproduction allows diversification within a species, and the modification of one species into another. But the moment of union (rather more than a moment for tortoises) is also a common experience transcending the barriers between man and the animal creation, and between man and beast and god: 'The same

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1 Graves, The Greek Myths, I, p.110

cry from the tortoise as from Christ, the Osiris-cry of abandonment'. Allusion to the crucifixion stresses this ambivalence. Christ's final cry in giving up the ghost, and the veil of the temple simultaneously rent in two, are both heard in 'The silken shriek of the soul's torn membrane .../ The male soul's membrane'. The rent veil reveals the tortoise's inward being, the god of the animal, something of the observer's own intrinsic self and of his god, and the god of the perception or connaissance:

> And so on, till the last plasm of my body was melted back
> To the primeval rudiments of life, and the secret.

It is not only the tortoise's sexual being that is torn apart, but the isolate self of the observer as well. Isolation is broken down, and the god apocalyptically revealed. The god is immanent in the living object, emerging from rather than presiding over its life; yet the revelation seems also to depend on the perceiving of the object by a subject. The end of the tortoise's sexual behaviour lies not in reproduction, but in that 'First faint scream', a unique expression of completed being. The quasi-sexual division between the tortoise and the observer, the object and subject, has also been ruptured and healed at this moment of crisis. Like sexuality, the isolation of selfhood is seen as a felix ruina. Like the tortoise, the human observer completes himself by self-expression, by the poem:

> Sex, which breaks us into voice, sets us calling across
> the deeps, calling, calling for the complement,
> Singing, and calling, and singing again, being answered,
> having found.

Sex is a means of religiously comprehending human alienation. The implicit analogy, of the tortoise's coital crying and the hymn of the poem, is more truly anagogy.

The sexual epiphany in "Tortoise Shout" combines self-fulfilment and -annihilation; it is a knife-edge on which the cycles

of the old and new are transformed. It is 'A death-agony' and 'A birth-cry', a moment of 'Giving up the ghost,/ Or screaming in Pentecost, receiving the ghost'.[1] Lawrence's organic model is not solely devoted to the springing of new life, to birth, growth and dawn; he registers their equilibriants, the hardening and withering of the old, death, decay and twilight. "Medlars and Sorb Apples" is devoted to this second aspect of living process. These fruits are chosen, because they remain hard and inedible until mellowed by the first frosts. Then, after picking in October or November, they are allowed to decay, or 'bletted'. In Shakespeare's words, to 'be rotten ere you be half ripe' is 'the right virtue of a medlar'.[2] Lawrence is attracted by the acid subtlety of their flavour, though he detects the very process of illness and dissolution in it. It makes him understand the semantic links between the Italian <u>morbido</u>, 'soft, tender', <u>morbo</u>, 'disease', and <u>morboso</u>, 'morbid, sensitive'. The flavour derives from the vegetable fibres' decay and separation. In calling to mind the involutions of this process, 'falling through the stages of decay:/ Stream within stream', Lawrence hints at the mythography of Hades, within its five rivers and encircling, ninefold Styx. But the 'rare, powerful, reminiscent flavour' also reminds him of 'white gods':

> What is it, in the grape turning raisin,
> In the medlar, in the sorb-apple,
> Wineskins of brown morbidity,
> Autumnal excrementa:
> What is it that reminds us of white gods?

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1 See Keith Sagar, "'Little Living Myths': A Note on D. H. Lawrence's <u>Tortoises</u>", <u>DHLR</u>, III (1970), 161-67

2 Shakespeare, <u>As You Like It</u>, III, ii, 125-26.

> Gods nude as blanched nut-kernels,
> Strangely, half-sinisterly flesh-fragrant
> As if with sweat,
> And drenched with mystery.

Recourse to classical mythology, or even to the esoterica of Lawrence's psychic chemistry, will not much help to explain or dispel this wonderful intuition. Aphrodite is the goddess of what Lawrence called sexual reduction, and might be expected to preside over the acidulous decomposition of the fruit. But the power of the intuition resides in the reader's assent to the homeopathic association of juice and incipiently alcoholic vapour with coldness, sweat and mysterious evanescence. It depends on his realization of an affinity between the bletting fruit and Keatsian physiological decay, with its half-spiritual, half-erotic intensities. There is a final, irreducible mystery and aptness in the epiphany.

The 'dead crowns' of the medlars suggest a male as well as a female aspect, an 'Orphic, delicate/ Dionysos of the Underworld'. The mysteries of the white goddess, of disintegration and dismemberment, are not unconnected with the gentler, Orphic 'unfusing into twain'. Both proceed within the male spirit, in its progression towards the 'Intoxication of final loneliness':

> In corruption there is divinity. Aphrodite is, on one side, the great goddess of destruction in sex, Dionysus in the spirit ... In the soft and shiny voluptuousness of decay, in the marshy chill heat of reptiles, there is the sign of the Godhead. It is the activity of departure. 1

The process of 'departure' is symbolized as a descent into the underworld, made by Dionysus and Orpheus. The Latin tag 'Iamque vale' comes from the story, inserted towards the end of Virgil's Georgics, of the near rescue of Eurydice from Hades. Eurydice's last words, after Orpheus has inadvertently turned back to look at her, are:

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1 Phoenix II, p.402

iamque vale: feror ingenti circumdata nocte
invalidasque tibi tendens, heu non tua, palmas! 1

So speaking, she dissolves into the shadows. Evidently this passage was a part of Lawrence's scanty classical education at Nottingham University College. Introducing memories of the tragic 'spasm of farewell' from the beloved wife, and of Orpheus' redoubled loneliness before his Bacchanalian dismemberment, the allusion is effective. The 'decaying frost-cold leaves' may be a second Virgilian echo, this time to the shades who crowded round Aeneas on his descent to the underworld:

Quam multa in silvis autumni frigore primo
labsa cadunt folia ... 2

The leaves are effective as an exact seasonal notation, and as a sensuous evocation of the sensual descent. 'The exquisite odour of leave-taking' and the 'winding, leaf-clogged, silent lanes of hell' fuse to recreate the sensory heightening, coupled with a strange anaesthesia, which accompany the quest through dissolution. The soul descending on its quest is very much the physical spirit:

.. continuing, naked-footed, ever more vividly embodied
Like a flame blown whiter and whiter
In a deeper and deeper darkness
Ever more exquisite, distilled in separation.

Keatsian reduction and intensification no longer give rise to that moral tension which perplexed the later poems in Look! We Have Come Through! Instead they are part of 'the delicate magic of life'. Less moral in its concerns, "Medlars and Sorb Apples" provides subtle

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1 Virgil, Georgics, IV, 497-98. Cf. The White Peacock, p.246; and cf. see Robert E. Gadjusek, "A Reading of The White Peacock",

2 Virgil, Aeneid, VI, 309-10.

insight into its own mythopoeic procedures. Even in decay, the fruit is symbolically and transformatively juxtaposed with the human heart, with 'The fibres of the heart parting one after the other. Participating in the mystery, it is the heart or physical soul that undergoes the descent 'down the strange lanes of hell', not a classical god. In communion with the sensuous secrets of autumn, the celebrant becomes the god Dionysus. He experiences that one of the 'moments of the gods',[1] to which the god's name is given. Lawrence's definition of myth is pertinent:

> .. myth is never an argument, it never has a dialectic nor a moral purpose, you can draw no conclusion from it. Myth is an attempt to narrate a whole human experience, of which the purpose is too deep, going too deep in the blood and soul, for mental explanation or description ... It describes a profound experience of the human body and soul, an experience which is never exhausted, for it is being suffered now ... [2]

The strange figure, self yet non-self, human yet nonhuman, mythic yet embodied, that descends through the grove of Avernus in "Medlars and Sorb Apples", haunts 'naked-footed' other poems in Birds, Beasts and Flowers. 'The rambling sky-dropped grape can add its savour to' the medlar's: it provides further intimations of this shadowy, Dionysiac demigod.

Most of the flowers and fruits ruminated upon belong to the order of Rosaceae; but "Grapes" is concerned with Vitaceae. The 'open-countenanced, skyward-smiling rose' makes way for the tight, fragrant clusters of tiny green flowers, on which the berries form:

> Look now even now, how it keeps its power of invisibility!
> Look how black, how blue-black, how globed in Egyptian darkness
> Dropping among his leaves, hangs the dark grape!
> See him there, the swart, so palpably invisible ...

The closed, dark sphere must survive from some other world of

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1 Kangaroo, p.160.

2 Phoenix, p.296

consciousness, a dark world in which sight yielded its pre-eminence to smell, hearing and touch:

> Audile, tactile sensitiveness as of a tendril which
> orientates and reaches out,
> Reaching out and grasping by an instinct more delicate
> than the moon's as she feels for the tides.

Lawrence's fine instinct for verse movement is noticeable, especially in the second line, transmuting the hesitant rhythm of 'Reaching out' to a confident run of anapaests. 'And on the margin' of this other-world of tactile darkness, we become aware of men 'soft-footed and pristine'. They may be dreams, aspects of our consciousness, or they may belong to a lost civilization, for whom 'Gods were dark-skinned', or to some future world. But like ourselves, 'As we sip the wine', or like Grendel in Beowulf, they traverse the boundaries and the waste places, wandering on the margins of consciousness.

Lawrence's domain of the 'invisible rose', where --

> There were no poppies or carnations,
> Hardly a greenish lily, watery faint,
> Green, dim, invisible flourishing of vines ...

-- may annex some of "The Garden of Proserpine". Swinburne's garden is 'A sleepy world' peopled with 'doubtful dreams of dreams', and admitting no disturbance of colour:

> No growth of moor or coppice,
> No heath-flower or vine,
> But bloomless buds of poppies,
> Green grapes of Proserpine,
> Pale beds of blowing rushes
> Where no leaf blooms or blushes
> Save this whereout she crushes
> For dead men deadly wine.

But the grape which Lawrence writes of, 'globed in Egyptian darkness', is also the scion of that tactile fulness compressed in Keats's 'globèd wealth of peonies'. Lawrence's poem is modelled, if not on

the "Ode to Melancholy", largely on the "Ode to a Nightingale". "Grapes" investigates what might have happened, had Keats opted for 'a draught of vintage' instead of 'the viewless wings of Poesy'. The forest into which Keats longs to fade unseen with the nightingale has many points of resemblance to Lawrence's dim, sightless, darkling otherworld. The earlier Romantic descends 'Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways', which match at every turn Lawrence's 'dusky, flowerless, tendrilled world', threaded by 'dark avenues'. As in the ode the poet must touch, smell and listen --

> I cannot tell what flowers are at my feet,
> Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
> But in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet ...

-- so in "Grapes":

> .. we find ourselves crossing the fern-scented frontiers
> Of the world before the floods, where man was dark and evasive
> And the tiny vine-flower rose of all roses, perfumed,
> And all in naked communion communicating as now our clothed vision can never communicate.

The 'coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine' has become the 'invisible rose' of the grape. And in the end 'we, as we start awake, clutch at our vistas democratic, boulevards, tram-cars, policemen'; perhaps we wonder, since 'Fled is that music. -- Do I wake or sleep?'

One of the sources for Keats's gloomy underworld is ultimately, through the modifications of "A Dream, After Reading Dante's Episode of Paola and Francesca" and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", the descent to the underworld, with Virgil for guide, in The Divine Comedy.[1] Lawrence was familiar with at least parts of Dante's epic, possibly knowing it in Cary's translation, as did Keats.[2] Dante's underworld is another possible analogue for the

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1 Keats, Letters, p.239.

2 Cf. Three Novellas; The Ladybird, p.75; "Evil is Homeless", Poems, ed. Pinto, p.711.

chthonic explorations of "Medlars and Sorb Apples" and "Grapes". The emphasis on darkness, on 'a gloomy wood' and on 'air/ Imbrown'd with shadows', on 'sleepy dulness' and the fearful 'heart pierced with dread',[1] may have added some overtones to the descent of "Medlars and Sorb Apples". Comparison can be made between Eliot's punctiliously documented references to The Divine Comedy in the first section of The Waste Land and Lawrence's general assimilation of his predecessors into infernal regions. Eliot demands that the reader be aware of his sources, of the correspondence between the London crowd and the damned. The address to the reader should be understood as an address to these shades. An important part of Eliot's meaning is the cultural gulf between the moral tradition assumed by Dante, and the modern lack of a tradition, productive of these living dead. By contrast, Lawrence's poetry actively attempts to transcend historical and cultural barriers, to re-enter a substratum of unchanging, 'profound experience of the human body and soul', in which myth was rooted and modern poetry should be. Mythic consciousness is still accessible. In the Australian bush Lawrence discerned an ancient pre-animal genius loci, surviving from the coal age.[2] Reformulated in Kangaroo, this intuition parallels closely the descent into the otherworld of "Grapes". The semi-tropical rain-forrest at Thirroul leads Somers into a musing abstraction:

> Worlds come, and worlds go: even worlds. And when the old, old influence of the fern-world comes over a man, how can he care? He breathes the fernseed and drifts back, becomes darkly half vegetable, devoid of preoccupations. [3]

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1 Dante Alighieri, The Vision; or Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, tr. Henry Francis Cary, (London: Warne, 1844) (Third edition), I, 2, 7, 11, 14; II, 1-2

2 Letters, ed. Moore, p.711, 22 June 1922.

3 Kangaroo, p.197-98.

A mystic celebrant of the grape, the poet must likewise take the fern-seed between his lips and resolve back to a quasi-vegetative consciousness, in his effort to understand worlds beyond his own. The fern-seed is, of course, fabulous, and Lawrence seems to impute to it the powers of a vegetative quintessence, allowing communion with ferns and vines as Solomon's ring enabled the wearer to talk with animals. According to Frazer, it symbolized to primitive Europe 'the blood of the sun': if gathered at the solstices, it conferred on its bearer invisibility and the power to divine subterranean fires and treasures.[1] With the fern-seed of his intuition, the poet can surpass the cultural barriers of the past, and apprehend a dim, primeval world of being in the living things which have survived from that time. Yet the poet also has more immediate historical concerns.

The recovery of a world of plant-like consciousness in "Grapes" is not made by the poet alone; his entire era is:

> .. on the brink of re-remembrance.
> Which, I suppose, is why America has gone dry.
> Our pale day is sinking into twilight,
> And if we sip the wine, we find dreams coming upon us
> Out of the imminent night.

The fruit is again metamorphosized into a day -- because it is swart, into a twilight. After the grape's evening, not the dawn of "Pomegranate", but the darkness of night impends. As the greater day of modern industrial civilization passes into this night, a new man, a dark man, may emerge as heir to the darkness. The inclusion of "The Revolutionary" and "The Evening Land" among "Fruits" is not, as has been supposed, fortuitous.[2] It is in

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1 Frazer, The Golden Bough, p.922-23.

2 R. L. Mégroz, Five Novelist-Poets of Today, (London: Joiner and Steele, 1933), p.232.

these poems that the Protean symbol of decomposition, of 'day ... sinking into twilight', is explored for its mythic, social and moral significance.

"The Revolutionary" is an allegory, based on the story of Samson, at the point in his life when the temple of his circumjacent life has become a prison. The pillars that support this edifice are made of brass, or 'white bronze', as were Samson's fetters.[1] The temple-prison, the disintegration of which is resisted by the supporting pillars, is a further metamorphosis of the fruit-heart-sky symbol. The temple is static, oppressive, the spit and image of technology and modern brutalist architecture:

> To keep on holding up this ideal civilization
> Must be excruciating: unless you stiffen into metal
> when it is easier to stand stock rigid than to move.

The columns in the temple are authority figures and pillars of the establishment, good examples of Lawrence's freshly literal use of clichés. Computerized automatons, they are as abstract as an accountant's columns; yet they have a dead, material presence. They have been dehumanized by their task, of restraining the roof and sky of their era from its natural passing away. 'Metallic-stunned with the weight of their responsibility', they have become bronze caryatids. The exactness with which Lawrence allegorizes the pillars illustrates the physical detail he is able to compress, even in unlyrical descriptions:

> Their poor, idealist foreheads naked capitals
> To the entablature of clouded heaven.

The caryatids are exceptional in having their heads turned upwards; they are emblems of a quasi-religious aspiration. The forehead of

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1 Judges xvi, 21.

the capital presses directly, with an aching nakedness, against the flat architrave (the lowest section of the entablature). 'Clouded heaven' is a precise visual metaphor for the carved marble relief of the frieze, running midway along the entablature. Then, springing from the cornice are the vaulted 'super-gothic heavens', to which the caryatids stare in attitudes of lifeless, idealist aspiration. They resist normality in other ways, too. Their lips are not vulnerable, but 'slips of metal/ Like slits in an automatic machine'. Yet living change cannot be averted by mechanical action. The sky's lips or fissure will form willy-nilly, when its time has come. Here Lawrence departs from his biblical narrative. Instead of calling on the Lord for strength, the revolutionary must wait until the undetermined but inevitable hour arrives, that will lend him power. Again unlike Samson, he will not ask for death as an end to his shame.[1] Lawrence's quarrel with tragedy lies behind his hero's courage to demand more life and a bigger universe to live in.

The figure of Samson brooding among the temple's 'forest of pillars' corresponds to the dark figures in the groves of "Medlars and Sorb Apples" and "Grapes". Samson's potential to subvert the old and break open the new cycle enlists him among the eruptive, ophidian and phallic powers of <u>Birds, Beasts and Flowers</u>. His labour 'at the round-working mill' lends him the proletarian attributes of "St Mark". Possibly, he is dark-skinned; for the caryatids are 'pale-faces' to Samson, accustomed in his blindness to conceiving all faces as dark. The racial aspect of this subversive power is accentuated in "Tropic", where the tree-like pillars of thermal heat raised by the sun are specifically

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1 Judges xvi, 28-30.

negroid. Pulsing, 'Sunblack men', reared by such heat, would be wholly phallic in their consciousness. The eruptive, inseminating potency of their being could easily be ignited:

> Columns dark and soft,
> Sunblack men,
> Soft shafts, sunbreathing mouths,
> Eyes of yellow, golden sand
> As frictional, as perilous, explosive as brimstone.

The Etruscans of "Cypresses" are less volatile, having about them 'some of Africa's imperturbable sang-froid'. Yet they, too, are faun-like and phallic dark men, 'sensitive-footed, subtly-smiling' and evasive in their groves, like 'swaying pillars of dark flame'. Even Cicio, the Italian seducer of The Lost Girl, has yellow-tawny, sulphureous eyes, eyes that 'are the darkest of them all'.[1] The divergences among these dark men, African, Etruscan, Italian, show that Lawrence's prophecies of doom and renewal are less racist than speculative. He is brooding on the glamour of the Mediterranean male. He is in search of a people, past or present, whose culture is a reflection of a physical communion with living things.

"The Revolutionary" offers some guidelines to the character of this communion. It seems to involve the lower body, for Samson's subversive energies are directed at the waists of 'The human pillars'. The poem depreciates vision to exalt touch. The impercipience of the 'staring caryatids' is contrasted with the literal blindness of Samson, richly aware of the tactile universe around him. Lawrence would have subscribed to Coleridge's indictment of the 'despotism of the eye',[2] not because the senses tended to tyrannize spiritual awareness, but because 'Sight is the least sensual of all

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1 The Lost Girl, pp.152, 173, 180, 196, 244, 335.

2 Coleridge, Biographia, p.62.

the senses'.[1] Nevertheless, Lawrence's espousal of touch, as the least mental of the senses, has a touch of mysticism about it. Tactile awareness is taken to include a kind of visceral empathy, to embrace that mythopoeic sexual communion which lay at the heart of Tortoises. Mystic touch is characteristically denoted by the adjective 'palpable':

> To me, men are palpable, invisible nearnesses in the dark
> Sending out magnetic vibrations of warning, pitch-dark
> throbs of invitation.

Though his sensuousness includes the extra-sensory, Samson is blind to the inanimate pillars 'that give off nothing except rigidity'. Like Maurice in the short story, "The Blind Man", in his physical contacts Samson is 'like a strange colossus', and makes mental and visual knowledge seem 'like a mollusc whose shell is broken'. Yet Maurice is seen (by his wife) to have deluded himself, or to be limited by his blindness.[2] In the poem limitation is stylistically suggested by the short, stupefied exclamations of Samson:

> I stumble against them.
> Stumbling-blocks, painful ones.
> . . . .
> They are not stronger than I am, blind Samson.
> The house sways.

The pugilist monomania of the revolutionary falls short of royalty: it is not fully sentient, or generously alive.

"The Evening Land" plots a further stage in the search for a race and a locale in which the new mode of consciousness might be sown. The title may translate a German expression for the west, 'das Abendland', but it is also a consistent extension of the diurnal symbolism in other poems:

> Oh, America,
> The sun sets in you.
> Are you the grave of our day?

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1 Fantasia of the Unconscious, p.65.

2 England, My England, p.74-75.

The temple-prison becomes a sepulchre. America may be the darkness following the sunset of Europe, the darkness preceding the dawn; or a new sun may already be rising there. A grave for Europe, for itself it may be an 'open tomb', a site of resurrection. The poet is tempted to be the prophet of this potential American renaissance. But shrewdly he would prefer it if America showed the first signs of regeneration: 'I would rather you came to me'. Noting the mass emigration from a financially depressed Italy to the economic boom of the American 'twenties, Lawrence mockingly reproaches the continent, 'Why won't you cajole my soul?' Lawrence's reading of Whitman in Studies in Classic American Literature is, by and large, his interpretation of America at this stage. In the 'All-embracing, indiscriminate, passional acceptance' of Whitman, his 'Lovers, endless lovers' and his injunction to 'Reject nothing', Lawrence finds the motive force of American society, 'The catastrophe of ... exaggerate love'. It is love that immolates the self in order to experience a transcendent infinite:

> But this is the last and final truth, the last truth is at the quick. And the quick is the single individual soul, which is never more than itself, though it embrace eternity and infinity, and never other than itself, though it include all men. [1]

The Janian other aspect of American idealism, equally the fruit of denying the physical self, is its industrial technology. The economic boom and the macabre, winged emblem for it are parodies of resurrection and the Laurentian phoenix. Like the caryatids, American institutions and individuals lack the vulnerability which bespeaks sensitivity and flexibility. They run always to the ultimate and the extreme.

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1 The Symbolic Meaning, p.257-58; Studies in Classic American Literature, p.172-74.

Yet the 'catastrophe' of their exaggeration might hold the explosive seeds of germination. Their brutalism holds for Lawrence a 'faery quality', their inhuman absolutes an implied wish to transcend mental limitations and initiate a new consciousness. The taste for the elemental and the rudimentary found in Melville and Dana may be the first expressions of the continent's daimon, 'Glimpsed now and then'. The demon may linger on, but it needs to be reborn in:

> Deep pulsing of a strange heart
> New throb, like a stirring under the false dawn that
> precedes the real.

This heart would be capable of the communion prefigured in the poems. In imagination, therefore, the poet can picture the dark man pacing through the margins of the 'industrial thicket' of the New World. He may be the:

> Nascent American
> Demonish, lurking among the undergrowth
> Of many-stemmed machines and chimneys that smoke like
> pine-trees.

Who is this demon, moving like Proteus through a changing grove -- Orpheus, Pan, Faunus, Samson? One candidate is Dionysus who, as bearer of the thyrsis, is an apt genius for 'chimneys that smoke like pine-trees'. His widely ranging attributes readily absorb the roles which the dark figure has filled in a succession of poems. Dionysus was a god of the woods and of the underworld, of the grape, the fig and the pomegranate, of death and decay, regeneration and rebirth, drunken orgies and ecstatic rites. The earthquake which he induced in order to escape from Pentheus' dungeon makes him a prototype for both Samson and the volcanic males of "Tropic"; and Lawrence was familiar with this episode from Murray's translation of Euripides.[1] The concept of the artist as

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1 See Euripides, The Bacchae, tr. Gilbert Murray, (London: Allen,1904), p.32-36; and cf. The Bacchae, tr. Philip Vellacott, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954), p.197-200.

Dionysiac subversive fascinated Lawrence, from his early review of Georgian Poetry, 1911-1912, when he named Ibsen, Flaubert and Hardy as 'the great prisoners' who had demolished 'the Temple', until 'out of the ruins leap[t] the whole sky'; to the late "Introduction to Chariot of the Sun", where he explained inherited vision as a 'house of apparent form and stability, fixity', which man erects between himself and terrifying chaos:

> Then comes a poet, enemy of convention, and makes a slit in the umbrella; and lo! the glimpse of chaos is a vision, a window to the sun. [1]

The dark hero recurs throughout Lawrence's art. From Annable's first appearance in The White Peacock --

> He stood in the rim of light, darkly; fine, powerful form, menacing us. He did not move, but like some malicious Pan looked down on us ... [2]

-- to Mellors in Lady Chatterley's Lover, who 'was feared and disliked in the district, a sort of black man in the wood to the children',[3] his mutable outline slips mysteriously from novel to novel, a type for the man in intimate conjunction with the natural world. His manifestations have been traced by Patricia Merivale, who takes him to be a polymorphic Pan-figure, frequently met with in Edwardian belles lettres.[4] Lawrence had prototypes for his dark man, in Heathcliff of Wuthering Heights and most notably in Chillingworth of The Scarlet Letter. In his essay on Hawthorne, one version of which was written during his residence at Taormina,[5]

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1 Phoenix, pp.304, 255

2 The White Peacock, p.155.

3 The First Lady Chatterley, p.44; cf. John Thomas and Lady Jane, p.259; for the association of Mellors with Vulcan, see Lady Chatterley's Lover, pp.51, 301.

4 Patricia Merivale, Pan the Goat-God: His Myth in Modern Times, (Cambridge, Mass,: Harvard University Press, 1969), p.194-207.

5 The Symbolic Meaning, p.162

Lawrence came to regard Chillingworth as a warped puppet of the Black Man, the potent demon of the forests, who was at once the genius loci of the Indians, the Devil of the New Englanders and the dark subconscious of the Puritan conscience. The 'black old physician', versed in 'the arts of the Golden Hermes, Hermes of the Underworld', becomes the means by which the 'Black Man of the American Forests', 'the aboriginal spirit of the primary sensual psyche' expresses itself.[1] Lawrence was intrigued by the mentality which led the Puritans to assimilate the Indian savage, homo sylvestris, once more with the Devil; just as Pan, Faunus and the local deities of the classical world had passed into the devils of the early Christians. He identified the Pan-Devil which was so firmly lodged in the conscious and subconscious Christian mind with 'the primary sensual psyche', suppressed but asserting itself in Dimmesdale. A new era would rehabilitate this physical mode of knowledge. America was a place where this restoration seemed possible and imminent. In a script for a radio broadcast Lawrence exhorted the nation to:

> .. turn to catch the spirit of [the] dark, aboriginal continent.
>
> That which was abhorrent to the Pilgrim Fathers and to the Spaniards, that which was called the Devil, the black Demon of savage America, this great aboriginal spirit the Americans must recognize again, recognize and embrace. The devil and anathema of our fore-fathers hides the godhead which we seek. [2]

Lawrence's dark men should not be restricted to any single religious ambit by a name, be it Dionysus or Pan. The dark man is a demon aboriginal to Lawrence's own imagination. He is a figure allowing Lawrence to come to terms with his Christian and Romantic

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1 The Symbolic Meaning, pp.150, 162-63; and Studies in Classic American Literature, p.105-06.

2 Phoenix, p.90.

heritage; or rather, to overthrow his Christian and extrapolate his Romantic heritage. There must have been a moment of shocked recognition for Lawrence, when he came across this creature of his own imaginative evolution implanted in other writers' symbolic worlds, and having a niche in the history of Western thought. As Lawrence developed this type for human interrelationship with the natural, he was involved in a tug-of-war between a sardonic realism, in presenting the alienation of modern man, and a Utopianism and mythopoeia, the imaginatively tested consequences of which appeared alarmingly primitivist. The dark hero from whom these tensions of belief and imaginative assent radiate is never more clearly or satisfactorily defined than in Birds, Beasts and Flowers. In these poems he is apprehended emerging from concrete, sensuously realized, living objects, as they undergo organic change. He is watched still haunting the margins of consciousness, a mysterious potentiality in our vision. He is present in the existential poise between the life of the object and the subject's act of apocalyptic perception. He is one of the strange gods that traverse the clearing of the known self for an instant, before returning to the dark forest that surrounds.[1] The modern reader may have reservations about the philosophical tenets underlying Lawrence's mythopoeia. But as is often the case with modern poetry, this scepticism is not the sole prerogative of the reader. In "The Evening Land" Lawrence himself agonizes over the hiatus between the real and the mythopoetically realized object, between intuition and fact:

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1 See Studies in Classic American Literature, p.22.

Nobody knows you.
You don't know yourself.
And I, who am half in love with you,
What am I in love with?
My own imaginings?

Like Yeats, Lawrence personifies the dilemma of modernity and the modern poet, struggling to close the gap between symbol and object, imagination and scientific fact, myth and recorded history. It is summed up in the tag from Whitman, '"These states!"'[1] Is the home of the 'Nascent American' a state of mind only, or does the imagination body forth states of being which have, which do or which will exist somewhere? The imagination's hypothesis is tested in the last poems of Birds, Beasts and Flowers.

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1 Whitman usually invokes 'The states'; but see "To the East and to the West".

VI

iii

The business of art is to reveal the relation between
man and his circumambient universe, at the living moment. 1

Is there not a great Mind pre-ordaining?
Does not a supreme Intellect ideally procreate the Universe?
Is not each soul a vivid thought in the great consciousness
stream of God?

Put salt on his tail
The sly bird of John. 2

Echoing Wordsworth's contention in "Preface to Lyrical Ballads" that an original poetry must create its own audience, Lawrence proposed the dictum for new and disturbing art-works that 'You may judge of their reality by the fact that they do arouse a certain resistance, and compel, at length, a certain acquiescence'.[3] It is a fair summary of the critical reception accorded to Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Reviewers and critics have reacted strongly to the volume. Judging by the wide diversity of evaluations and the disagreements about the volume's themes, by the vehement denunciations and plaudits, it seems these poems do tax the resources of critical analysis, that a new kind of imagination, or a new metaphysic of the imagination, might be at work in them. J.H.Thomas complained in an early, hostile article that Lawrence's poetry was an imaginative, 'forcible wrenching of things into his own orbit': 'Whatever he writes about — "skies, trees, flowers, birds, etc." — one thing alone is his preoccupation, the state of his

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1. Phoenix, p.527.

2. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.328-29.

3. Phoenix, p.531.

own soul'.[1] In a laudatory review John Middleton Murry declared that Lawrence caused his reader to know what it was like to be an animal: 'he does actually impress us as possessing "blood-knowledge" — that is his own phrase — of non-human life'. Murry actually contrives to represent both points of view: he later recanted — 'Of course, Lawrence completely humanizes his tortoises' — in order to fit the animal poems into his biographical portrait.[2] The critical debate, as to the independence which the living objects are granted of their authorial subject, has continued up to the present. From one side comes the voice of naive admiration, claiming that, after Lawrence, poetry 'cannot penetrate any further into the psyche of the nonhuman'; from the other the voice of knowing insensitivity, labelling the verse as 'reminiscent of seventeenth century poetry', 'particularly of the emblem poems, where objects are interpreted by ingenious allegorization'.[3] The consensus of contemporary opinion is generally more accurate. As it is expressed by Keith Sagar, although the poems testify to an 'almost occult penetration into the being of other creatures, even of fruits and flowers' and an 'ability to look out through the eyes of a mountain lion, to be a bat flicker-splashing round a room', nonetheless, their 'deeper purpose ... is to reveal the sheer unknowable otherness of the non-human life'.[4] It is encouraging to find the poems of themselves leading to such conclusions even from the first. Stuart Sherman's

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1. John Heywood Thomas, "The Perversity of D.H.Lawrence", Criterion, X (1930-31), 7-8.

2. John Middleton Murry, Reminiscences of D.H.Lawrence, (London: Cape, 1933), p.250; Son of Woman: The Story of D.H.Lawrence, (London: Cape, 1931), p.229-31.

3. D.H.Lawrence: A Selection, ed. R.H.Poole and P.J.Shepherd, (London: Heinemann, 1970), p.59; Pritchard, Body of Darkness, p.143.

4. Sagar, Art of D.H.Lawrence, p.121.

early opinion of Lawrence's imaginative achievement in Birds, Beasts and Flowers was that the poems gave an impression of there being:

> .. no barrier between him and the life which pulses in beasts, birds, flowers, clouds, the sea and the spumy star clusters of the Milky Way. Arnold called Wordsworth 'a priest of the wonder and bloom of the world'. It is a beautiful phrase, but it should have been reserved for D.H.Lawrence. Wordsworth was an interpreter of the contemplative mind. Wordsworth saturated nature with purely human emotion, he filled the woods with the 'still sad music of humanity', he tinted the skies with a divine benevolence not their own. Mr Lawrence does not taint the air with human preconceptions or 'pathetic fallacies'. And to reward him for his disinterested adoration of the multitudinous spirit of life, the 'thing in itself', it seems as if life had let him penetrate into intimacies unknown to those who have made most boast of her confidences ... He looks at nature for nature's sake, acknowledging nothing superior, nothing equal. [1]

It will only be necessary to expand and refine these last judgments in what follows. One means for doing so is a comparison between the Wordsworthian and Romantic imagination, and Lawrence's neo-Romantic imagination, as it is displayed in these poems.

In Chapter III it was proposed that Wordsworth's Nature and the Romantic idealism which, to an extent, he shared with Coleridge and Shelley were part of a recoil from the sceptic and empiricist philosophical thought of the Enlightenment. This school of thought, it was felt by the Romantics, tended to reduce experience and imagination, the outer and inner worlds of subjective knowledge, to mechanical, determined and valueless paradigms. Romantic poetry re-asserted value and religious feeling as primary experiences. It emphasized the self-originating creativity of the human mind, especially of the imagination. It rehumanized human intercourse with an external world, Nature. For Coleridge, the most metaphysically aware of the Romantics, this programme necessitated retreat into an idealism, which permitted the self to retain its creativity, while allowing science to prescribe its

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1. Stuart Sherman, Critical Woodcuts, (New York: Scribner, 1926), p.24-25.

mechanical laws for the natural world. Shelley, too, embraced an idealism, but one that absorbed material Nature and the disciplines of science, and allowed free rein to the overriding, magical flights of his imagination. Nonetheless, some of his finest poems arise from a consciousness of a hostile, alien world, from which the imagination derives its powers and to which it must adapt itself. Keats's sensuous feeling for the concrete made him seem more at home and unmetaphysically content in the life of the senses. But even he proposed a scale of quasi-sensual, quasi-spiritual experience, leading to an ecstasy in which self and non-self were extinguished, and all united in a mystic One. The idealism of Shelley and Coleridge also referred to a moment of mystical transcendence. The sensibilities of the Romantics can be differentiated by their attitudes to these moments. Keats's were suggestively sexual, creating and destroying. Coleridge's were moments of harmony bestowed by grace. Shelley's were magical conquests and accessions of inspirational power. Wordsworth's 'visionary gleams' were circumscribed by time and place, perhaps alone of all these. The fundamental mode of Wordsworth's sensibility, it was suggested, was a dualistic immanentism, a conviction of the spontaneous life of the human mind, of a corresponding centre of vitality and value in Nature, and of an intercourse between the two, by which the mind was educated. Nevertheless, in order to preserve these convictions, to reconcile them with rationalist tenets and to avoid lapsing into primitive or pantheistic superstition, Wordsworth was forced to attribute the greater part of the creativity of this subject/object relationship to the human mind, especially to the faculty of memory. Wordsworth's poetry was the battle-ground on which the forces of rational belief and intuitive faith were most powerfully drawn up. Ultimately even he was forced to retire into a richly humanist idealism, confessing the main region of his song to be the mind of man, and himself to be the poet, not of Nature

but of the states of mind aroused by Nature.

Lawrence seems to have been acutely conscious of these historical perspectives. In his essay, "New Mexico", he admitted to the burden of 'the great psyche of materialism and idealism which dominated' him, and from which he had been unable to break free. 'I had looked all over the world', he declared, 'for something that would strike me as religious'.[1] In fact, he found this something religious in other places than New Mexico, and the pattern of his religious belief was established long before reaching America. But the search for religious value in a world, not only deracinated by empiricist materialism, but also, now, by the idealism of religion — 'the essential Christianity on which my character was established' — and by the Romantic idealism of his literary heritage, this search is definitive of Lawrence's neo-Romanticism. His understanding of Romantic idealism and transcendentalism is in evidence in his criticisms of Shelley and, for that matter, of Whitman; but it is more acute in his remarks on Wordsworth, the most non-idealistic Romantic, whose dualistic immanentism is the closest to Lawrence's mystical materialism.

Wordsworth is rebuked in "Love Was Once a Little Boy" for reverting to an imaginative paradigm that allowed no essential autonomy to the object; that saw all value in the object as originating in the perceiving subject. As Shelley had parodied Peter Bell, so, less skilfully, Lawrence lampoons these lines:

> In vain, through every changeful year,
> Did Nature lead him as before;
> A primrose by a river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more.
> (246-50)

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1. Phoenix, p.142-43.

He repudiates the arrogation of value to the subject:

> One understands Wordsworth and the primrose and the yokel. The yokel has no relation at all - or next to none — with the primrose. Wordsworth gathered it into his bosom and made it a part of his own nature. "I, William, am also a yellow primrose blossoming on a bank." This, we must assert, is an impertinence on Wordsworth's part. He ousts the primrose from its own individuality. He doesn't allow it to call its soul its own. It must be identical with his soul. Because, of course, by begging the question, there is but One Soul in the universe. [1]

Lawrence is impatient at any identification with the object that annuls the identity of the object, an instinctive sense of its otherness. This is not, perhaps, prevalent in Wordsworth. But concentration on limitedly human sentiments aroused by contemplation of the object is; and Lawrence is particularly suspicious of the moments of transcendence to which such contemplation leads, of the times when the poet sees one life, and feels that it is joy: [2]

> This is bunk. A primrose has its own primrosy identity, and all the oversouling in the world won't melt it into a Williamish oneness. Neither will the yokel's remarking: "Nay, boy, that's nothing. It's only a primrose!" — turn the primrose into nothing. The primrose will neither be assimilated nor annihilated, and Boundless Love breaks on the rock of one more flower.

Lawrence rejects idealist transcendence, not only for its otherworldliness, but from a scepticism about the imaginary self-aggrandisement which it brings on. The poet does not rest at perceiving One Soul, he becomes it, through an act of spiritual identification that obscures the integrity of the physical other. By denying this integrity, Romantic idealism, in Lawrence's view, falls into the very patterns of sceptical and empiricist thought, which it sought to temper or replace. It rejects the body, the fact of physical individuality, in order to aspire to intellectual or spiritual dominion over all things.

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1. Phoenix II, p.447.

2. Wordsworth, The Prelude, II, 430.

Materialism and idealism seemed to Lawrence two sides of the same coin, the coin rendered unto the 'ugly imperialism of any absolute'.[1]

Lawrence himself is not averse to the concept that some transcendent unity might exist in the living, objective universe, a 'kind of communion' or 'love unison'. But his emphasis falls strongly on individuation. He deplores Wordsworth's location of value in the act of perceiving or of remembering: 'Ah William! The "something more" that the primrose was to you was yourself in the mirror'.[2] This is accurate and suggestive criticism: Wordsworth's humanism does indeed discover religious value in the faculties of the human mind. Elsewhere Lawrence is more tolerant of the Romantic recovery of religious vision. Wordsworth and Shelley had 'established a new connection between mankind and the universe, and the result was a vast release of energy'. Wordsworth did see a primrose 'in the full gleam of chaos'.[3] But this is now an old relationship; the vision has faded, the gleam of chaos dulled; and the business of art is to reveal relationship at the living moment. At this moment its business must be to restore the centre of religious value, of vitality and selfhood, to the object, and so reestablish a sane equilibrium between subject and object, 'fifty per cent. me, fifty per cent. thee'.[4]

The idealist imagination and spiritual transcendence of the nineteenth century have become, for Lawrence, evasive and positively harmful in this century. The imagination of Wordsworth has been made into a cosy commonplace: 'Absolutely the safest thing to get your emotional reactions over is NATURE'. But intellectually monitored

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1. Phoenix, p.536; and cf. Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p.210-11.
2. Phoenix II, p.448.
3. Phoenix II, p.478; Phoenix, p.256.
4. Phoenix II, p.434.

emotional reactions have repercussions:

> This Nature-sweet-and-pure business is only another effort at intellectualizing. Just an attempt to make all nature succumb to a few laws of the human mind. The sweet-and-pure sort of laws ... An artist usually intellectualizes on top, and his dark under-consciousness does on contradicting him beneath. [1]

The spiritualization and idealization of the Romantic imagination is one aspect of the terrible and traumatic division in Western consciousness between mind and body, and the consequent creation of a dark, retributive subconscious. Lawrence recognized that Coleridge's, and after him Wordsworth's, absorption of the subject/object dichotomy into the self transformed this schism, psychologically, into the mind/body problem. Hence came his outraged rejection of the Romantics en bloc as 'post-mortem poets', men for whom 'the essential instinctive-intuitive body is dead'.[2] Lawrence's restoration of a quota of physical feeling to the artistic imagination may be a response to the Zeitgeist, or it may be a realization of his own sensibility, which itself contributed to the spirit of the age. The twentieth-century sense of the bankruptcy of the idealist imagination can be illustrated by turning to a poem from outside the mainstream of British literature, and hence retaining a pristine sympathy with the nineteenth century. It is one of the few poems in English to have taken seriously, before Lawrence, the business of penetrating an animal's individual consciousness; and this it achieves by a Romantic transcendence. The poem is "The Silver Gull" by the Australian poet John le Gay Brereton. Although the full text deserves quotation, some stanzas have been omitted for reasons for space:

> I lie on the warm sea-beach
> And out to the wandering heart
> Of feathered life in the beating air I reach
> Arms that beseech
> - Arms of my soul that in the living air

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1. Studies in Classic American Literature, pp.29, 31.

2. Phoenix, p.552.

As answer to my prayer
Are wings of ecstasy;
And on the fierce quest silently I start
Above the envious crowding of the sea.

.....

O sister seabird, hearken, I call to thee!
Sister! my life and thine
Still intertwine,
And not till side by side
Equal and glad and free
Down the invisible stream we twain may glide,
Shall you or I seek rest
On weathered ledge or reef or feathered nest.

Wider the shelter of my grand wings outspread
Encloses earth and sea
And thee, unconscious wandering heart - and thee.
I am forgotten: but thou art still my care
Who have known thy life and know thy way is mine,
For over the waves thou lovest I too have sped
Where now at my heart they shine;
For I am the world-encircling eddying vast of air.

In me is the manifold urge,
The shedding of leaves, the upward push of the seed,
Of all the life upon earth
The scramble and fury and fret,
The ceaseless monotonous chant of eternal surge,
The pangs of change and of triumph in death and birth,
The ache of unending need
Lest we should have peace and forget.

And mine is the torrent of hate,
Growling black flood with a seething foam of red,
And the insolent pomp of the ape in a robe of state,
And the sliding silence of guile;
And mine is the eager meeting of souls that are newly wed
- Throb, throb, O passionate heart!
Heed not the impotent hands that would fain defile
The shrine of the god who for sake of the One still moulds
the many apart.

I am the spirit of joy set free,
Knowing no limits, for further than thought can reach
And as far as love can bless
I hold exultant reign.
I am I, unbodied, supreme,
The spirit of joy. [1]

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1. See The Penguin Book of Australian Verse, ed. Harry Heseltine, (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1972), p.118-20; or John le Gay Brereton, Sea and Sky, (Melbourne: Lothian, 1908).

The lines are a maze of echoes, of Keats's nightingale and Shelley's skylark, of Plato, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Swinburne; it is no surprise to learn that Brereton held a chair in English Literature at Sydney University; yet there is a purity and coherence of diction which bespeak an integral, though not a major talent at work in the poem. Particularly strong is the influence of Whitman, and this conveys a distinctly physical tinge to the interpenetrationof bird and man. Blood, heart and feathers are mentioned. Whitman, with his proclamations — 'And if the body were not the soul, what is the soul?'[1] — undoubtedly had a profound effect on the development of Lawrence's mystical materialism. But, despite leanings in this direction, Brereton shows little ability or desire to realize the gull as a living, physical individual. Instead, he embraces the opportunity for a self-transcending identification, not only with the bird, but with the air and the 'eternal surge' of all living things, and with the god or One or limitless Love that lies behind this surge. Thus, his ultimate communion is spiritual, not sensuous. Yet the contemporary reader will complain of a spurious element in the rapport, saying that it is difficult to accept the claim of spiritual union with the One, when there is little evidence of sensuous empathy with a single, living thing. What for Coleridge was a matter of intense imaginative and metaphysical struggle has become a poetic platitude. Spiritual communion with Nature is turned into a kind of fabulous air-travel, arousing neither interest nor conviction. In part, contemporary expectations of what an animal poem should do have been conditioned by Lawrence's success in this genre. But the demand for a sensuous realization of the animal itself also springs from a conviction that the poet should confront his subjective vision with concrete reality. The modern animal poet confronts again the epistemological dilemma of the Romantics, but there is no longer the possibility

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1. Whitman, "I sing the Body Electric", i.

of allowing spiritual aspirations to pass for communion with his object. If he is to locate a centre of selfhood and value in the object of his poem, he must borrow or evolve, or there will at least be implicit in his poetry, a new, a neo-Romantic metaphysic. Lawrence did develop such a metaphysic, and Birds, Beasts and Flowers is the expression of it, the volume in which he came to terms with his Romantic heritage, extending it into the twentieth century.

The first term in this metaphysic is the self, though this has multiple aspects. In "St Matthew" the human soul at one time aspires to 'the Uplifted', at another time seeks 'the dark reversion of night', and at yet another time is content with 'life horizontal and ceaseless'. But during life:

> I am man, and therefore my heart beats, and throws the
> dark blood from side to side
> All the time I am lifted up.

One criterion for defining the self is wholeness: self-expression must express 'the deepest whole self of man, the self in its wholeness, not idealistic halfness'.[1] Yet this wholeness is not homogeneous: it includes division and conflict, systole and diastole. As the symbol of the heart implies, it is primarily physical: 'we are all basically and permanently physical'. It is characteristic of Lawrence's materialistic bent that he locates 'the creative productive quick' of the self in 'the first nucleus of the fertilized ovule', which 'lies situated beneath the navel of all womb-born creatures'; and that he seeks to explain, in Fantasia of the Unconscious, all the emotional and psychical life of the individual in terms of polarization between the different physical centres or chakras, which are created by division of the original nucleus. Thus, although he continues to include spiritual aspiration as a part, though an over-emphasized part, of human consciousness, he reduces it metaphysically to a holism. 'Every

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1. Studies in Classic American Literature, p.13; and cf. Phoenix, p.533f.

man ... ends in his finger-tips';[1] and it is on this rock of physical individuality that Lawrence shatters the tradition of spiritual transcendence:

> But this is the last and final truth, the last truth is at the quick. And the quick is the single individual soul, which is never more than itself, though it embrace eternity and infinity, and never other than itself, though it include all men. Each vivid soul is unique, and though one soul embrace another, and include it, still it cannot become that other soul, or livingly dispossess that other soul. In extending himself, Whitman still remains himself; he does not become the other man, or the other woman, or the tree, or the universe: in spite of Plato.
>
> Which is the maximum truth, though it appears so small in contrast to all these infinites, and En Masses, and Democracies, and Almightynesses. The essential truth is that a man is himself, and only himself, throughout all his greatnesses and extensions and intensifications. 2

As is clear, however, from his emphasis on the quick, the heart and the nucleus, Lawrence does intensify the self by the concept of intrinsicality. The intrinsic physical self must be sought by a sensory quest, inverting the Orphic or Platonic imperative of spiritual self-knowledge. 'A man may come into possession of his own soul at last', as Lilly Rawdon insists in Aaron's Rod, but not through abnegation of the body or its emotions.[3] The image in "The Princess" of a green demon that is the 'real self', existing at the heart of the individual as at the heart of an onion, is applicable to Lawrence's demon. The element of self-parody creeps in because Mary Urquhart mistakes what this real self is.[4] The peeling of the onion, or the process of sensory reduction, is part of the journey of self-realization, the discovery of the divine, physical fundaments of selfhood. It is described in "Medlars and Sorb Apples":

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1. Phoenix II, p.590; Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p.218.
2. The Symbolic Meaning, p.258.
3. Aaron's Rod, p.128.
4. The Princess and Other Stories, p.25.

> Orphic farewell, and farewell, and farewell
> And the ego sum of Dionysos
> The sono io of perfect drunkenness
> Intoxication of final loneliness.

The final discovery of the central self is not solipsistic, however; for the physical self must continuously acknowledge an influx of impressions from the dark unknown. It is here that Lawrence's descriptions of the intrinsic self modify into his poetic terms for apocalyptic perception of the objective world:

> That is the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega, the one absolute: the man alone by himself, alone with his own soul, alone with his eyes on the darkness which is the dark god of life. Alone like the pythoness on her tripod, like the oracle alone above the fissure into the unknown. The oracle, the fissure down into the unknown, the strange exhalations from the dark, the strange words the oracle must utter. Strange, cruel, pregnant words: the new term of consciousness. [1]

On this partially existential self that is the absolute of his metaphysic, Lawrence bases his aesthetic, of a quasi-oracular inspiration entering the demonic self. The fissure of this aesthetic, with its compulsive, inspirational exhalations, is the fissure that opens in "Tortoise Shout" or "Snake". Again, in "Baby Tortoise" and "Tortoise Family Connections" Lawrence creates a myth of the physical self, unarmoured by mentality, courageously yet without consciousness of courage, voyaging through the void of the inanimate world, conscious only of its own supreme being:

> Wandering in the slow triumph of his own existence,
> Ringing the soundless bell ofhis presence in chaos,
> And biting the frail grass arrogantly,
> Decidedly arrogantly.

Yet to be fully alive, this isolation must be broken down. Lawrence's void or darkness is not finally empty; it is divine. His absolute of the self is relative. The intrinsic physical self, as it is defined at last, cannot but be conscious of, related to and polarized against the second term in the metaphysic, the external universe.

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1. Kangaroo, p.310; and cf. p.360.

A qualified primacy is allowed to the universe beyond the self, or rather to the creative mystery which brings forth the universe and man.[1] The creative mystery precedes man and cannot be plumbed by him; it made man and can dispose of him. Moreover, it did not create the universe, and then withdraw. It persists as a 'rare living plasm', an anima that creates by self-division and resolution.[2] The universe consists of both the animate and the inanimate: life is a matter of distinguishing the matter that matters, that which is quick and alive. To embrace all matter was the error of Whitman,[3] and is the mistake of the unhappily domesticated, 'Walt-Whitmanesque bitch', Bibbles:

> Reject nothing, sings Walt Whitman.
> So you, you go out at last and eat the unmentionable,
> In your appetite for affection.

The truly alive individual relates, not to all the universe, but to that part of it in which he detects the quickness of the creative mystery. Lawrence's metaphysic is not materialism; nor is 'mystical materialism' necessarily the best term for it, in that mysticism so often carries the imputation of otherworldliness. Lawrence himself, in distinguishing between the material and the physical —

> Physical and material are, of course, subtly opposite.
> The machine is absolutely material, and absolutely
> anti-physical — as even our fingers know. 4

— suggests the coinage of another term, 'physicalism'. Lawrence invents physicalism as a metaphysic of the senses, to escape the horns of the materialist/idealist metaphysics of the intellect and the spirit. The second term of physicalism, the phenomenal universe, is necessarily modulated from absolute matter into physical substance, that which is

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1. See Women in Love, p.538.
2. The Symbolic Meaning, pp.26, 178-79.
3. Studies in Classic American Literature, p.172-73.
4. Phoenix II, p.591.

perceived as quick by the senses, by virtue of its revealing the creative mystery.

But the second term cannot be identified with the first. The universe is a terrifying, other reality, and if it has become stale to our modern scientific or social vision, then:

> .. this is the result of our making, in our own conceit, man the measure of the universe. Don't you be taken in. The universe, so vast and profound, measures man up very accurately, for the yelping mongrel with his tail between his legs that he is. [1]

Terrifying and wonderful, the universe is seen under two distinct forms. Firstly, in the nature of the thing itself and as it is seen by the existential self, the universe is a single unknown whole, a mysterious anima with an overriding, unitarian principle. This concept underlies some of the symbolism in Birds, Beasts and Flowers, especially the continuum of infernal darkness in "Elephant", and the 'glossy dark wind' and the correlative water, fire, electricity and magnetism of "Turkey-Cock". Yet the volume as a whole is based on another idea of the universe: each individual creature is considered as a unique and discrete manifestation of the creative mystery. 'The creative mystery unfolds itself in pure living creatures', so that 'We are forced to attribute to a starfish, or to a nettle, its own peculiar and integral consciousness'. Each animal offers an 'intimation of other worlds':[2] each object has complexities and intrinsic depths corresponding to those in the subject. The religious value, placed by this aspect of Lawrence's vision, on the small, the fragile and the individual, is not unlike Blake's:

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1. Phoenix II, p.479.

2. The Symbolic Meaning, p.176; Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p.217; Letters, ed. Moore, p.486, [?23 Nov. 1916].

How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts the airy way,
Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by your senses
five? [1]

The distinction is only that for Blake the senses remain Lockian and imprisoning; for Lawrence they are the agents of the imagination, the keys to revelation.

When Lawrence's imagination forsakes universals and transcendencies, however physical, to descend to concrete particularities, it is the better exercized. The taste for physical transcendence ends in the near inarticulacy and symbolic inanition of "Manifesto"; the finding of revelation in time, space and individual encounter leads to the variegated richness of Birds, Beasts and Flowers. To this extent Lawrence's imagination was Wordsworthian, given to finding intimations of eternity in the circumstantial moment. Yet both urges, towards the One and the Many, are genuine touchstones of his sensibility; and perhaps the height of his genius, as novelist or poet, is to create a vital suspension between the two;[2] to show the fish wresting its shadowy identity from the all-mothering element, the humming-bird whizzing through the vast, slow tubes of past time towards its jewel-like perfection in the present, the baby tortoise voyaging, the most ancient and lonely mariner of all, through the dark chaos of the non-self. This consciousness of a perilous equilibrium maintained between life and the One is, as Ethel Cornwell has proposed, a point of sympathy between Coleridge and Lawrence.[3] Moreover, although these ontological divisions, between the individual and the One, the self and the universe, are

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1. Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, "A Memorable Fancy".
2. Cf. Phoenix II, p.444.
3. Ethel F.Cornwell, The "Still Point": Theme and Variations in the Writing of T.S.Eliot, Coleridge, Yeats, Henry James, Virginia Woolf and D.H.Lawrence, (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1962), p.66-67.

fundamental to his metaphysic, nonetheless, for Lawrence as for Coleridge, the 'secret' or 'the process and mystery of production and of life'[1] lies in the transcendence of these divisions. As in Look! We Have Come Through! the first term of self had to suffer annihilation, so in Birds, Beasts and Flowers, if they are to be renewed, both terms must be 'melted back/To the primeval rudiments':

> The Cross, the Cross
> Goes deeper in than we know,
> Deeper into life ...

The cross symbolizes the source of the problem, division — into multiplicity, into subject and object, into the many voices of the self. 'The duality of spiritual and sensual being, spirit and senses, soul and body, mind and matter ... does exist, in all our living, in all our experience.'[2] It is a dualism as acutely realized, if not as stringently defined, as Coleridge's. Like Coleridge Lawrence resolves it by the concept of a crowning synthesis, a 'third thing' equivalent to the 'tertium aliquid' of Biographia Literaria, making good this fortunate division.[3] But Lawrence's distinction between subject and object is more Wordsworthian in being drawn, not primarily within the self, but between the self and Nature. 'I am not so clever', he protested to the Bhuddist Earl Brewster, 'but that my life consists in a relation between me myself, that I am, and the world around me, that I am in contact with, which may or may not be illusory'. Moreover, for the period under scrutiny, Lawrence's attention and wonder was monopolized by the living world of Nature:

> How marvellous is the living relationship between man and his object: be it man or woman, bird, beast, flower or rock or rain ... An Egyptian hawk, a Chinese painting

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1. Coleridge, Biographia, p.153.

2. The Symbolic Meaning, p.55.

3. Phoenix II, p.433; Coleridge, Biographia, p.164.

> of a camel, an Assyrian sculpture of a lion, an African fetish idol of a woman pregnant, an Aztec rattlesnake, an early Greek Apollo, a cave-man's painting of a Prehistoric mammoth, on and on, how perfect the timeless moments between man and the other Pan-creatures of this earth of ours! [1]

From this 'pure conjunction', from a 'new relationship between ourselves and the universe' springs not only art but life and morality.[2]

As David Gordon has demonstrated, in "Morality and the Novel" Lawrence defines art, morality and life according to the one basic criterion, of relationship 'between man and his circumambient universe, at the living moment'.[3] Life is the achieving and consummation of such a relatedness; art is the revelation and expression of it; morality is its balancing or mensuration. How does this relation come to pass? Lawrence appears to concede everything to scepticism or idealism. When Van Gogh paints the sunflowers, he does not perceive the flower as it is in itself, nor does his painting 'represent the sunflower itself. We shall never know what the sunflower itself is.' 'Bishop Berkeley is absolutely right', Lawrence continues in another essay:

> .. things only exist in our own consciousness. To the known me, nothing exists beyond what I know. True, I am always adding to the things I know. But this is because, in my opinion, knowledge begets knowledge. Not because anything more has entered <u>from the outside</u>. There <u>is</u> no outside. There is only more knowledge to be added. [4]

Lawrence shares the great Romantic fear, of solipsism or its psychological equivalent. In "New Heaven and Earth" and repeatedly in <u>Pansies</u>, in "Escape" and "Ships in Bottles", Lawrence lashed out against the stultifying and corrupt certainty that 'I am god inside my own crystal

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1. <u>Letters</u>, ed. Huxley, p.236, 2 Feb. 1922; <u>Phoenix II</u>, p.434.
2. <u>Phoenix</u>, p.526; <u>Phoenix II</u>, p.478.
3. Gordon, <u>Lawrence as Literary Critic</u>, p.54; <u>Phoenix</u>, p.527-28.
4. <u>Phoenix II</u>, p.617.

world, the strictly limited domain of my own being'. Yet he is willing to accept an extreme idealism, inasmuch as it applies to the 'known self', because idealism is the philosophy of the mind; whereas 'the vast bulk of our consciousness is non-cerebral'.[1] Lawrence denominates and differentiates this other consciousness in a variety of ways, as first-consciousness, first-knowledge, blood-consciousness, physical awareness, the unconscious, the intuition and even the imagination. But these varied modes of knowing have two things in common. Firstly, they are all non-mental:

> Let us realize that the subjective and objective of the unconscious are not the same as the subjective and objective of the mind. Here we have no concepts to deal with, no static objects in the shape of ideas. We have none of that tiresome business of establishing the relation between the mind and its own ideal object, or the discrimination between the ideal thing-in-itself and the mind of which it is the content. We are spared the hateful thing-in-itself, the idea, which is at once so all-important and so nothing. We are on straightforward solid ground; there is no abstraction. [2]

Secondly, they perceive objects directly as living, physical beings. Our first-knowledge is of such being, and since this knowledge is innate and instinctive, it is, within its own frame of reference, irrefutable. The failure of our intellectual knowledge to find grounds supporting the validity of our first-knowledge is an indication of the limitations of the intellect. Idealism and materialism fall short of our instinctive needs, because of their exclusive reliance on mentation. They have arisen from 'the dead end of consciousness', whereas non-cerebral consciousness is the source of 'the sap of our life, of all life'.[3]

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1. Phoenix II, p.253; Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p.217.

2. Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p.228.

3. Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p.217; see John Remsbury, "'Real Thinking': Lawrence and Cézanne", Cambridge Quarterly, II (Spring 1967), 117-47.

Non-cerebral modes of consciousness know the object as a deep of physical being corresponding to the subject itself, not as the flimsy sense-impressions to the reception of which empiricism and idealism have condemned the sensory man:

> .. an artist is never, in being an artist, an idealist. The artist lives and sees and knows direct from the life-mystery itself ... [The] artist lives from the great sensual centres, his art is in terms of the great sensual understanding, dark and rich and of that reserved, pagan tenderness to which we have lost the key.
>
> In the sensual vision there is always the pause of fear, dark wonder and glamour. The creature beheld is seen in its quality of <u>otherness</u>, a term of the vivid, immanent unknown. And the new knowledge enters in rich dark thrills into the soul. [1]

The instinctive artist knows the object as a self with a potential religious value inherent in it. The final acknowledgement of the subject should be of a failure of knowledge, of having left 'a certain untouched chaos' in the object. The object retains an ultimate depth at which it is intrinsically other, a unique self rooted in the unknown as the subject is. The acknowledgement of this guarantees a moral balancing between subject and object, and a recognition of 'the great blank of the gulf' between them that enhances both.[2]

Physicalism posits a pluralistic universe. The universe contains dark depths of physical being, which are other selves; but these others are dualistically equivalent to depths in the subjective self. As such, physicalism closely resembles Wordsworth's immanentism; but whereas Wordsworth shrank from the pantheistic implications of a Spirit immanent in material Nature, Lawrence accepted the primitivism implied by his physicalism. It has been suggested that the depth ascribed to the subject was partly the result of advances in the study of psychology made in Lawrence's life-time; <u>Psychoanalysis and the</u>

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1. <u>The Symbolic Meaning</u>, p.59-60.

2. <u>Phoenix II</u>, p.447.

Unconscious and Fantasia of the Unconscious were written to attack Freud's theories in particular. It will be proposed in the next section that the depth attributed to the object term was partly the outcome of Lawrence's reading in anthropology; it certainly has affinities with primitive, mythopoeic modes of thought. The theory of blood-consciousness, broached in the letter to Russell, was based on The Golden Bough and Totemism and Exogamy. But Lawrence does not transpose all value from subject to object. The depths of both allow a commerce denied to the mind, and it is from this transaction that the 'third thing' is synthesized, a conjunction between self and the universe in which, for Lawrence as for Wordsworth, creative growth resides:

> No man, or creature, or race can have vivid vitality unless it be moving towards a blossoming ... Blossoming means the establishing of a pure, new relationship with all the cosmos. This is the state of heaven. And it is the state of a flower, a cobra, a jenny-wren in spring, a man when he knows himself royal and crowned with the sun, with his feet gripping the core of the earth.

The third thing exists in a 'fourth dimension', the realm of all creative reality, of life, art and quick morality. It is a state of being, yet notideal; a 'frail moment' in time and space, yet eternal in its quality; a goal, yet not a fixed absolute; a transcendent fulfilment, yet incarnate.[1] Up to a point the fourth dimension is a ploy for absorbing the mystical vitality of Romantic transcendence, while shedding the spirituality and idealism, the self-consciousness and narcissism. Yet it is also a fact of Lawrence's sensibility, the observed consequence of the meeting of his sensuous intelligence with the centres of value and selfhood in the circumjacent universe. Lawrence's concept of a rapport, in the fourth dimension, between nonmental depths of subject and object, does not, according to any metaphysical standards, solve the Romantic epistemological dilemma. Yet

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1. Phoenix II, pp.432-34, 469-73; Phoenix, p.527.

it has the backing of common sense. It is a mysticism based on the natural presumption of sensory experience, unsophisticated by metaphysical doubt. It is, moreover, in Lawrence's sense an empowering 'metaphysic'. Physicalism offers a speculative framework, in which to pursue psychological and religious intuitions, and an aesthetic foundation for art.

It provides as well a paradigm under which to study Lawrence's poetry. From the vigorous distinction between human and non-human, self and non-self, can be deduced a theoretical basis for the imagery and symbolism in Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Lawrence has nothing but impatience for purely expressionist or subjective symbols:

> Do you imagine the great realities, even the ram of Amon, are only symbols of something human? Do you imagine the great symbols, the dragon, the snake, the bull, only refer to bits, qualities or attributes of little man? [1]

A symbol represents a third thing. In "Figs" the fruit is symbolic in this whole sense:

> As you see it standing growing, you feel at once it is symbolic:
> And it seems male.
> But when you come to know it better, you agree with the Romans, it is female.
> . . . .
> The fig, the horse-shoe, the squash-blossom.
> Symbols.

The nonhuman as well as the human implication of the symbol must be comprehended. Often the clue to understanding is to realize the thing itself, sensuously, as an object in depth; for a true symbol includes the nonhuman significance of the object in its meaning. Likewise, when alluding to a marble frieze in "The Revolutionary", Lawrence refers his reader back, not to the Elgin marbles, and to the cultural and human associations of the object, but to the visual and dimensional similarity between marble and clouds. At bottom, Lawrence's imagery is sensuous

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1. Phoenix II, p.479.

rather than cultural in its patterning. It refers back to objects as preceding concepts; it celebrates lost cultural values as forever recoverable in the phenomenal world. Lawrence's symbols are to be understood neither in the light of the first, nor of the second term in his metaphysic, but of the third. They are produced by the transaction between self and universe, and they draw life from the senses:

> You can't give a great symbol a "meaning", any more than you can give a cat a "meaning". Symbols are organic units of consciousness with a life of their own, and you can never explain them away because their value is dynamic, emotional, belonging to the sense-consciousness of body and soul, and not simply mental.

Myth, too, as "Medlars and Sorb Apples" showed, is developed from a sensuous meditation on the object. It reproduces a '<u>complete</u> imaginative experience, which goes through the whole soul and body', 'going too deep in the blood and soul, for mental explanation or description'.[1]

The senses acquire a mystical import for Lawrence. 'One sees by divination', not by 'the optical vision, a sort of flashy colour photography of the eye'. 'The reality of substantial bodies is only perceived by the imagination'; this imagination is substantially sensory, 'physical, intuitional perception'; and its percepts are not of surfaces, but of depths of real being.[2] Non-visual sensation primarily gives access to these depths. In <u>The Boy in the Bush</u> the smell of a kangaroo brings home the terrible alienness of its being.[3] Hearing detects an aura of Keatsian or Panic mystery about the bat, a 'Black piper on an infinitesimal pipe'. In "Snake" the tactile sensitivity, which evokes the reptile's soft descent to the trough and its drinking, 'in a small clearness', through 'straight gums',

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1. <u>Phoenix</u>, p.295-97.
2. <u>Phoenix II</u>, p.250; <u>Phoenix</u>, pp.521-23, 557-60.
3. <u>The Boy in the Bush</u>, p.112.

is of such rapt totality that touch does indeed become a medium for apprehending the wholeness of another being. Lawrence emphasizes that first-consciousness, directly knowing the object, melts all the senses into a total perception:

> When a boy of eight sees a horse, he doesn't see the correct biological object we intend him to see. He sees a big living presence of no particular shape with hair dangling from its neck and four legs ... The image on his retina is not the image of his consciousness. The image on his retina just does not go into him. His unconsciousness is filled with a strong, dark, vague prescience of a powerful presence ... The child is not a little camera. He is a small vital organism which has direct dynamic rapport with the objects of the outer universe ...
>
> The mode of vision is not one and final. The mode of vision is manifold. And the optical image is a mere vibrating blur to a child — and, indeed, to a passionate adult. In this vibrating blur the soul sees its own true correspondent. [1]

Some poems move through a similar blurring of exact visual detail to find the soul's 'true correspondent'. In "Fish", staring directly at the creature's scales and eye, the poet only saw them grow opaque and dull. His most intense and immediate vision of the fish took place when he 'saw, dimly,/ Once a big pike rush'. In "Grapes" the fruit remained a closed world until, in his cups, the poet entered unawares 'another world, a dusky, flowerless, tendrilled world', 'before eyes saw too much'. A beautiful effect in "Almond Blossom" is the transition from visual to visceral empathy. In "Tortoise Shout" it remains uncertain whether the final revelation, though entirely physical, can be classified under any of the usual senses:

> A far, was-it-audible scream,
> Or did it sound on the plasm direct?

Other aspects of the metaphysic pass into the art. Patience wears thin over the multiple centres and polarities bred by the subjective physiology of Fantasia of the Unconscious. Yet the criterion, that art

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1. Fantasia of the Unconscious, p.89-90.

should record the wholeness of the self's varied modes of knowing, is the basis for the conversational structure of the poems. From the willingness to accept multiplicity and difference within the psyche the complex expressionism of the verse-form itself was evolved. Under the concept of depths of intrinsic being within the subject, the progression of Lawrence's entire poetic oeuvre, from harrowing self-analysis to an outward-looking, balanced impersonality, can be understood. Birds, Beasts and Flowers exhibits mementoes from the sexual quest, echoes of former soundings. Murry was appalled to find how the description of Lawrence's male tortoise, 'scuffling beside his female, persistent, unsatisfied, humiliated', fitted his picture of 'the achieved and lonely soul of Lawrence'.[1] But the portrayal of testudinal sex as a gamut of torture and humiliation —

> Doomed, in the long crucifixion of desire, to seek
> his consummation beyond himself ...
> Doomed to make an intolerable fool of himself
> In his effort toward completion again.

— is part of a broader canvas in which pain and indignity become the sacrifices from which new life flows. The alternative to this sacrifice of identity is the enclosed, solipsistic world, for which the overripe fig and sealed volcano are symbols. To a critic for whom sexuality holds no fears of loss of pride or integrity, "Lui et Elle" will doubtless speak in a tone of exacerbated morbidity. Others will hear in it a mature voice reflecting on the equilibrium between the heroic and the foolish, the aspirant and the resistant, what the individual suffers and what is universal. The voice is reflective, but passionate: emotion is past as well as present, involving the poet and his poetic creation: but this passion is claimed to be general and impersonal. The informing passion of the poet's voice enriches the reader's sense of the object. Comparison of "Almond Blossom" with H.D.'s flower poems

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1 Murry, Son of Woman, p.230.

from the Imagist anthologies is a convincing proof that this passionate vision creates a fuller sense of the object, and a deeper and richer art, than a contrivedly unemotional representation. Paradoxically, the full depth and breadth of the subject must be brought to bear to convey the fulness of the object. The mature expressionism of Birds, Beasts and Flowers empowers the rich impressionism.

Seminal to the metaphysic and the very conception of Birds, Beasts and Flowers is the notion of correspondent deeps of sentient, physical being in the subject and living object. The support this notion offers to Lawrence's imagination can be seen in "Mosquito", possibly the earliest poem to be written.[1] The poem successfully evinces the detestable insect's 'evil little aura, prowling, and casting a numbness'. The reader sees its body and movements, but mainly hears its maddening buzzing during the game of waiting:

> It is your trump.
> It is your hateful little trump,
> You pointed fiend,
> Which shakes my sudden blood to hatred of you ...

Intuitively, the reader disbelieves the scientific explanation of this noise; believes that the cry can be apprehended by more than audition; that it is 'a slogan,/ A yell of triumph as you snatch my scalp'. Raising a sense of antagonistic depths in this tiny adversary, the poem illustrates the metaphysic negatively. The mosquito gains an ecstasy by breaking into the man's bloodstream, but it is an 'obscenity of trespass'; and the man's revenge reduces the object, whose depths he had realized, into an insubstantial film:

> Queer, what a big stain my sucked blood makes
> Beside the infinitesimal faint smear of you!
> Queer, what a dim dark smudge you have disappeared into!

Two positive examples of correspondence between subject and object will

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1. Sagar, Art of D.H.Lawrence, p.118.

suffice to conclude this section, illustrating how the metaphysic serves as a basis for the play of the imagination.

Superficially, "Kangaroo" seems a delightful animal vignette, little connected with Lawrence's other writing about Australia. But it is linked with one of his most persistent impressions, in the letters, Kangaroo and The Boy in the Bush, of a vast underdark in the continent on which the civilized white population float, without making any substantial contact, 'like ducks'. 'The minute the sun begins to go down', Lawrence shuddered, 'even thetowns, even Sydney, which is huge begins to feel unreal ... as if life here really had never entered in: as if it were just sprinkled over, and the land lay untouched'. Reaching to touch it himself, he felt as if he were sliding 'over the edge of a gulf', yet was forced to admit the genius of the place eluded him.[1] The substantial reality of Australia was 'too far back' for European consciousness adequately to grasp it. 'Each continent has its own great spirit of place'; to produce a great civilization a people must come to knowledge of the relationship between their 'deepest self' and this spirit; but a continent also expresses itself in flora and fauna.[2] The contemplation of the emblematic Australian animal might lead to a first-knowledge of the Australian continent. The kangaroo does seem to obey different laws of motion to the beasts of the northern hemisphere. Its body is pivoted radially to the earth's centre, 'plumb-weighted', 'like a liquid drop that is heavy, and just touches the earth'.

Impressions of the kangaroo blend sharp visual images, having human and cultural associations, with vaguer, more powerful presentiments of depth and weight. One line captures a photographic portrait of 'Her

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1. Ed. Nehls, II, p.139, 15 May 1922; p.153, 3 July 1922; Letters, ed. Moore, p.707, 13 June 1922. Cf. Kangaroo, p.18; Boy in the Bush, p.255.

2. Studies in Classic American Literature, p.12-13; The Symbolic Meaning, p.30.

little loose hands, and stooping Victorian shoulders'; another follows 'the great muscular python-stretch of her tail'. The poet traces the slender lines of the muzzle; the man offers her peppermint drops, 'which she loves, sensitive mother Kangaroo'. In her eyes, particularly, can be felt depths of evolutionary time:

> Her full antipodal eyes, so dark,
> So big and quiet and remote, having watched so many
> empty dawns in silent Australia.
>
> . . . .
>
> How full her eyes are, like the full, fathomless, shining eyes of an Australian black-boy
> Who has been lost so many centuries on the margins of existence!

A correspondence with her experience still lingers on the margins of human consciousness. But her eyes are also wistful with looking 'for something to come'. It is her belly's pendulous weight of blood which governs her knowledge, holding her to the past. Lawrence speculated freely about animals' modes of consciousness: they might preserve lost human ways of knowing. He thought that animals perceived the world directly from within 'the dark passionate belly'. Their whole blood-system is conscious, but the quick of their awareness lies in the solar plexus. He supposed the female blood-system especially might gravitate towards the earth's centre.[1] Their perception is an extended form of touch, a palpation that instantly knows the other. Annotating a book which proposed an opposite theory of animal perception, Lawrence was roused by the author's positivist contention, that 'we sense directly only surfaces', to rejoin:

> We do sense the solid, even in mere touch ... [It] is eyesight only which is 2-dimensional — touch is 4 or 5 dimensional. Eyesight learns to be 3-dimensional — but it learns from touch — the basic sensuality ... & our whole intellectual system is based too much on sight.
> .. the animal sees the world as a kind of deeps from

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1. The Symbolic Meaning, pp.135, 67; Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious, p.218; Fantasia of the Unconscious, p.188.

> which things emerge, or start, or sink: it sees flux not surface. That is, it doesn't really see, & surfaces have never become defined to it. [1]

As the kangaroo turns and hops away at the poem's close, and we watch her 'Leap ... and come down on the line that draws to the earth's deep, heavy centre', she is like a giant palp, a sense of which we still have some intimation, which touches directly the pulse of the continent.

"Cypresses" has several points of similarity and instructive contrast to Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn". Both Lawrence and Keats are intent on recapturing an ancient mystery, in fact their own sensibility, in objects suffused with an antique way of life. Both seek a forgotten glory and loveliness, but Lawrence looks for what is 'darkly monumental in ... Etruscan cypresses', Keats for 'What ... haunts about' the urn, 'Of deities or mortals or of both'. Keats chooses an artefact as against a living object, Art before Nature. He searches in a world of cruel mutability for a symbol of that permanence in which sexual and spiritual ecstasy take on an eternal quality. Lawrence finds a moment of embodied communion which, though existing in a fourth dimension, must pay heed to the quickness of 'cypress-trees in the wind'. (Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium" could be used to make up a tryptic, exploring the consequences of applying to human existence a timeless, artificial symbol, 'out of nature'.) Keats's vase is a 'Sylvan historian' with mystical tendencies. Lawrence's trees are the very silva; personified, they would be mythographers. Indeed, they are personified in the Etruscans, seen moving through the groves like dark fauns. Considering its free verse-form, its apostrophes and invocations, and the dark figures that are invoked, Lawrence's poem seems wholly Dionysian, compared with the Apollonian suspension of Dionysian ritual and passion, which characterizes Keats's ode. Yet "Cypresses" is not without art or artistic

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1. E.W.Tedlock, Jr., "D.H.Lawrence's Annotation of Oupensky's Tertium Organum", Texas Studies in Literature and Language, II (Summer 1960), 211-12.

reference; Lawrence, like Keats, has been into galleries and museums: possibly his descriptions of the trees and Etruscans as sinuous 'length/s/ of darkness' are modelled on Etruscan tomb-paintings and the Athenian black-figure vases, which the Etruscans collected.[1] Lawrence's cypresses keep the inviolate secret of the 'silenced' Etruscans, which is to be felt, not spoken. Keats's 'silent form' remains an 'unravished bride of quietness', yet continues to 'tease us out of thought/ As doth eternity'. The vase expresses itself 'more sweetly than our rhyme'; and Lawrence, too, doubts the adequacy of modern language to penetrate the trees' mystery.

The suggestiveness of a race that has left only cryptic memorials allows Lawrence to suppose that the lost Etruscan language and culture had the power to penetrate the mystery of living things. The Etruscans must have been a race possessed of depths of physical being, hidden like their tombs. It can be sensed in 'the subtle Etruscan smiles still lurking/ Within the tombs'. Just as he was instantly and instinctively attracted to Etruscan things, so Lawrence was fascinated by the cypresses at first sight. In Twilight in Italy they seemed 'like flames of forgotten darkness', 'candles to keep the darkness aflame in the full sunshine'. To Aaron Sisson in Aaron's Rod they appear:

> .. like ghosts, like soft, strange, pregnant presences. He lay and watched tall cypresses breathing and communicating, faintly moving and as it were walking in the small wind ... In the dark, mindful silence of the cypress trees, lost races, lost language, lost human ways of feeling and of knowing. Men have known as we can no more know, have felt as we can no more feel ... Aaron felt the cypresses rising dark about him, like so many visitants from an old, lost, subtle world, where men had the wonder of demons about them, the aura of demons, such as still clings to the cypresses, in Tuscany. 2

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1. For Lawrence's recurrent association of Keats's urn with Etruscan ware, see Etruscan Places, pp.129, 188, 205.

2. Etruscan Places, p.97; Twilight in Italy, p.88; Aaron's Rod, p.310.

The 'aura of demons' clung to the Etruscans, to the cypresses and to the poet; but it is the poem that makes out the relation between all three. The cypresses are symbolized as dark flames, living bodies or putative phalloi, 'supple, brooding, softly-swaying pillars of dark flame'; but the trees are not, to Lawrence or the Etruscans, phallic symbols in any reductive sense. They are not subjective symbols, excluding the object; for the dark 'thought' on which they are folded is their intrinsic being. The similarity between trees and Etruscans, as they are depicted, springs from a correspondence between arboreal pith and racial marrow:

> Yet more I see you darkly concentrate,
> Tuscan cypresses,
> On one old thought:
> On one old slim imperishable thought, while you remain
> Etruscan cypresses;
> Dusky slim marrow-thought of slender, flickering men
> of Etruria,
> Whom Rome called vicious.

The Etruscans' 'marrow-thought' was non-mental, physical consciousness. They communed with the cypresses from their central, physical selves. They saw in the trees a blurred, dark presence that was the soul's true correspondent; like Lawrence, they saw the cypresses as 'tall and naked bodies'.[1] Attaining to this vision, the poet achieves a further revelation of the corresponding selves of the Etruscans, 'Who made so little noise outside the cypress-groves'. The groves are living monuments to a dead race. Through the communion they struck with the trees, the Etruscan experience survives in a fourth dimension, 'wrapt inviolable in soft cypress-trees'. Accessible to any new communicant, the religious mystery remains inviolable, demanding acknowledgement of the unknown.

"Cypresses" leaves an aura of mystery around the rapport, the trees and the Etruscans. An earlier version contained an additional

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1. Phoenix, p.54.

stanza (following line 44), in which the hypotheses about Etruscan sensory knowledge were made more explicit. The poet dreams of achieving a yet closer rapport with the lost race, without the trees' intercession:

> To sit with pure, slim, long-nosed
> Evil-called, sensitive Etruscans, naked except for
> their boots;
> To be able to smile back at them
> And exchange the lost kiss
> And come to dark connection. [1]

The final version rightly excised anything as unintuitive and concrete as a 'dark connection'. Yet it is explicit about the need to revive the mode of physical consciousness which the ancients possessed:

> For oh, I know, in the dust where we have buried
> The silenced races and all their abominations,
> We have buried so much of the delicate magic of life.

Lawrence has not much time for 'abominations'. His aim is to restore a fulness to consciousness, to bring an ancient 'meaning back into life again', without which our knowing is dead to buried depths and our 'words are hollow as hollow seed-pods'. A great part of life should not be cast aside as evil or vicious, 'As Rome denied Etruria/ And mechanical America Montezuma still'. But the linking of physicalism with ancient cultures inevitably raises doubts as to the atavistic tendency in Lawrence's thought. In the first version of "The Spirit of Place" Lawrence had assessed the divine emperor of the Aztecs, Montezuma, as 'a decadent and sensitive character'; but he extolled the 'plain, direct prescience' of his 'mystic sympathy'. His consciousness was 'fluid, not mechanically fixed', capable of registering 'the rarest impressions upon the physical soul'. 'The responsibility for perfecting this life-form' devolved on modern America; it must 'pick up the life-thread' of the old way.[2] If the intuition of "Cypresses" were

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1. The Adelphi, I (Oct. 1923), 368-77.

2. The Symbolic Meaning, p.22-23; Phoenix, p.91.

institutionalized as a religion, it would resemble the belief among certain tribes, as reported by J.G.Frazer, that their ancestors' spirits were incorporate in certain trees.[1] The origins and implications of Birds, Beasts and Flowers have yet to be satisfactorily explicated. To do so requires a disentangling of the roots and affiliations which Lawrence's metaphysic has in anthropology and with primitivism.

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1. Frazer, The Golden Bough, p.777.

> The soul must take the hint from the relics our scientists have so marvellously gathered out of the forgotten past, and from the hint develop a new living utterance. [1]

Apart from the thirteenth-century vernacular bestiary, the special case of Blake's "The Tyger" and some minor precedents in the poetry of Meredith and Brooke, Birds, Beasts and Flowers erupts into English literature with a startling originality. Beast fables, allegories and satires there had been. But no-one before Lawrence had thought to take animals so seriously, to find in them a centre of religious value and artistic vision; no-one, that is, unless one seeks as far back as the Old English riddles, charms and spells. In the preceding section an attempt was made to show this vision had roots in Romanticism, though its development was altered by transplantation in a new metaphysic. This section will advance and test the hypothesis that Lawrence's reading in anthropology suggested the idea of extending Romanticism in this direction. By examining his debts to these sources, a theoretical basis for the neo-Romanticism of Birds, Beasts and Flowers can be sketched out; insight can be gathered into the imagination that rejuvenated Romantic Nature; and perspective can be gained on the aesthetic and social implications of the poetry.

Early in 1916 Lawrence was asking his friends to send him 'something a bit learned', classical or medieval translations, or anthropological reconstructions of ancient civilizations.[2] Like Gerald Crich and Rawdon Lilly, Lawrence had a taste for learning about primitive cultures. Later he wrote complaining to Koteliansky, 'I seem to have

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1. Fantasia of the Unconscious, p.14.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.416, [?21 Jan. 1916].

nothing but Greek Translations and Ethnology, in my head';[1] but he continued to read the thick tomes of the anthropologists, if not with unmixed pleasure, with unabated curiosity. Among those he had read before arriving in New Mexico were Jane Harrison, J.G.Frazer, E.B.Tylor and Leo Frobenius, along with Gilbert Murray and John Burnet. It is the influence of these authors on his poetry which will be examined in this section. Frazer's books were instrumental in Lawrence's formulation of a theory of blood-knowledge. Influencing Lawrence's metaphysic, anthropology can be said generally to have influenced his poetry. But the affiliations are more definite than this. It should be kept in mind that Lawrence prefaced his speculations in the letter to Russell, by remarking that The Golden Bough had only convinced him of the truth of earlier intuitions. The principles and conclusions of these learned studies may have been of more importance to Lawrence than the masses of data compiled in them. But Lawrence accepted none of their 'laws' of human behaviour until tested on his pulses. All had to be transformed by a long process of creative thought before they could inform his art.

In the foreword to Fantasia of the Unconscious Lawrence takes issue with some of his ancient mentors and academic sources, and asserts his own creative independence:

> I have found hints, suggestions for what I say here in all kind of scholarly books, from the Yoga and Plato and St John the Evangel and the early Greek philosophers like Herakleitos down to Frazer and his 'Golden Bough', and even Freud and Frobenius. Even then I only remember hints -- and I proceed by intuition ... I refer to the science which proceeds in terms of life and is established on data of living experience and sure intuition.

Lawrence's science, pseudo-philosophy or 'pollyanalytics' is deduced as

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1. Letters, ed. Zytaruk, p.77, 1 April 1916.

well from the novels and the poems, these being 'pure passionate experience'. Like Coleridge in Biographia Literaria, he asserts the truth of 'facts of mind', but these truths are not restricted to the mind, nor are they the truths of transcendental philosophy. Art is not itself based on the mental construct of this science, yet:

> .. even art is utterly dependent on philosophy: or if you prefer it, on a metaphysic ... Men live and see according to some gradually developing and withering vision. This vision exists also as a dynamic idea or metaphysics -- exists first as such. Then it is unfolded into life and art.

'Our vision, our belief, our metaphysic is wearing woefully thin, and the art is wearing absolutely threadbare.'[1] Thus, "Cypresses" did not originate in Frazer's account of primitive tree-worship. Its motive impulse was an intuition of the poet's about cypresses and Etruscan artefacts.[2] Possibly the anthropological datum furnished a hint which set in motion the concept of proliferating rapports. But the substance of the poem was 'pure passionate inspiration'. Underlying this creativity, however, and reflected in the poem, is a dynamic paradigm, physicalism. This did not suggest the intuition either, but it is the mode of vision, a dynamic which can be abstracted afterwards as a paradigm. Anthropological studies helped Lawrence to abstract physicalism. They may have helped him to conceive the theoretical outlines of a new Nature poetry, in which living things were represented as possessing an indwelling mana, such as certain primitive peoples attributed to them. But the substance of that poetry for the reader, and the creative inspiration for writing it, would spring from the poet's intuitive sympathy with animals. Success would depend, not on the elaboration of a construct for imagination, but on the quality of the feeling for living things and the creativity of the writer.

Lawrence's attitude to his sources was a mixture of gratitude and contempt. A principle objection was to their prose style. Jane

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1. Fantasia of the Unconscious, pp.11-12, 13-14.
2. Cf. Letters, ed. Moore, p.668, 25 Oct. 1921.

Harrison he pronounced 'schoolmarmy'; Frobenius seemed 'a tiresome writer' (here one must agree);[1] and Gilbert Murray was too chatty and woolly:

> Thank you for the Gilbert Murray book ... I wish he were a little less popular and conversational in his style, and that he hadn't so many layers of flannel between him and his own nakedness. But the stuff of the book interests me enormously. [2]

The last is the continual refrain of his commentary on these authors. He declares them pedantic, pusillanimous or insensitive; but the stuff of their books intrigues him. He was not impatient over their diligence or the accuracy of their information, though, once he himself had reached Taos, he was armed and ready to attack Frazer's armchair anthropology.[3] He did protest at the cultural assumptions which ethnologists brought to, and the conclusions they purported to draw from, their material. He disputed their evolutionism and progressivism:

> .. as for me, I have some respect for my ancestors, and believe that they had more up their sleeve than just the marvel of the unborn me.

On the other hand, he asserted the superiority of European race and culture, exclaiming in Kandy that 'The natives are back of us -- in a living sense lower than we are'.[4] But he was equally repelled by modern European technology. In Asia and in America, therefore, he hoped to gather a clue which would contribute to the regeneration of the failed Western religious sense; to 'take up the old broken impulse that will connect us with the mystery of the cosmos again'.[5] Though it did not make him a regressivist as such, Lawrence's mistrust of the tendency of contemporary civilization did allow him to retain a respect for the spiritual life of the European

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.249, 2 Dec. 1913; p.550, 18 April 1918.
2. Letters, ed. Huxley, p.328, 'Sunday' [1916].
3. See Phoenix, p.105-06.
4. Fantasia of the Unconscious, p.15; Letters, ed. Moore, p.702, 30 April 1922.
5. Letters, ed. Moore, p.721, 27 Sept. 1922; The Plumed Serpent, p.147.

past and of the so-called savage, non-European races. Later in life rereading Murray's Four Stages of Greek Religion, by then expanded to Five Stages, Lawrence was:

> .. annoyed with Murray for teaching that civilization keeps evolving into something better. The old gods were as important to Lawrence as the new, different but not inferior. [1]

A civilization was to be judged, not by the gods it had discarded, but by what it had succeeded in retaining and incorporating in its spiritual awareness. Lawrence wanted to sit down with all the gods, numberless, nameless, and eternal in the sense that they are always a part of human religious potential. In particular, the author of Birds, Beasts and Flowers would have had nothing but scorn for Frazer's evolutionist contention that the substitution of theriolatry for the worship of anthropomorphic gods was a necessary advance in the spiritual life of a people.[2]

Lawrence greatly preferred Tylor's Primitive Culture to Frazer's The Golden Bough.[3] This seems odd at first, for Tylor proposes that the basis of primitive religious belief is a kind of animism, a general belief that Nature is animated by 'the operation of personal life and will', by 'spiritual beings' the type of which is the human soul. This animism, claiming that primitive religion is founded on the notion of spirit, seems a far cry from Lawrence's physicalism. But elsewhere Tylor admits that certain tribes appear to conceive of the soul as being simply a smaller, more tenuous and subtle body.[4] Lawrence had Frazer's word for it that in other cultures the soul was considered a small animal,[5] and John

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1. Ed. Nehls, III, p.403.
2. See Frazer, The Golden Bough, pp.515, 556; Totemism and Exogamy, I, p.81-83.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.446, 7 April 1916; p.463, 12 July 1916.
4. Edward B.Tylor, Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom, (London: Murray, 1903), Vol.I, pp.285, 426; II, pp.110, 198-99.
5. Frazer, The Golden Bough, p.235.

Burnet's scholarly opinion that, before the Greek philosophers, the distinction between spirit and matter had not made itself felt.[1] It was evident that the religious axioms which Tylor or Frazer purported to extract from their studies of travelogues and ethnological reports were not so much conclusions empirically deduced from conclusive data as schemata for classifying and arranging information. The information which Tylor had arrayed to support his theory of spiritual animism could equally well be deployed to substantiate a widespread belief in 'mystical materialism'. The exact metaphysical terms which Tylor applied to primitive man's attitude to his environment were irrelevant: of more importance was his portrayal of an immediate and vivid relationship, which man in a primitive society had with the 'sun and stars, trees and rivers, winds and clouds', beasts and plants. Given this, Lawrence could readily suppose that older civilizations shared a physical consciousness of the world which had atrophied in modern times.

Frazer's positivism in The Golden Bough -- his determination not to recognize, while he continued to classify, mystical intelligence in primitive customs and myths -- was Lawrence's particular aversion. A fair specimen of this deliberate blindness is his account of the worship of Osiris:

> As a god of vegetation Osiris was naturally conceived as a god of creative energy in general, since men at a certain stage of evolution fail to distinguish between the reproductive powers of animals and plants. [2]

The worship of Osiris is governed, not by any religious perception of an affinity between human, animal and vegetative fertility, but by a failure to distinguish between them. The aim of rituals performed in Osiris' name must therefore be to propitiate him, or magically to influence him, so as to promote fertility. Ritual cannot be the celebration of a

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1. John Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy, p.15-16.
2. Frazer, The Golden Bough, p.501.

mystery. It must be a means of guaranteeing increased productivity; there must be a material end. The intuitive artist could only be outraged by such unmystical materialism. From the Study of Thomas Hardy to Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine Lawrence vigorously combated the idea that the end of life was production or generation. If life had to have a goal or an absolute, and Lawrence felt that it must, it should lie in the making and consummation of relationships between the individual and his universe. Lost or forgotten modes of connection with the universe fascinated Lawrence. He derided Frazer's denial that such connections had been, as the ignorance of a 'scientist of the most innocent modern sort'. Only modern hubris and stupidity could believe that the ancients were merely superstitious, 'old duffers: or babbling, the babes'.[1] Modern man may retain some 'emotional awareness' of the old modes of connection, and of the symbols and myths in which they were expressed:

> But if you are dead in the old feeling-knowing way, as so many moderns are, then the dragon just "stands for" this, that and the other -- all the things it stands for in Frazer's Golden Bough: it is just a kind of glyph ... 2

Frazer's determinedly objective approach to gods and symbols exemplifies the modern deadness, wilfully dividing mental knowledge from emotional or religious knowledge. The 'twiddle-twaddle about golden boughs' fails to satisfy the self, or to pay attention to the 'living vibration' between subject and object. A symbol originates in this vibration, and it is only by divorcing it from its physical context of intuition that Frazer is able to compile and abstract his mythic patterns. He belittles the human psyche by his reductive schemata:

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1. Fantasia of the Unconscious, p.14-15.
2. Apocalypse, p.206.

> The field of the primary sensual mind is so immense that the attempt to reduce myth or legend to one consistent rational interpretation is futile. It is worse than useless to bring down every great primary myth to cosmic terms, sun myth, thunder myth, and so on. It is still more useless to see the phallic, procreative, and parturitive meaning only. [1]

Far from reducing human intelligence to sensation and superstition, Lawrence is intent on extending the scope of human consciousness.

Frobenius and his 'fantasies'[2] were to be preferred to Frazer and his objectivity. Amid all his pro-colonial rantings, Frobenius had a decent respect for at least the historical African; and in Fantasia of the Unconscious Lawrence adapted to his own purposes the German's speculations concerning 'a great West African -- Zoruban -- civilization, which preceded Egypt and Carthage, and gave rise to the Atlantis myth'.[3] In an essay on Melville Lawrence quotes with approval Frobenius' comments on African cannibalism:

> .. all the cannibal tribes of Inner Africa associate a quite distinctive frame of mind with the consumption of human flesh, and as far as this refers to the territories I myself have travelled through, I am bound to regard it as a misinterpretation of the facts for any traveller to say that the Africans of the interior 'eat human flesh with the same sensation which a beefsteak gives to us'. This is not the truth, because, even if a negro has a human joint upon his board several times a week, his enjoyment of it in these countries will always be connected with a definite emotion. [4]

Frobenius had done his field-work. In consequence he was able to appreciate that an element of mystical communion lingered in even the most brutal rites. He was prepared to testify to 'a definite emotion' in a ritual act. Tylor was to be preferred before other anthropologists because, not only did he express respect for the 'deeper consciousness'

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1. Phoenix II, p.480; The Symbolic Meaning, p.136-37.
2. Aaron's Rod, p.134-35.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.550, 18 April 1918.
4. Leo Frobenius, The Voice of Africa, Being an Account of the Travels of the German Inner African Exploration in the Years 1910-1912, tr. Rudolf Blind, (New York: Blom, 1968) (First published 1913), Vol. I, p.13; cf. The Symbolic Meaning, p.225.

displayed in myth, he also proposed that mythic consciousness had not been lost or superseded. On the contrary, myth revealed 'consistent structures in the human mind'. To the ancient poet myth was the representation and explication of what appeared before his senses. The modern anthropologist, wishing to recapture the meaning of a myth, must first regain this primary poetic consciousness: 'Fully to understand a myth needs not evidence and argument alone, but deep poetic feeling'.[1]

In reaction to positivism and in defence of artistic intuition, Lawrence goes further, arrogating to himself the right to practise a kind of subjective anthropology. Reporting his impressions of the war-cries of some dancing Indians, he anticipates objections:

> So I felt. I may have been all wrong, and other folk may feel much more natural and reasonable things. But so I felt ... I am no ethnologist. The point is, what is the feeling that passes from an Indian to me, when we meet. We are both men, but how do we feel together? 2

Supposedly, Lawrence is concerned with conveying only individual impressions; but he is willing to draw far-reaching conclusions from his impressions. An anthropologist might well condemn such an approach as intellectually vicious. It adds little to the store of definitive knowledge about Indian culture. But neither does Lawrence's emotional vision degenerate into anything more harmful than the pleasant, undogmatic travel sketches of Mornings in Mexico. The descriptions of the ritual dances in this volume are Lawrence's venture into anthropological research, however slight or subjective.

Lawrence brought to New Mexico the theoretical precepts gleaned from his earlier reading. The idea for the chapter "Indians and Entertainment" is taken from Jane Harrison's account, in Ancient Art and Ritual, of the evolution of Greek drama from the Dithyrambus, the springtime sing-

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1. Tylor, Primitive Culture, I, pp.282-84, 297, 305; II, p.446-47.
2. Phoenix, p.95.

ing and dancing for Dionysus. Lawrence uses as well Frazer's definitions of religion, as propitiation of a god who in some way controls the cosmos, and of magic, as the coercion of impersonal cosmic powers, to delineate the magical ethos underlying the Indian mime dance:[1]

> To the Indian there is no conception of a defined God. Creation is a great flood, for ever flowing, in lovely and terrible waves. In everything, the shimmer of creation, and never the finality of the created. Never the distinction between God and God's creation, or between Spirit and Matter. Everything, everything is the wonderful shimmer of creation, it may be a deadly shimmer like the lightning or the anger in the little eyes of the bear, it may be the beautiful shimmer of the moving deer, or the pine-boughs softly swaying under snow. [2]

Lawrence sees in the dance a magical universe celebrated and realized, rather than compelled to serve. The cosmic energy, which primitive magic invokes or around which it lays an insulating taboo, is as amoral, as powerful for good or evil, as an electrical current.[3] But the Indian is seen as communing with this power, which is something like the glinting web, the play of natural vitality divined in the early poetry. Other dances are interpreted as revealing and expressing mysteries analogous to other dynamic symbols in the poetry. The eagle dance celebrates the polarity between the individual and the One Life: 'It is the dance of the naked blood-being, defending his own isolation in the rhythm of the universe'. In the corn dance the men and women become a grove of trees, 'a little forest of trees in motion, with gleaming black hair and gold-ruddy breasts that somehow do not destroy the illusion of forest'. Their singing is 'deep' and 'like the booming and tearing of a wind deep inside a forest'. In the snake dance the singing again calls to the deeps of the snake and 'the earth's inner core'. It is low sometimes 'like a mutter underground, inaudible'. Like the paranormally audible cry of

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1. Frazer, The Golden Bough, p.64-65; Totemism, I, p.105.
2. Mornings in Mexico, p.61.
3. See Frazer, The Golden Bough, pp.622-23, 779; Tylor, Primitive Culture, I, p.427.

the tortoise in coition, it communicates by 'mystic dark-sacred concentration'.[1] An anthropologist would reject Lawrence's descriptions as imprecise and his interpretations as unresearched fantasy. But before dismissing these accounts as purely self-expressive, it should be observed that Lawrence's symbols and the intuitive vision they enshrine have affinities with primitive modes of vision, as described by more objective anthropologists. This empathetic approach to primitive ritual may have gained insights denied to more impartial observers. Finally, emending the fault he found in many scientific ethnologists, Lawrence's descriptions of the dances are immensely readable.

Tylor submitted that there were connections between poetic inspiration and the primitive vision of the world. Romantic poetry in particular, he felt, tended to recreate mythic consciousness:

> Wordsworth, that 'modern ancient', as Max Müller has so well called him, could write of Storm and Winter, or of the naked Sun climbing the sky, as though he were some Vedic poet at the head-spring of his race, 'seeing' with his mind's eye a mythic hymn to Agni or Varuna. [2]

Lawrence shared with Wordsworth this fundamental mythic vision, a way of looking at the universe which has been metaphysically labelled dualistic immanentism, and might anthropologically be termed animism. Unlike Wordsworth, however, he had at his disposal a large, comparatively accurate body of information concerning primitive beliefs and myth. Lawrence, drawing on this information to restructure the metaphysic of his art, might have found the clue for extending Romantic poetry beyond the Wordsworthian vision of Nature. The novella The Fox illustrates how the Romantic artist could incorporate a fragment of anthropological research in his art, without disturbing the balance or validity of his intuitive vision. Lawrence had read in Totemism and Exogamy of the Australian Aborigine's belief in the hunter's magical powers 'of transfusing a portion

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1. Mornings in Mexico, pp.59, 65-66, 80.
2. Tylor, Primitive Culture, I, p.305.

of a man's life into an animal ... to exercize a sort of mesmeric control over the creature, and thereby to catch and kill it'.[1] The young Cornish soldier, Henry Grenfel, is 'a huntsman in spirit', and describes hunting as 'not so much what you do ... as how you feel':

> First of all, even before you come into sight of your quarry, there is a strange battle, like mesmerism. Your own soul, as a hunter, has gone out to fasten on the soul of the deer, even before you see any deer. And the soul of the deer fights to escape. Even before the deer has any wind of you, it is so. It is a subtle, profound battle of wills which takes place ... It is your own will which carries the bullet into the heart of your quarry. [2]

The character of Grenfel at this turn owes something to anthropology. But even this rendering of the scientific datum in emotional and psychological terms shows the imaginative artist at work. Beyond this, the development of Grenfel as a coherent character interacting with others, the ramifications of plot, the idea of Grenfel's displacing the fox in March's consciousness, the entire substance of the novella, in fact, is brought into being by the novelist, not the ethnologist manqué. In Lawrence's poetic vision one might expect to find similar fragments assimilated: in particular, given the content of Birds, Beasts and Flowers, primitive attitudes to plants and animals would seem especially pertinent.

Gilbert Murray's study of the evolution of Greek religion is a useful primer for primitive attitudes to animals. Murray analyses three important Athenian festivals, apparently dedicated to Olympian gods, but having at their heart cruder and more violent religious fears. All retain symbolic traces of their origin in the worship of sacred animals, of the snake, the sow and the bull. Murray finds a second variant of animal worship in the sacramental feast, at which an animal is

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1. Frazer, Totemism and Exogamy, I, p.129.
2. The Fox, p.104-05.

eaten, close attention being paid to the blood, in order to obtain the brute strength and the divine power, both of which are comprehended as the mana, of the sacred beast. A third means of acquiring divine power is the ecstatic dance. Here the dancer becomes possessed, apparently by a force beyond himself. Murray feels that these practices have in common the concept of the mutable and subtle theos of the early Greeks -- a god-presence which could be felt to be immanent in animal or stone, wine or water, in 'the fact of success' or the recognition of a friend after a long absence.[1] This perception of the 'momentary god', the manitou, mana or numen present, however briefly, in concrete objects, is prevalent among uncivilized races;[2] it is clearly not unlike the Romantic impulse of 'natural piety'; and it has yet stronger affinities with Lawrence's vision, as described in "Poetry of the Present", of the 'incarnate moment'. Lawrence was certainly intrigued by Murray's account of the Greek theoi, introducing it into St Mawr, and describing the concept thus in Apocalypse:

> To the ancient consciousness, Matter, Materia, or substantial things, are God ... Today, it is almost impossible for us to realise what the old Greeks meant by god, or theos. Everything was theos; but even so, not at the same moment. At the moment, whatever struck you was god. If it was a pool of water, the very watery pool might strike you: then that was god; or a faint vapour at evening rising might catch the imagination: then that was theos; or thirst might overcome you at the sight of the water: then the thirst itself was god; or you drank, and the delicious and indescribable slaking of thirst was the god; or you felt the sudden chill of the water as you touched it: and then another god came into being, "the cold"; and this was not a quality, it was an existing entity, almost a creature, certainly a theos: the cold; or again, on the dry lips something suddenly alighted: it was "the moist," and again a god. Even to the early scientists or philosophers, "the cold," "the moist," "the hot," "the dry" were things in themselves, realities, gods, theoi. And they did things. [3]

The fascination of the slippery Greek theos was partly its restoration of the numinous to the events of daily life; partly its resemblance to

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1. Gilbert Murray, Four Stages of Greek Religion, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912), p.26-43.
2. See Michael Bell, Primitivism (Critical Idiom), (London: Methuen, 1972), p.7-11.
3. Apocalypse, p.94-95; cf. St Mawr, p.61-62.

the glinting web and incarnate moment; partly its subsisting as a pure, continuous state of consciousness which, though it might give rise to customs and ceremonials, did not demand them for its evocation or definition. Lawrence was repelled by the thought of regression to primitive behaviour and ritual. Modern man must regain his submerged powers of mythic consciousness. 'But there is not going back'; he 'can't cluster at the drum any more'.[1]

Primitive attitudes to the animal kingdom are complex and multifarious. The reduction of savage customs and beliefs to a single, coherent schema was a crux for early students of anthropology. The savage was held to draw no line of demarcation between the human and the animal. He identified himself with animals; he also apparently confused himself with them. An animal was deemed to possess an intelligence equal or superior to his own. It was revered for greater speed, strength, fierceness or cunning. Respect came to blend, according to Tylor, 'with the thought of the creature as being an incarnate deity, seeing, hearing and acting even at a distance, and continuing its power after the death of the animal body to which the divine spirit was attached'.[2] Frazer, on the other hand, doubted whether the most primitive people had any 'superstitious reverence for the creature as a superior being'. An animal was only venerated 'on account of some benefit, positive or negative, which the savage hope/d/ to receive from it'. This reverence for, or sheer dependence on, animals was the origin of totemism, a religious system and a basic social structure in many tribes. Even Frazer had to admit that at the heart of totemic religion there seemed to be a concept of 'mystic union of the savage with his totem'. The end of totemic ritual he surmised to be the magical regulation of all departments of Nature,

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1. Phoenix, p.99.
2. Tylor, Primitive Culture, I, p.469; II, p.229-30.

and hence of the food-supply, by the various totemic groups within the tribe.[1] Jane Harrison, however, felt that totemic society only preserved the 'crystallized form' of an older sense of community which man had with the world about him. In his rituals and art man became the thing or creature which he represented, not from any ulterior motive, but 'to give out a strongly felt emotion or desire':

> Ritual ... does imitate, but for an emotional, not an altogether practical, end.
>
> "Totem" means tribe, but the tribe was of animals as well as man. In the Kangaroo tribe there were real leaping kangaroos as well as men-kangaroos. The men-kangaroos when they danced and leapt did it, not to imitate kangaroos -- you cannot imitate yourself -- but just for natural joy of heart because they were kangaroos; they belonged to the kangaroo tribe, they bore the tribal marks and delighted to assert their tribal unity. What they felt was not mimesis but "participation", unity, and community. [2]

Harrison's account of the beast-dances must have fixed itself in Lawrence's mind. Two years later, promulgating blood-consciousness, he echoed this passage with his assertion, 'some tribes no doubt really were kangaroos: they contained the blood-knowledge of the kangaroo'.[3]

The two forms of ritual prevalent in totemic societies were the sacramental feast and the mime dance. Lawrence made little reference in his writing to the former of these, though he does play with the connotations of sacramental eating in "Fish". Of all primitive rituals it was the mimetic dance that most fascinated him, as is evident from Mornings in Mexico. Lawrence's interpretation of the dance differs marginally from Harrison's. Lawrence's dancers do not become the animal. In the corn dance, for example, the Indians seek to identify themselves with the creative impulse that causes the crops to grow, not with the maize itself. In the eagle dance the singleness of the dancer, 'the peril of his own isolation', 'like a single red star, in a great and

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1. Frazer, The Golden Bough, pp.286, 697-98, 901; Totemism and Exogamy, I, pp.3, 101, 118-22.
2. Harrison, Ancient Art and Ritual, pp.26, 44, 46.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.394, 8 Dec. 1915.

complex universe', is accentuated. The men adorn themselves with feathers, to be 'feathered with the power of an eagle'; and they dance or race in order to gain creative energy that is in the eagle and the earth. The Indians feel none of the brotherly affection which Harrison supposed was the basis of the savage's emotion towards his fellow-creatures. Theirs is a 'silent tolerance that acknowledges dangerous difference'. Their dancing or singing admits the otherness of creatures, of the snake or the eagle, but seeks to make contact with the vital physical depths of the living object. Dance, drum and song are the revelation and the means of 'dark calling to dark'. 'The wonderful deep sound of men' is heard 'calling to the unspeakable depths' of the other.[1] The beast dances are a primitive means of creating and expressing the physical consciousness which Lawrence recreates and expresses in Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Some of the poems refer to the dances, as analogous to their own creative effort. In "Elephant" a clue to this common impulse can be found in the eyes of the devil dancers, 'dancing on to the shudder of drums' among the 'dark mountain/s/ of blood' that are the elephants. The devil-dancers:

> .. forever dance, with breath half sobbing in dark sweat-
> shining breasts,
> And lustrous great tropical eyes unveiled now, gleaming
> a kind of laugh,
> A naked, gleaming dark laugh, like a secret out in the
> dark ...

As in "Tortoise Shout", the unveiling gives knowledge of an instinctual connection between man and beast. In "Turkey-Cock" the poet is convinced of an affinity between the bird's rushing movements and Indian dancing, as if the underlying spirit of place exacted a similar homage from man and beast. In "The American Eagle", the last poem in the volume, Lawrence drops a final hint as to the provenance of the physical vision of his poems:

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1. Mornings in Mexico, pp.57-59, 63-64, 74-80; Phoenix, p.145-47.

The big bird of the Amerindian being the eagle,
Red Men still stick themselves over with bits of his fluff,
And feel absolutely IT.

The reader of "Eagle in New Mexico" need not go so far as to collect eagle-down, however. Already he has had some experience of feeling partially, if not absolutely, it:

Dark-visaged
Sickle-masked
With iron between your two eyes;
You feather-gloved
To the feet;
Foot-fierce;
Erect one;
The god-thrust entering you steadily from below.

A verbal ritual is a myth. Myth is the oral, and ritual the active, form used by man to symbolize or express his religious consciousness.[1] Lawrence's poems in Birds, Beasts and Flowers are verbal rituals, means of entering into communion with animal and natural life that are equivalent to the beast dances. The poems aim at reviving the lapsed mythic consciousness of the modern, and at reestablishing his connection with a vital, physical cosmos. 'The business of art is to reveal the relationship between man and his circumambient universe', a relationship which has fallen into desuetude 'at the living moment'.[2] Lawrence's poetic art in Birds, Beasts and Flowers is not unreservedly mythic. But it does have designs of restoring an 'old faith, [an] old sense of participation and oneness', 'tempered by deep religious awe'.[3] It seems probable that Lawrence's reading in anthropology, specifically his knowledge of the beast dances and of various theories as to their significance, was seminal to his conception of a volume of poetry that, in recreating the poet's intuitive knowledge of living things, could revive in the reader the sense of a potentially mythic cosmos.

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1. René Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p.191.
2. Phoenix, p.527.
3. Harrison, Ancient Art and Ritual, p.46.

Lawrence's poetic is neo-Romantic. Like Keats in "Ode to Psyche", he reopens a 'region of the mind', not untrodden in times past, but forsaken in the present. His poetry displays what Coleridge regarded as the true sign of genius in Wordsworth's verse: he restores an aura of wonder around objects 'of which, for the common view, custom hath bedimmed all the lustre'.[1] He shares a general Romantic fascination with primitive superstition, with the concept of a primeval, unfallen man, and with the thought that, since poetry 'is connate with the origin of man',[2] aboriginal man may have much to tell us about the nature of poetry. Lawrence tended to pride himself on his anti-Romantic disillusionment with the noble savage;[3] but his aesthetic engagement with myths of origin, with lost Edens, was too deeply ingrained to allow him to break free of this archetype.

The more exact anthropological data at his disposal did allow Lawrence, however, to fashion a metaphysic that would contain anew the, by then, entirely spilt religious content of Wordsworth's wavering philosophy and Coleridge's idealism. As Wordsworth and Coleridge turned to the ballad, an ancient, popular form for conveying powerful, rudimentary emotion, so Lawrence modernized the bestiary, which became a form for open-ended moralizing and religious speculation. Lawrence's mythopoeia is not primitivist but neo-Romantic. He confronts his reader with a sophisticated play of sensuous imagery, symbolism, intuition and reflection -- a most unprimitive dance of concepts.

Yet mythic consciousness, analogous to that of the beast dances, is an intrinsic motion in the conceptual dance. Lawrence's recreation of myth is at its most refined in Tortoises. Mark Spilka has argued that

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1. Coleridge, Biographia, p.49.
2. Shelley, Works, ed. Ingpen, VII, p.109.
3. See Studies in Classic American Literature, p.28.

Lawrence's novels tend to move forward through ritual scenes to a ritual crisis.[1] The crisis of Birds, Beasts and Flowers is undoubtedly Tortoises. In "Baby Tortoise" the sharp exactness of description is immediately apparent. The series is, apart from all other considerations, a considerable feat of natural observation. Lawrence notes the eyes, lids, neck and, instead of teeth, the 'beak-shaped' 'hard thin gums'. He meticulously numbers the plates and shields of the shell, both dorsal and ventral. He observes the social life of the colony, their diet and the presence of a pecking order. Finally, he watches their mating habits, the courting, the coital position and the faint, high-pitched scream in coition. For this last observation he has even been cited in a recent zoological study of reptiles.[2] But, as Austin Warren compactly remarks, 'If the mythic has as its contrary either science or philosophy, it opposes the picturable intuitive concrete to the rational abstract'.[3] Lawrence concentrates on chelonian characteristics, not in order to classify them, but to gain a sensuous, even a magical knowledge of tortoiseness. He notes the size of the baby tortoise, 'No bigger than my thumb-nail'. But his end is an emotional contrast between this tiny, pathetic centre of consciousness and the vast material chaos it inhabits. Exact observation is sensuous meditation; meditation tends to the creation of myth, a myth that tells about the human condition as well as the tortoise's.

The success of Tortoises depends on the striking of a balance between metaphysical poles: the tortoise must be an alien being; but since both tortoise and man are alive, both share some experiences, of being a consciousness in motion in an environment. Man at least should

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1. Mark Spilka, The Love Ethic of D.H.Lawrence, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), p.24.
2. Angus Bellairs, The Life of Reptiles, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), Vol. II, p.394
3. Wellek and Warren, Theory of Literature, p.191.

be able to commune with the basic facts of this other existence. Lawrence makes his account of tortoise-consciousness acceptable by interpreting it in terms of humanity's most basic myths. The primary myth is existential. The tortoise is an isolated consciousness in an unknown, sometimes hostile chaos. This self is in motion, and so is 'The lonely rambler, the stoic, dignified stalker through chaos'. It conforms to the mythic model of a peregrinatio: it is a 'Ulyssean atom'. Its motion is pitched against the inertia of the material, the Law, as Lawrence called it in the Study of Thomas Hardy. For its simplest needs it must wage war against the Law. While it lives, it battles, participating in 'the tension of opposites', without which 'all things would pass away'. It is a 'little Titan':

> All animate creation on your shoulder,
> Set forth, little Titan, under your battle shield.

The cosmic opposites of fire and earth, Love and Law, intersect in the living centre of the tortoise, with its earth-walls wrapped about its spark of life. It is a type for the Titans, buried as volcanic fire beneath the mountains; but its war with Olympus continues. Lawrence alludes as well to the tortoise's status in Hindu and other cosmologies as a foundation supporting the earth, or as a plan for the whole universe, its carapace the sky, its body the living creatures and its plastron the earth. The tortoise is both world-fundament and myth-fundament. Lawrence asks if it can be denied that the archetypal myths of human experience extend as well to the nonhuman life of the tortoise. The physical and mythic foundations of human and animal existence form a continuum. The tortoise is a:

> .. rudiment,
> This little dome, this pediment
> Of all creation,
> This slow one.

Like creation with its tension of opposites, the physical consciousness of the tortoise is divided within itself. The final human myth by which Lawrence is able to understand tortoiseness attach to the creature's sexuality. It has been suggested that "Lui et Elle" contains a caricature of Lawrence and Frieda:

> He is much smaller,
> Dapper beside her,
> And ridiculously small ...

Without denying the private joke, the poem is also profoundly impersonal, in a psychological sense. The tortoise may become more human in its sexuality; but in its sexuality humanity becomes that much more chelonian. Sexuality is a drive towards a potentially mystic union, yet it also creates division within the individual. Lawrence may be remembering Aristophanes' myth of the creation of the sexes in Plato's Symposium. But his symbol for division is the cross:

> The Cross, the Cross
> Goes deeper in than we know,
> Deeper into life;
> Right into the marrow
> And through the bone.

The cross symbolizes the division of the sexual or physical self into male and female, two opposing and productive antinomies:

> The Cross, as we know, stands for the body, for the dark self which lies in the body. And on the cross of this bodily self is crucified the self which I know I am, my so-called real self. The Cross, as an ancient symbol, has an inevitable phallic reference. But it is far deeper than sex. It is the self which darkly inhabits our blood and bone ... [1]

Since Lawrence is dealing with animals, the cross does not denote the dichotomy of body and spirit or blood-consciousness and mental consciousness.[2] It represents a disjunction in the physical psyche, 'The long cleavage of division, upright of the eternal cross', though symbolic

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1. Phoenix II, p.619.
2. See Studies in Classic American Literature, p.90-91.

space remains, in the horizontal, to hint at a possible secondary duality.

In his mystical mathematics Lawrence dwells not on multiples of two and division, but on oddness and reconciliation: 'Four and one makes five which is the keystone to all mathematics'. The making of five from duality in the neural plates or 'keystones' of the tortoise's shell is the clue to the creation of a third thing from life's polarities. Sexual division and the subject/object dichotomy are reconciled by the 'Holy Ghost'. It illustrates the subtlety -- and the lingering Christianity -- of Lawrence's religious thought that the symbol of division is equally the symbol of reconciliation. In "Almond Blossom" Christ is victim and bridegroom. The breaking down of the old life is the issuing of the new, separation is revelation, and the symbolic wounding instantaneously the means of healing. 'Alas', Lawrence exclaims, though he could cry Halleluljah or Evoe, 'the spear is through the side of his isolation'. Tortoises conducts a progress from a primitive animism, through fertility gods to the glimmerings of Christianity, without discarding the sense of a living, numinous, physical universe, to move on to the more 'advanced' anthropomorphic gods. The series suggests that the trail of religious consciousness need not necessarily, as in "Turkey-Cock", have 'disappeared at the foot of the crucifix'.

The horizontal of the cross is represented in "Snake" by the division between the burning darkness which is the snake's home and the bright noonday where the man wanders. A corresponding division makes itself felt in the man's thoughts, between his inexplicable liking for the snake and the peremptory voices of his education. The sharpness of this duality recalls Coleridge; Lawrence's allusion to The Rime of the Ancient Mariner has long been recognized. The reference is geographically apt, since Coleridge was the only Romantic to have had

close associations with this part of the world. During his time in Malta, he was posted at Syracuse, and twice climbed Etna.[1] Like the Ancient Mariner, the poet of "Snake" commits a pettiness or impiety against a living thing. As the Mariner blessed the water serpents, the poet must bless the snake, or make some expiation to free himself from the life-in-death of an unliving, 'intense still noon'. Although the Mariner is restored to the superficially sane world of his 'own countree', he never recovers from the trauma of his knowledge. He must roam the world, like Cain, and tell his tale:

> Since then, at an uncertain hour
> That agony returns:
> And till my ghastly tale is told,
> This heart within me burns.
>
> I pass, like night, from land to land;
> I have strange power of speech ...

Likewise the tortoise has been broken by sex, and the poet by his division from the world, into voice; it is a cleavage that sets them calling:

> .. across the depths, calling, calling for the complement,
> Singing, and calling, and singing again, being answered
> having found ...
> That which is in part, finding its whole again throughout
> the universe.

The snake that breaks open the poet's knowledge of self-division, causing him to despise himself and the voices of his human education, calls him to a possible reconstitution of his psyche. The 'cultured animist' of the pueblo in Mornings in Mexico uses the rattle-snake for intercession between himself and a chthonic power, a Demogorgon-like 'dark sun'.[2]

It would be a distortion to think of "Snake" as a symbolist exploration of psychological space. The apparently relaxed tone of reportage sketches a framework of space and time; the encounter with the beast is a Wordsworthian spot in time. The snake is a snake, not

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1. Coleridge, Letters, ed. Griggs, III, p.1157.
2. Mornings in Mexico, p.78.

a phallic symbol. Rather, as Lawrence speculates elsewhere, phallic experience may provide insight into ophidian.[1] The snake can only 'symbolize', as it crawls back into 'that horrid black hole', those depths of physical being which the poet has plumbed in his contemplation of it. But the poem should not be thought of, as Tortoises can be, as the product of purely mythic consciousness. The snake may represent pure blood-consciousness, but Lawrence is not a 'sheer ophiolater' in "Snake".[2] The introduction of self-critical, mental consciousness seems at first to have an objectifying effect. But in practice the factor of mental consciousness tends to break down in the poem the integrity of the creature's separate being. Particularly in less successful poems, "He-Goat" and "Ass", the centre of balance shifts from the subject/object dichotomy to the conflict between intuition and mentation, instinct and reason. The mythic world becomes simply human, a struggle between early Greek animistic and Hebraic ethical religious principles, the latter insulating, or in animal terms domesticating, the power and vitality of the former. Lawrence humanizes in order to combat humanist religion. This self-defeating paradox is at its height in "Evangelistic Beasts", where the potentially mythic beasts of the epigraph are reduced to allegorical emblems by being deployed in anti-Christian fables. In "Snake", however, Lawrence preserves a complex balance between sensuous meditation, conferring mythic otherness on the snake, and the conflict between mythic and mental knowledge, allegorizing its own struggle in the snake. The mythic mode is primary in art; but it is not the whole of art, for it does not tell the whole truth of consciousness:

> The primary or sensual mind of man expresses itself most profoundly in myth. At the same time, myth is repugnant to reason.

Art synthesizes mythic and rational knowledge:

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1. See John Thomas and Lady Jane, p.174.
2. Fantasia of the Unconscious, p.188; The Symbolic Meaning, p.65.

> In the highest art, the primary mind expresses itself direct ... But this expression is harmonious with the outer or cerebral consciousness. [1]

If it does not harmonize the voices of education and of instinct, Lawrence's 'highest art', in "Snake" or in the major novels, where psychic and social worlds are juxtaposed, does bring into clear, undistorted focus the dramatic conflict. Again, like all high Laurentian art, it presses home a conclusion. If a vital equilibrium is to be restored between passional and mental knowledge, the partisan revival of mythic consciousness must precede all else. There must be a vision of 'the lords/ Of life', and of a king:

> .. a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld
> Now due to be crowned again.

The mythic mode in Birds, Beasts and Flowers is enhanced by what has been called Lawrence's psychic chemistry. In "He-Goat", for example, Lawrence is impressed by the animal's nervous energy and rigid spine, and by the convergence of bone, muscle and power in its horned forehead. He symbolizes these impressions in terms of lightning and thunder:

> And suddenly lowering his head, the whorls of bone and
> of horn
> Slowly revolving towards unexploded explosion,
> As from the stem of his bristling, lightning-conductor
> tail
> In a rush up the shrieking duct of his vertebral way
> Runs a rage drawn in from the ether divinely through him
> Towards a shock and a crash and a smiting of horns ahead.

The symbolism makes immediate, anti-scientific claims: the electricity in the goat's spine is 'drawn in from the ether divinely'. 'The godhead of goats' that would be revealed in the clash of conflict is Jehovah. The Jewish Jahweh had goats sacrificed to him, and the Jews themselves were associated in medieval times with goats.[2] In "She-Goat" Lawrence

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1. The Symbolic Meaning, pp.59, 136.
2. Beryl Rowland, Animals with Human Faces, p.84-85.

returns to the stiffness of the spine and the nerve-centred caprine energy. When the she-goat jumps or balances in a tree, she exhibits always 'Her backbone sharp as a rock/ Sheer will'. Yet that it is a ridge of 'quick rock' with a 'libidinous magnetism' playing through it, is evident when she is in rut:

> .. having exposed the pink place of her nakedness, fixedly,
> She trots on blithe toes,
> And if you look at her, she looks back with a cold,
> sardonic stare.
> Sardonic, sardonyx, rock of cold fire.
> See me? she says, That's me!

Lawrence's etymological guesswork is astray.[1] He is, however, less concerned with the derivation of sardonyx, or even its biblical association with Jehovah,[2] than with the stone's coldness to the touch, and the veins of dark blood-red, or brown, or gold, shot through the white chalcedony. The stone is not a particularly useful reference for designating the colour of the goat's banded pupil. It does suggest, though, the animal's physical being, suppressed and stratified blood-consciousness. The suggestion of dangerously repressed fire recurs in the sexual clash of he-goat and she-goat. He is like 'a needle of long red flint' that 'will never quite strike home'; and 'She is as brittle as brimstone'. A spark leaping from the surcharged potency of the male to the suppressed sulphur of the female would detonate an eruption or apocalypse even in the sexual world of these domesticated and allegorical beasts.

Many images and symbols in Birds, Beasts and Flowers, especially those dealing with colour, interrelate in this way. The symbols tend to form a system, based on sensuous intuition, that is more than metaphoric in the magically causal interrelatedness which it posits among

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1. Sardonic derives from Latin Sardonia, the epithet for a 'Sardinian plant', 'which was said to produce facial convulsions resembling horrible laughter, usually followed by death' (OED). Sardonyx is derived from Sardis, the metropolis of Roman Lydia, where the precious stone sard was found, and from Latin Onyx, a nail, since the layers of darker colour in the stone were thought to resemble the nails' bands of light and dark.

2. Exodus xxviii, 7.

phenomena. Some faint structural lines of such a system have been elucidated in analysing "Fish". The chemical continuum from the sun, volcanoes and sulphur and earth to the sea, salt and phosphorus and the moon, has affinities with the Elizabethan great chain of being. Like the chain of being, the system would finally encompass the impersonal laws of the material cosmos, the moral laws controlling human society and the psychological principles regulating the human emotions or humours; and it would show the causal relationships between these spheres. Lawrence found it intolerable that similarities recognized by intuition should be denied an objective and real significance as well as a subjective one. Aldous Huxley recognized the intellectual provenance of such intolerance:

> Lawrence's dislike of abstract knowledge and pure spirituality made him into a kind of mystical materialist ... Matter must be intrinsically as lively as the mind which perceives it and is moved by the perception. Vivid and violent spiritual effects must have equally vivid and violent material causes. And, conversely, any violent feeling or desire in the mind must be capable of producing violent effects upon external matter. Lawrence could not bring himself to believe that the spirit can be moved, moved if need be, to madness, without imparting the smallest corresponding movement to the external world. He was a subjectivist as well as a materialist; in other words, he believed in the possibility, in some form or another, of magic. [1]

The scientist and positivist had driven intuition from the objective world; the psychologist and anthropologist threatened to expel it from the subjective. Frazer hinted at an analogy between poetic symbolism and primitive animism, between astrological conviction in a star's 'steadfast influence' and the metaphor of Keats's "'Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art'". Repeatedly, The Golden Bough bade farewell to the rearguard of superstitious belief, noting that the 'poets' dreams' were among 'the last flutter of the standards of the retreating

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.1256-57.

host'.[1] Lawrence pugnaciously lashed back in prose works like "The Two Principles" and Fantasia of the Unconscious, extrapolating subjective symbols into an objective, magical cosmology. W.H.Auden, who had had himself an undergraduate passion for the Fantasia, recognized that, if the book were not interpreted as a fantasy or 'private myth', then it had to be read as a replacement for science.[2] Lawrence continued to assert a sporadically magical cosmos in his poetry, a universe perceptually if not practically magic. He does not reconcile reason and intuition into a 'pure unison', in which, one imagines, science would be subsumed in religion.[3] He does not, like Yeats, formulate and adhere to a complex system in his poetry: the poetry is 'pure passionate experience'. Rather, he creates a rich, often comic dramatic interplay between a surprising fund of biological knowledge and a subtle overtone of magical possibilities. It would be a stern positivist who would deny any shiver of mystic recognition at the quintessential affinity he distils alchemically from 'the strange retorts of medlars and sorb-apples';

> What is it, in the grape turning raisin,
> In the medlar, in the sorb-apple,
> Wineskins of brown morbidity,
> Autumnal excrementa;
> What is it that reminds us of white gods?

The critic shivers, and sets about to answer the question.

Lawrence's psychic chemistry is the most primitivist element in the sequence. It directly involves and defies the reader's belief or disbelief, recalling the atavistic associations which surround the desiderated revival of mythic consciousness. The essays and fiction written in America and the last poems of Birds, Beasts and Flowers make clear that any form of regression was repulsive to Lawrence. But Lawrence does have designs on his reader's sense of civilization or

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1. Frazer, The Golden Bough, pp.45, 716.
2. W.H.Auden, "Makers of Modern Poetry, II: Heretics (Rimbaud and Lawrence)", Literary Opinion in America, ed. M.D.Zabel, (New York: Harper, 1951), p.256.
3. The Symbolic Meaning, p.138.

progress. He damns science, yet uses it; but he rejects utterly Western industrial civilization, based on scientific knowledge. He cannot be thought a progressive. His teleological imperatives, arising from a cyclical and apocalyptic historiography, are experiential and mystical. They attract him to a self-purifying eremitism, to dropping out like Lou in St Mawr; yet this impulse makes up only half of a dialectic with the critical and constructive social sensibility of the novels. In fiction centred around animals, The Fox, Kangaroo and St Mawr, Lawrence gives a balanced statement of his outlook. From Lawrence's empathetic interest in animals it is not to be inferred that he wishes men to behave like animals. As Lou carefully explains to Mrs Witt:

> '-- And don't misunderstand me, mother. I don't want to be an animal like a horse or a cat or a lioness, though they all fascinate me, the way they get their life straight, not from a lot of old tanks, as we do. I don't admire the cave man, and that sort of thing. But think, mother, if we could get our lives from the source, as the animals do, and still be ourselves.' [1]

The point is succinctly put in Pansies:

> If men were as much men as lizards are lizards
> they'd be worth looking at.

Men will not become more like men by reverting to totemic customs or animal secret societies. 'All savagery', Lawrence feels, 'is half-sordid':

> And man is only himself when he is fighting on and on, to overcome the sordidness.
> And every civilization, when it loses its inward vision and its cleaner energy, falls into a new sort of sordidness, more vast and more stupendous than the old savage sort. An Augean stables of metallic filth.
> And all the time, man has to rouse himself afresh, to cleanse the new accumulations of refuse. [2]

Change is cyclical, but this should not provoke a timid conservatism. In Kangaroo Richard Lovat Somers and Ben Cooley, the political leader nicknamed Kangaroo, argue about what older races, whose cultures have

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1. St Mawr, p.57.
2. St Mawr, p.160.

been lost, might have to offer the present:

> 'They don't believe in our gods, in our ideals, They remember older gods, older ideals, different gods: before the Jews invented a mental Jehovah, and a spiritual Christ. They are nearer the magic of the animal world.'
> 'Magic of the animal world!' roared Kangaroo. 'What does that nonsense mean? Are you a traitor to your own human intelligence?'
> 'All too human,' smiled Richard. [1]

'What does it matter', Lawrence asks in "The Evening Land", 'What we call human, and what we don't call human?' -- since 'to be limited by a mere word is to be less than a hopping flea'. It does matter to Lawrence what we call human, but only because the label tends to be restrictive. To be fully human, a man must strive towards knowledge of the nonhuman. Lawrence is not a progressivist, regressivist or secessionist: rather he is, to take a leaf from Denis Donohue,[2] a Promethean. His is a Promethean humanism that seeks to renew and extend human potentialities. John Middleton Murry criticized the Lawrence of the Collected Poems in these terms:

> He is like a creature of another kind than ours, some lovely unknown animal with the gift of speech. With a strange sixth sense he explores this world of ours, first revealing wonders, then horrors. [3]

Lawrence replied to Lady Ottoline Morrell:

> Don't you think it's nonsense when Murry says that my world is not the ordinary man's world and that I am a sort of animal with a sixth sense. Seems to me more likely he's a sort of animal with only four senses -- the real sense of touch missing. They all seem determined to make a freak of me -- to save their own short-failings, and make them 'normal'. [4]

Lawrence's poetry, as well as his novels, make up a coherent part of the modernist English movement of this century, most of the important works of which were published in the second and third decades.

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1. Kangaroo, p.229.
2. Denis Donohue, Thieves of Fire, (London: Faber, 1973), p.130.
3. Murry, Reminiscences, p.257.
4. Letters, ed. Moore, p.1124, 5 Feb. 1929.

The poetry has its roots, as has the work of Yeats, Pound, Joyce and Eliot, in a greatly expanded definition of civilization and in a new accessibility of non-European art-works. Yeats drew, for instance, on primitive Celtic myth and the jumbled stores of Eastern religion in spiritualism; Pound on the Chinese language and literature; Joyce on the diachronic linguistics of the nineteenth century, on comparative myth and folk-lore. Eliot's learning was centred in the Western Christian tradition, but he ranged with a wide eclecticism beyond this. In particular, the pattern of anthropological allusion in The Waste Land allows a comparison between this, the central text of modernism, and Birds, Beasts and Flowers.

Both are whole volumes, in which individual sections or poems are interrelated. The organization of Birds, Beasts and Flowers is that of a freely growing entity. A few poems could have been omitted from, and certainly more poems could have been added to, the open-ended, proliferating symbolic scheme. The volume does have an organic shapeliness, conferred by amplification, ritual crisis and (as will be seen) critical revision. The Waste Land reflects a process of compression and intensification, rather than augmentation. The patterns of symbolic and cultural cross-reference, which structure the loose, associative transitions between different scenes and speaking voices, are made and remade to bear enormous semantic tensions. Overtly and symbolically, both poems revert, with what verges on obsession, to sexuality, to 'Cycles of generation and of ruin' and to the barrenness of the modern world. The poets find themselves in the wilderness -- Lawrence's the Taos desert, Eliot's a symbolic waste -- searching for the first shoots of new life. For Eliot April is a cruel month, inasmuch as it is purely vegetative, 'stirring/ Dull roots with spring rain', and not symbolic of spiritual regeneration. Rain, however, symbolizes grace in The Waste

Land, as in The Ancient Mariner: Eliot carefully differentiates spiritual from material regeneration. Literal fertility, as the burgeoning family of Lil and Albert proves, abounds in the desert of modern sexuality. But the wheel of birth per se is barren, pointless and redolent of death; it is the clapping of 'dry sterile thunder without rain'. (Lawrence would agree, but object to the recurrent identification of the physical with generation and unemotional lust.) Frazer's The Golden Bough had threatened to relegate Christianity, as a religious mystery if not as an ethical system, to the status of a primitive fertility myth, with Christ as a type of the dying god. Eliot's black comedy, descended from Jacobean satire, daringly juxtaposes the ordered inanity of modern experience, lacking religious faith or intense emotion, with the horrors of unquestioning superstition:

> There I saw one I knew, and stopped him crying: 'Stetson ...
> That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
> Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?'

The grotesque comedy of Stetson, engaging in ritual murder to promote fertility, distinguishes belief from credulity. The horror distances the anthropological motif of the dying god, while bringing to the fore the need for faith in an age when the savagery of mere generation combines with the sterility of unbelief. Eliot's use of anthropological motifs, the dying god and Fisher King, is guardedly and calculatedly ironical. As Michael Bell judiciously comments:

> Where the primitive thinks in unwittingly mythic terms the fully civilized man can turn to mythic forms with a sophisticated awareness of their peculiar ontological status. And so Eliot turns to myth, in effect, as to a highly civilized cultural acquisition ... Indeed this, as it were, tactical use of the primitivist motif ... is at the furthest possible move from the recreation of mythic sensibility. [1]

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1. Bell, Primitivism, p.43.

By contrast to Eliot's ironical and negative, 'tactical use' of myth, Lawrence's recreation of mythic consciousness is more direct, inward and positive. Where Eliot presents the modern spiritual dilemma, the despair of faith and the necessity of faith in despair, Lawrence sets about actively to nurture a religious awareness through his art. Both would agree that faith 'is the breath of all poetry';[1] but for Eliot faith in another world must give meaning to this, and 'the third who walks always beside you' walks in a spiritual realm. Lawrence adheres to a natural piety, finding in this world, incarnate, the third thing. His understanding of the roots of myth is as sophisticated as Eliot's, but it is an understanding that precedes the poetry and, except in a few instances, such as the goat poems, is not worked into the texture of the verse. There is no complex juxtaposition of mythic, religious and secular worlds. Rather, Lawrence's pre-knowledge of myth and his fundamentally mythic sensibility combine to create a new genre of Nature poetry, directly reactivating awareness of a potentially mythic universe. The metaphysic is not simplistically primitivist; often the poems record the interaction between mythic and mental consciousness; but the aesthetic priorities of Birds, Beasts and Flowers have an overriding simplicitas. The volume is an 'all-gratulant' celebration of the creative mystery; the poetry itself shares the qualities of the 'fragile-tender life-body':

> More fearless than iron all the time,
> And so much prouder, so disdainful of reluctances.

Lawrence cannot be accused of lacking historical perspective or of disregard for the values of Western civilization. He might be criticized for a too total rejection of modern science and technology. But it is his hypersensitivity to the encroachments of industrialism and overpopulation that makes "Mountain Lion" seem more a poem of the ecolog-

1. Phoenix, p.260.

ically conscious 'seventies than the anti-Romantic 'twenties. His effort at stirring once again the dull roots of mythic vision is not an uncritical exaltation of crude vitality. In the essay "On Human Destiny" Lawrence rejects the child, the idiot and the savage as types of the spontaneous mind, 'the innocent child of nature'. A man must face up to and resolve the division in his psyche between mind and instinct. It is a cruel but necessary destiny: from the marriage of mind and emotion ideas are born ideas that control man, his society and his history. At the end of the Christian era, however, the dominant idea, instead of being a pole-star, is a mill-stone round our necks. We must return to the creative mystery, seeking for a godhead, a new idea to inform a new civilization:

> We have to struggle down to the heart of things, where the everlasting flame is, and kindle ourselves another beam of light. In short, we have to make another bitter adventure in pulsating thought, far, far to the one central pole of energy. We have to germinate inside us, between our undaunted mind and our genuine passions, a new germ. The germ of a new idea. A new germ of God-knowledge, or Life-knowledge. But a new germ. [1]

Birds, Beasts and Flowers might be seen as the first term in such a quest, the return to the creative mystery. The gnostic epigraphs to the sections allude to a process of return, renewal and synthesis:

> ".. the shadow of the lost secret is vanishing from earth."
> ".. the apples of life the dragon guards, and no woman gives them."
> " -- for in the tension of opposites all things have their being --"
> "And long ago, the almond was the symbol of resurrection ... [The] almond bone, the last bone of the spine ... was the seed of the body, and from the grave it could grow into a new body again, like almond blossom in January."

The quotations and some of the information adapted in the epigraphs are taken from John Burnet's Early Greek Philosophy. Lawrence had been sent a copy of what must have been the second edition by Bertrand Russell, and it is possible that he kept a copy with him through most of his life.

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1. Phoenix II, pp.624-25,628-29.

He valued the book highly: 'These early Greeks have clarified my soul'.[1] It is used extensively in his pollyanalytics, and his attitudes to animism and science owe much to Burnet's theories of the origins of Greek science. In "Tortoise Shell" the description of Pythagorean mathematics, of number as having shape and of an arithmetic still attached to things, to a 'life-clouded, life-rosy tortoise-shell', draws freely on Burnet's account of the beginnings of mathematics.

Burnet brilliantly brings to life the intellectual milieu of the Greeks, either by recognizing in, or by projecting on to, their philosophical concerns the epistemological and religious dilemma of the Romantics. So long as a primitive animism prevailed, Burnet proposes, an elegiac melancholy was impossible, since the Greeks felt recurrent, unbroken life to be present in all things. However, the decay of polytheism was accompanied by a rising fear of mutability, an elegiac fear 'that there was nowhere any abiding reality':

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1. John Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy, (London: Black, 1908) (Second edition). For Lawrence's interest in the book, see Letters, ed. Moore, p.352, [?7 July 1915]; p.473, 5 Sept. 1916; Richard Aldington, Portrait of a Genius, But ...: The Life of D.H.Lawrence, (London: Heinemann, 1950), p.168. For quotations from Burnet in the epigraphs, see Poems, ed. Pinto, p.1012f. The editors state that 'The quotations in BBF ... seem to come from the 3rd edition, as they refer to a passage that does not occur in the earlier ones'. This is not the case. The second edition contains all the borrowings found by the editors, including one quotation, from "Fruits", whose origin they could not trace. References to the second edition are as follows: "Fruits" (p.130, Xenophanes, fr.1); "Trees" (p.278); "Flowers" (pp.101, 260); "Creatures" (p.283); "Reptiles" (p.150, p.172, Heraclitus, frs. 50, 69, 71, 74-76, p.250, Empedocles, fr.76); "Animals" (pp.131, 96, 124, 151); "Ghosts" (p.254).

> Nowadays we are accustomed, for good or for ill, to the notion of dead things, obedient, not to inner impulses, but solely to mechanical laws. But that is not the view of the natural man, and we may be sure that, when first it forced itself on him, it must have provoked a strong sense of dissatisfaction. Relief was only to be had from the reflexion that as nothing comes from nothing, nothing can pass away into nothing. There must, then, be something which always is, something fundamental which persists throughout, and ceases to exist in one form only that it may reappear in another. [1]

The Greek philosophers searched for a 'primary substance', a physical substance which constituted 'what was abiding in the flux of things'. The primary substance, though part of a philosophical rather than a mythical cosmology, reconciled the new knowledge with the old animism. It gave 'back to nature the life of which it had been robbed by advancing knowledge'. The primary substance must have influenced Lawrence's search for an elemental level of being in men and women. But the attempt of these early thinkers to reconcile the instinctual animistic cosmos with the mental universe of dead matter would have attracted Lawrence yet more deeply. Here was a Promethean imaginative daring that combined scientific intellect and mythic intuition:

> No sooner did a Greek philosopher learn half a dozen geometrical propositions, and hear that the phenomena of the heavens recur in cycles, than he set out to look for a law everywhere in nature, and, with a splendid audacity, almost amounting to <u>hubris</u>, to construct a system of the universe. [2]

Lawrence was, it is plain, strongly drawn to Heraclitus' system, based on flow, apocalyptic recurrence and duality. He was attracted as well by the temper of his utterance, burning with élitist arrogance and hard with a coarse or sybilline terseness. Conceivably, Lawrence might have thought of the modern era as a mirror image of the Greek philosophers'. Then the long darkness of primitive superstition was giving way to positive knowledge; and after the preliminary efforts of thinkers like

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1. Burnet, <u>Early Greek Philosophy</u>, p.11-12.
2. Burnet, <u>Early Greek Philosophy</u>, pp.15, 29.

Heraclitus came the flowering of the Greek Enlightenment and the Athenian drama. In his own time Lawrence assumed the monolith of Western rationalism was disintegrating from internal tensions; and his attempts at renewing mythic consciousness he might have regarded as ushering in a new, whole form of artistic expression, as implanting 'the germ of a new idea'. "Snake" juxtaposes mental and mythic consciousness; but it does so in a form of mild self-satire, of recoil that leads 'into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness'.[1] Satire precedes myth; myth precedes art. It is consistent with Lawrence's attitudes to art and history that he might have regarded Birds, Beasts and Flowers as only the precursor of a more complete art. But it would be an art comparable to the achievements of the golden age of Hellenism. Yet this flowering had sprung from a soil rather like that of modernism, with its expanded sense of civilization; it resulted from the implosion of knowledge accompanying maritime empire. Like most prophets of apocalypse, Lawrence would have found it hard to accept that he himself was participating, in his novels and his poetry, in an artistic renaissance.

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1. Lady Chatterley's Lover, p.104.

> Yet every work adheres to some system of morality. But if it be really a work of art, it must contain the essential criticism on the morality to which it adheres. [1]

Eliot's case against Lawrence is put, with unaccustomed and unguarded vehemence, in After Strange Gods. According to the prosecution, Lawrence lacked 'the faculty of self-criticism', especially when it came to his religious intuition, and this failing lay at the heart of his ignorant heterodoxy. It led him to an indiscriminate acceptance of primitive religious fervour as a means of regenerating the secular aridity of contemporary life:

> Against the living death of modern material civilization he spoke again and again, and even if these dead could speak, what he said was unanswerable. As a criticism of the modern world, Fantasia of the Unconscious is a book to keep at hand and re-read. In contrast to Nottingham, London or industrial America, his capering redskins of Mornings in Mexico seem to represent Life. So they do; but that is not the last word, only the first. [2]

By way of contradiction it has been propounded that Lawrence's interest in the primitive was not primitivist. The beast poems of Birds, Beasts and Flowers have affinities with less civilized visions of the natural world, but they are also the product of Lawrence's own intuition, which hardly would have seemed primitivist to the poet himself. Neither his own intuition nor the anthropological data of his reading is ever uncritically accepted in his novels -- it is significant that Eliot attacks a travel book and cites a polemic -- or in Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Here Lawrence tests his metaphysic against intuitive, physical and social realities. In the Taos desert

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1 Phoenix, p.476.

2 T. S. Eliot, After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy, (London: Faber, 1934), p.58-60

and among the pueblo Indians he faces up to the social consequences, if not of his own, at least of one form of animistic religion. In "The Red Wolf" he confronts at last the black man, the evasive figure of "Fruits" and "Trees".

"The Red Wolf" recounts some details of the poet's pilgrimage to New Mexico. It has been a dog's or a cynic's life. The poet has been:

> .. like a homeless dog
> That has followed the sun from the dawn through the east,
> Trotting east and east and east till the sun himself
> went home,
> And left me homeless here in the dark at your door.

As Keith Sagar has indicated, something is amiss with a poem or a solar system, where a man-dog travels east, in order to chase the sun which, in appearance, moves west.[1] The cosmological incoherence is a large flaw in the poem's make-up, but it is not necessarily the result of blind adherence to biographical fact. It is probably an intended irony that the man-dog and the sun have not met or coincided during this hunt. It is the cultural significance of day, sunrise and sunset which must be examined, a symbolic frame of reference in which the sun stands still, or can be seen at different elevations at the same moment. In "The Evening Land" the poet had watched the day of Western civilization setting in America, where it gave the appearance of a glaring sunset -- 'Your horrible, skeleton, aureoled ideal'. There, too, he detected signs of a 'false dawn that precedes the real'. The poet had therefore set out eastwards to find the beginnings, or dawn, of the subsiding day of Europe: the search for origins leads him at last to New Mexico. He arrives in America, 'the grave of our day', just as the day of the West is

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1 Keith Sagar, Letter to the Editor, TLS, No. 3628 (10/9/71),1086.

setting, in Europe and America. He settles down to wait through the terrible night for the new day, which he believes will rise in America, not on its horizon. Then he will be able to fulfil his role as 'the red-dawn-wolf'. Amid these symbolic permutations of dawn and twilight, the sun cannot possibly describe a course through an actual cosmology, though the critic might wish Lawrence's symbolism reconstituted, so that it did.

The 'lost white dog of a pale-face' does meet, in the dark night of New Mexico, the 'dark old demon' that had haunted the twilit margins of the European day. As Europe's day sets, the symbols of its religious life crumble, a secular waste surrounds and the primeval religious symbols reassert themselves. From this confusion of past and present, heavy with overtones of death and the grave, the demons of the inner life emerge:

> Day has gone to dust on the sage-grey desert
> Like a white Christus fallen to dust from a cross;
> To dust, to ash, on the twilit floor of the desert.
>
> And a black crucifix like a dead tree spreading its wings;
> Maybe a black eagle with its wings out
> Left lonely in the night
> In a sort of worship.
>
> And coming down upon us, out of the dark concave
> Of the eagle's wings,
> And the coffin-like slit where the Indian's eyes are ...
> Come tall old demons, smiling
> The Indian smile,
> Saying: How do you do, pale face?

The dark man is the American genius loci, just as the red wolf is the poet's totemic demon. As Lawrence argued in Studies in Classic American Literature, the future of the continent depends on the reconciliation of the white American psyche with the aboriginal spirit of place in America, the spirit which was recognized and pacified by the older races. In their lives and culture the Red Indians assimilated

themselves to this genius. Although the white psyche cannot convert itself into the Indian's, in interaction with it it might produce a third thing. 'It can open out a great new area of consciousness' -- the terminology recalls Keats's "Ode to Psyche" -- in which there is room for the red spirit too'.[1] In the event, the meeting between the white totem and the aboriginal demon is an anticlimax. Both circle each other suspiciously, like prowling animals, assert their identities, and come to no agreement.

Lawrence was deeply impressed by the landscape. Lou in St Mawr found 'a certain latent holiness in the very atmosphere'; the place was sacred to her. In his own person Lawrence avowed that it was New Mexico which awoke him to the existence of 'terrifying under-deeps, of which we have utterly no experience'. He discovered in New Mexico his 'greatest experience from the outside world'. The difficulty was still to 'break through the shiny sterilized wrapping, and actually touch the country'. But such contact would change the demonic self. In "Autumn at Taos" Lawrence evokes an animistic, motile landscape of 'Jaguar-splashed, puma-yellow, leopard-vivid slopes', such as Lou Carrington witnesses on her American ranch.[2] But though it seems to scare his pony, the poet feels something missing in this gorgeousness: the animistic power is 'nerveless just now./ So be easy.' Lawrence found the people less prepossessing. In "Men in New Mexico" he dismisses even the Indian dances as 'No good'. The typical pueblo paysan, 'blanket-wrapped/ Round a white hearth', filled him with depression. Both the European and Amerindian races labour under:

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1 Studies in Classic American Literature, p.56-62; and cf. pp.12-13, 15.

2 St Mawr, pp.147, 140-41; Phoenix, p.141-143.

A dark membrane over the will, holding a man down
Even when the mind has flickered awake;
A membrane of sleep, like a black blanket
. . . .
Born with a caul,
A black membrane over the face,
And unable to tear it,
Though the mind is awake.

It is like the somnambulism of "New Heaven and Earth". Some new revelation is needed which will enable the people to 'actually touch', not the wife's flank, but the physical spirit of place. Like the European, the Indians' gods, too, have had their twilight: while they sleep, and:

While the sun goes round
And round and round the desert,
The mountains never get up and walk about.
They can't, they can't wake.

In New Mexico Lawrence sensed what he later felt more strongly in Mexico proper: 'A certain dead, heavy strength and beauty ... unable to pass away, unable to liberate itself and decompose'. Yet he felt strongly, too, an intimation of gods still to be brought to consciousness in a land not yet fully humanized. The place had a spirit which 'was not all known ... was not all worked out. Life was not only a process of rediscovering backwards'.[1] Yet along with this Promethean urge, a strain of despondency can be detected. Confronted with sordid actualities and the political squabbles of the pueblos, the poems bespeak a disillusionment at the gulf between religious aspiration and social reality.

The scenery in these three poems -- "The Red Wolf", "Autumn at Taos" and "Men in New Mexico" -- is necessarily, given the articles of Lawrence's poetic creed, actual as well as symbolic.

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1 The Plumed Serpent, p.37; Sea and Sardinia, p.131.

The actuality is reported in a letter to Willie Hopkin. The unpublished letter is worth quoting in full, since it offers an insight into the vein of melancholy in the poetry:

> * Dear Willie
>
> I heard this minute from Ada about Sallie. -- But I knew that Sallie was turning away to go. And what can one do. Only it hurts, the inevitable hurt. Our life coming to an end.
>
> But Sallie had a fine adventurous life of the spirit, a fine adventurous life. And it's the adventure counts, not the success. If she was tired now at least it was after a vivid travel with you. You travelled a fine adventurous way together, and if the arriving is in a waste place, [w]hat does it matter! What does it matter, you made a long trek, like pioneers. And you two led me over some frontiers, as well. And if Sallie had to go to sleep, being really tired, having gone a long way for a woman; and if you or I have to go on over queer places, further; well, the rest of the journey she goes with us like a passenger now, instead of a straining traveller.
>
> Nevertheless, one uses words to cover up a crying inside.
>
> But one has got to live. -- Here, on this high desert, it seems so remote, and so near -- even to Devonshire Drive. The aspens on the mountains are yellow, gangs of donkeys and horses wander over the pale, sage-brush desert. The night freezes, the day is hot. Frieda and I ride every afternoon, till sundown, when the sun sets behind a far-off mesa. -- It seems so far -- and yet so near in thought. Frieda sends her love. -- There will be another grave in that cemetery now, down Church Street. It makes me feel I am growing old.
>
> Never mind, one must strike camp, & pack up the things, and go on.
>
> With love, that belongs to the old life.
>
> D. H. Lawrence
>
> England seems full of graves to me. * [1]

The last line of the letter is the first of the threnody "Spirits Summoned West". The poet invites the women, now that they are dead, to come home to peace in his heart. The spirits that he summons are the ideal selves of the women, not their intrinsic, physical selves. It was this spiritual self, 'gentle in the olden belief in love', that gave itself 'to the toils of a would-be perfect

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1 Willie Hopkin Collection, Nottingham Public Library, 25 October 1922.

love'. In life the spirit was:

> The homeless virgin
> Who never in all her life could find the way home
> To that difficult innermost place in a man.

Only in death could it find fulfilment and peace. These are women that the poet 'told to die' in his life and in his art. Yet now he accepts them into that perennial home of departed spirits, the west,[1] and into his own heart, since the dead remain incarnate in the love the living have for them:

> My own dead, whom I have loved and love, is with me,
> within me, here, now, at one with me, and not elsewhere.
> Those that die return to the beloved, enter in,
> and at last live in peace, at one with the most beloved.
> So that the living are always living ... My immortality
> lies in being present in life. And the dead have presence
> in the living. So that the dead are always present in
> life, here, in the flesh, always. [2]

The ghosts of the dead must also be appeased,[3] they must be fulfilled in the lives of the living. In psychological terms, the neuroses of the older generation will either be visited upon, or overcome by, the younger. Nevertheless, the psychic energy derived from the beloved does not end with her death. She must continue to be accepted as a dynamic part of the self. The deaths mourned in "Spirits Summoned West" included Lawrence's mother's, Sallie Hopkin's and, in addition, that of Katherine Mansfield. Lawrence wrote of her: 'The dead don't die. They look on and help.' But the deaths left him sad and afraid:

> .. I always knew a bond in my heart. Feel a fear where
> the bond is broken now. Feel as if old moorings were
> breaking all. What is going to happen to us all? Perhaps
> it is good for Katherine not to have seen the next phase

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1 See Tylor, Primitive Culture, II, p.62.

2 The Symbolic Meaning, p.78; and cf. The Plumed Serpent, p.369-70.

3 See Murray, Four Stages of Greek Religion, p.31.

... It has been a savage enough pilgrimage these four
years ...
Still it makes me afraid. As if worse were coming
... [In] America one feels as if everything would die,
and that is terrible.[1]

The deaths do not only provide spiritual succour: they prove Europe moribund. There is besides an inert ghastliness in the peace of "Spirits Summoned West". America, the traditional resting-place of the dead, is already too full of death.

A theme of "Eagle in New Mexico" is that literal death has little to offer life, in the context of the American past or present. A predecessor of Ted Hughes's "Hawk Roosting", this beast poem is one of the fiercest and most splendid in Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Unlike the Indians who have fallen out of contact with the demon of the desert, the eagle appears still to sustain its intercourse with a pole of vivid energy:

Towards the sun, towards the south-west
A scorched breast.
A scorched breast, breasting the sun like an answer,
Like a retort.

The poem conveys powerfully the eagle's mana, 'The god-thrust entering ... steadily from below'. Yet an undertone of manipulation, of the creature being a puppet of the elements, is betrayed. Hughes introduces similar critical implications, philosophical and political, into his short poem. The second half of "Eagle in New Mexico" overtly questions why the bird's beauty lies in its power and cruelty only, and what its status was in earlier Mexican religions:

When you pick the red smoky heart from a rabbit or a
light-blooded bird
Do you lift it to the sun, as the Aztec priest used to
lift red hearts of men?

Like the trees in "Cypresses", the eagle offers a point of re-entry

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1 Letters, ed. Moore, p.736, [2 February 1923].

to a lost civilization, but the communion suspected between priest and eagle is 'a bond of blood-shed'. The bird was to the Aztecs an avatar of the 'blood-thirsty sun', as the snake was an emissary from the slow-blooded, 'reptilian' continent. Snake and eagle between them reduced life to mere carnage, 'Leaving a nervous people'. Did the elemental and demonic powers of the continent demand this bloodshed? In Mexico, where serpent and eagle had been worshipped in the form of the dual god Quetzalcoatl, endless death did seem to be the order of every new wave of religious conversion and social change, whether among Aztecs, Christian invaders or modern revolutionaries. Death was only more squalid in modern times. In Mornings in Mexico Lawrence disgustedly rejected the fatal emphasis of Aztec ritual, though he felt that in doing so he was rejecting something intrinsic to the Indian psyche. He noticed that the Navajo, too, worshipped the snake and eagle; and in The Plumed Serpent forced himself to wonder what Quetzalcoatl might have meant 'to the dead Aztecs, and to the older Indians, who knew him before the Aztecs raised their deity to heights of horror and vindictiveness'.[1] Time and again Lawrence must have questioned whether his own mythic intuition and the animism of the Indians did not lead inevitably to the worship of sheer bestial cruelty and death. Yet Lawrence's intrinsic self is not amoral: morality demands the striking of a quick balance with other life. It is not from slavish theriolatry or the veneration of elemental power, but from the striking of a balance between the human and the nonhuman, that the germ of a new world is created. Unlike the eagle that merely absorbs power, men can and must assert their humanity, while continuing to absorb the savage potencies of place:

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1 The Plumed Serpent, pp.56, 64; Mornings in Mexico, p.32f; and cf. ed. Nehls, II, p.223.

Even the sun in heaven can be curbed and chastened at
last
By the life in the hearts of men.
And you, great bird, sun-starer, heavy black beak
Can be put out of office as sacrifice bringer.

The last poem in Birds, Beasts and Flowers reverts, with a lambent wit, to some aspects of the bestiary model, treating animals primarily as emblems. "The American Eagle" reviews the religious alternatives sought in the poem-sequence, and their possible social implications. 'The dove of liberty' is a descendant of the Paraclete brooding on the face of the waters, as eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century radicalism was the scion of Christian idealism. But the dove has been having relations with the proud Johannine Logos, which is why she is forever hatching eagles. The fledgling in question is the emblem of the Republic of the United States. Idealism would convert him into a pelican which, as a type for Christ in the bestiaries, wounded its breast to nourish its young. Not self-interest but misguided altruism, Lawrence believes, leads the eagle to present this spectacle of himself, 'plucking out of his plumage a few loose feathers to feather the nests of all'. The poor bird can express himself neither by a columbine 'Coo' nor an aquiline 'Quark'. What comes out is a cross between idealistic selflessness and imperialistic self-extension: it sounds just like Whitman's 'barbaric yawp'.[1] Preferable to this self-deceiving idealism would be a franker recognition of the potentialities of burgeoning political power. The animistic Amerindians worshipped the eagle for its mana; and their magical aim was the acquisition of physical energy. Lawrence recalls the fact in a voice suggesting antipathy, even satire. The irony is defensive, adjusted to the

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1 See Whitman, "Song of Myself", iii: 'I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world'.

abrasive wit that has gone before. But animism is not looked upon as a possible psychic alternative for the new America.

Neither is Lawrence's dream for America one of unlimited economic power. Descending from myth and religion to the bathos of fairy-tale, he invokes the story of the goose that laid the golden egg, a moral homily for the rabid capitalist. An eagle should not condescend to be a goose. The physical self should not be sacrificed to the demands of production. The point is not whether eggs should continue to be laid, nor whither they should be despatched, but whence the self is to derive its life-energy. Lawrence envisages:

> The new Proud Republic
> Based on the mystery of pride.
> Overweening men, full of power of life, commanding a
> teeming obedience.
>
> Eagle of the Rockies, bird of men that are masters,
> Lifting the rabbit-blood of the myriads up into something
> splendid,
> Leaving a few bones ...

In transferring attention from the relationship between man and his circumambient universe, to that between man and man, in presuming that among men, too, might be found 'lords of life', Lawrence has subtly altered the balance of the poem-sequence. In Pansies and the leadership novels the search for mana in men, and the construction and testing of its social consequences, preoccupies him. But this is not the equilibrium of Birds, Beasts and Flowers: it is based on glory and submission, the 'power of life, commanding a teeming obedience'. The differences between the cruelty of Aztec worship, rejected in "Eagle in New Mexico", and the giving allegiance to eagle-like men, who will consent to 'Drinking a little blood' only, seem less salient than the similarities. The two poems set up a disturbing resonance. Between the horrors of the past and the

terrors of the future, in the aridity of the present, the forces at work in Nature and the man seem too extreme and harsh to be 'loosing another royalty into the world'. 'Mere anarchy' is abroad; and if Lawrence hears no 'voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells', nevertheless, his imagination in these concluding poems is dominated by 'the sage-grey desert/ Like a white Christus fallen to dust', and by the ghosts of a dead era come crowding to this desert, to ask appeasement of those who survive, yet despair.

CHAPTER VII IT IS ENOUGH

> The magicians knew, at least imaginatively, what it was
> to create a being out of the intense will of the soul. 1

> What are the gods, then, what are the gods?

> The gods are nameless and imageless
> yet looking in a great full lime-tree of summer
> I suddenly saw deep into the eyes of god:
> it is enough. 2

By way of conclusion it is proposed to give a synopsis of Pansies, Nettles, More Pansies and Last Poems. Birds, Beasts and Flowers represents the apex of Lawrence's poetic achievement. In the light of it Pansies and Last Poems appear as a catabolism, followed by a ghostly resurrection. Item by item, the disintegrated fragments of the complex free verse and symbolism of Birds, Beasts and Flowers can be found dotting the free stream of consciousness of Pansies. Lawrence's deep-seated lyrical impulse is little in evidence in the second volume. Where lyrical evocations of animal gaiety and insouciance do occur, in "Little Fish" or "Many Mansions", they are sundered from the framework of reflection and the deepening ironies and syntheses, which result from a consideration of the human observer. They may loosely develop an argument from poem to poem, but this polemic does not constitute a complex of thought and emotion. They betray a secondary quality: in "Little Fish" Lawrence imitates himself, in "Self-Pity" Whitman.[3] In the poems where Lawrence does look at animals afresh, the centre of his vision

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1. The Symbolic Meaning, p.36.
2. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.650.
3. Whitman, "Song of Myself", xxxii.

has shifted. In "The Mosquito Knows" the insect has become a bestiary animal, an edifying exemplum. Despite the assured versification and the reverence accorded to the great beings of "The Elephant is Slow to Mate" —

> They do not snatch, they do not tear;
> their massive blood
> moves as the moon-tides, near, more near,
> till they touch in flood.

— once more the beasts are there to point a moral. They are more like the fabulous creatures from T.H.White's delightful translation of a twelfth-century bestiary than the shambling darknesses of "Elephant".[1] Even as late as "Whales Weep Not!" the animal has no sensory outline, the focus is otherworldly. The hierarchies of symbolic cherubim and seraphim, while they do induce awe at the vastnesses of cetine sex, never make the whales as alien or animal as Lawrence's tortoise or fish.

The symbolic model, of a man moving through a grove beneath overarching heaven, recurs in Pansies. Its recognition, Lawrence's nervous satire of the voracious modern Venus having denuded the grove of its symbolic ramifications, comes as a shock:

> The son of man goes forth to war
> no more, he sends his daughter
> collecting foreskins.
>
> But I consider I was sufficiently circumcised long ago.
>
> My dears, if you want the skies to fall
> they are established on the many pillars of the phallus,
> so perhaps you'll do it.

The earlier symbolism with its mythic suggestiveness is reduced to a kind of caricature, not without humour, but relying on signs rather than symbols. Attempts to reach a more mythic level of discourse are similarly forthright. Lawrence was drawn to Einstein's theory of relativity by the element of indeterminacy allowed for in nuclear physics:

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1. T.H.White, The Book of Beasts, Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century, (London: Cape, 1954), p.24-28.

> I like relativity and quantum theories
> because I don't understand them
> and they make me feel as if space shifted about like a
> swan that can't settle,
> refusing to sit still and be measured;
> and as if the atom were an impulsive thing
> always changing its mind.

Lawrence's Tennysonian interest in contemporary science is itself remarkable. But, although under certain conditions the behaviour of subatomic particles can be unpredictable in any one instance, their activity is statistically quantifiable and regular. Lawrence was probably himself aware that to conclude from the scientific evidence that the behaviour of matter was indeterministic, let alone that the atom was a self-determining 'impulsive thing', was to overstep the bounds of legitimate inference. In the poems "Swan", "Give Us Gods" and "Spiral Flame" mythopoeic assertions that there are 'Mists/ where the electron behaves and misbehaves as it will', and that 'There is a swan-like flame that curls round the centre of space/ and flutters at the core of the atom', while seeming quasi-scientific, are in fact anti-scientific. The quality of mere assertion deracinates the mythopoeia of Pansies. The moments of mythic power are felt only briefly, when Lawrence returns to the 'concrete intuitive':

> .. a wild swan, or a goose, whose honk goes through my
> bladder.
>
> And in the dark unscientific I feel the drum-winds of
> his wings
> and the drip of his cold, webbed feet, mud-black
> brush over my face as he goes
> to seek the women in the dark, our women, our weird women
> whom he treads
> with dreams and thrusts that make them cry in their sleep.

Through immediate sensuous experience, he can still enter the nightmare of Leda, and recover the alien realm where human and animal momentarily overlap.

The hymns to Quetzalcoatl in The Plumed Serpent typify the less appreciative, more assertive myth-making. The finest of these is probably the first, telling of Quetzalcoatl's preparations to return

to Mexico:

> .. I took the sandals of the Saviour
> And started down the long slope
> Past the mount of the sun.
> Till I saw beneath me
> White breast-tips of my Mexico
> My bride.
>
> Jesus the Crucified
> Sleeps in the healing waters
> The long sleep.
> Sleep, sleep, my brother, sleep.
> My bride between the seas
> Is combing her dark hair,
> Saying to herself: Quetzalcoatl.

The formal relaxation, the simplicity of diction, image and action, reproduce translations one has read of primitive songs or verse-narratives. The metaphor of bride and groom, symbolizing religious mystery through sexuality, is convincingly aboriginal in its temper, copied perhaps from the Song of Solomon. Others of the songs and paeans are more derivative. Roger Dataller has shown how Lawrence modelled some on the Congregational hymns of his childhood,[1] and there are traces of Swinburne's humanist hymns. In the second song of Quetzalcoatl —

> Deep in the moistures of peace,
> And far down the muzzle of fight
> You shall find me, who am neither increase
> Nor destruction, different quite.

— can be heard beating the second choric ode of Atalanta in Calydon:

> Before the beginning of years
> There came to the making of man
> Time with a gift of tears;
> Grief with a glass that ran ...
> Strength without hands that smite;
> Love that endures for a breath;
> Night, the shadow of light,
> And life, the shadow of death.

The difficult effort of refurbishing the roots of mythic vision has given

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1. Roger Dataller, "Eastwood in Taos", The Adelphi, XXVIII (1952), 173-81.

way to a mimicking of myth and the primitive, at second hand. The hymns of Quetzalcoatl are imitations of myth, not initiations into it.

The complex tonal comedy of "Peach" is also disintegrated in Pansies into a more insistent, carping satire. "What Is He?", "What Would You Fight For?" and "What Ails Thee?" retain the format of a dialogue, and some of the flexibility, satirizing the self as well as the opponent, but this is not synthesized with the lyrical impulse of "Peach". The laughter is seldom ironic, most often sardonic. There are usually no two ways of interpreting any one pensée. The function of Lawrence's satire is straightforward and not subtle:

> Satire exists for the very purpose of killing the social being, showing him what an inferior he is and, with all his parade of social honesty, how subtly and corruptly debased. Dishonest to life, dishonest to the living universe on which he is a parasite or a louse. By ridiculing the social being, the satirist helps the true individual, the real human being, to rise to his feet again and go on with the battle. [1]

Satire can hardly afford to appeal to any social norms, therefore; but a normative sanity to which Lawrence does appeal is the organic development of the individual, in contact with values beyond the social. He invokes and defends this educational axiom, overtly donning the mantle of Romantic polemicist in his poetry. His call to the individual to attain 'inward peace' is reminiscent of Wordsworth's advocation of 'wise passiveness': indeed, "Choice" alludes to "Expostulation and Reply". John Danby has related Lawrence's rainbow, symbolic of a covenant with the creative mystery, to the rainbow's meaning within the Romantic tradition;[2] and familiar symbols of organic connection are deployed in "The Hands of God" and "Wealth". "Fallen Leaves" works the Romantic tree and breeze into a neatly organized emblem:

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1. Phoenix, p.543.
2. John Danby, "D.H.Lawrence", Cambridge Journal, IV (1950-51), 274-75.

> There is the organic connection, like leaves that belong
> to a tree
> and there is the mechanical connection, like leaves that
> are cast upon the earth.
>
> Winds of heaven fan the leaves of the tree like flames
> and tunes,
> but winds of heaven are mills of God to the fallen leaves
> grinding them small to humus, on earth's nether mill-stone.

But in case the point has been missed, Lawrence goes on to repeat it in four or five other short poems in the vicinity. The stately "Fidelity" also has three spin-off poems, using its symbols of centrality and permanence, but not adding to their significance. Even where Lawrence did prepare the pensées for publication, repetition abounds, a persistent and curious annoyance.

The furious denunciations of modern 'mechanical man' are most often duplicated, seeming to grow louder as they become more unspecific. This repetition differs radically from the delicate modifications and ramifying progressions of Birds, Beasts and Flowers. It reverts continually to a single problem, like a wound. Raymond Williams has puzzled over the obsessive iterations of the pensées, and their Carlylean outbursts of 'sudden wild bitterness':

> The case is reasoned and yet breaks again and again into a wild passion of rejection, of which the tenor is not merely negative but annihilating — a threshing after power, which is to be known, ultimately, only in that force of mystery at the edge of which human articulation breaks down. 1

At times the repetition seems thaumaturgical in its aim, as if the impassioned retelling of the evils of mechanized work-rotas could of itself abolish system and suffering. In "Healing" and "Kisses and Horrid Strife" Lawrence identifies the social malaise with his own consumption:

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1. Williams, Culture and Society, p.201.

I have been defeated and dragged down by pain
and worsted by the evil world-soul of today.

Remedy lies in:

.. freeing oneself
from the endless repetition of the mistake
which mankind at large has chosen to sanctify.

The language and the rage have a quasi-magical use: some poems might be regarded as charms or curses. But equally healing are the moments of self-recognition and acceptance, in "Image-Making Love" —

Nakedly to be alone, unseen
is better than anything else in the world,
a relief like death.

Always
at the core of me
burns the small flame of anger, gnawing
from trespassed contacts ...

— and "The Hostile Sun":

.. and the sun turns hostile to us
and bites at our throats and chests
as he bites at the stems of leaves in autumn, to make
them fall.
. . . . .
Then only under the moon, cool and unconcerned
calm with the calm of scimitars and brilliant reaping
hooks
sweeping the curve of space and mowing the silence
we have peace.

Especially in More Pansies there is a moving alternation between angry rejection and a quieter acceptance.

Richard Aldington has no trouble explaining the tone of these collections: they reveal 'the irritability of the consumptive', 'the snapping of worn exasperated nerves'.[1] Indeed, the repetition which has been called thaumaturgy would, by another name, be brow-beating. In the political sphere the niceties of argument are forsaken for the certainties of vehemence. Lawrence's basic moral imperatives pay so

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, pp.595, 598.

little heed to any extant society that his ideas for reform seem impractical, concerned only with ends. He is, in this realm, himself an extreme idealist, his aspirations quite divorced from the body politic. Believing in the intrinsic self, he turns a blind eye to the formative influence of social environment on character. He attacks class as a deadening barrier between individuals. But an individual with a spark of true vitality would not be inhibited by it. Fulfilling that spark of inward being, he would absolutely transcend the limitations of class; and if he did not, that would measure his limitations:

> No, there's nowt in the upper classes
> as far as I can find;
> a worse lot o' jujubey asses
> than the lot I left behind.

Those with no vitality should make way, or be pushed away by those who do have, or will have it, in the historiographical progression of things. Finally, there was Lawrence's blind spot, a function of his non-ironic sensibility, to seeing himself as implicated in, or a beneficiary of, the society which he was criticizing. This combination of hard-headedness and soft-sidedness makes his social criticism in these poems often seem unwittingly simplistic, too easily to be discounted. But his attacks on modern society are not the product of a sick mind. Fifty years have done little to dispel doubts and qualms about industrial development and the injustice of class. And among Pansies prickle shafts of the political shrewdness of the outsider, which Lawrence never lacked. "When Wilt Thou Teach the People —?" is more than a display of cynical wit. It analyses the connection which the motive of saving the people, under any political banner, will have with religious idealism, a basic acquisitiveness and a desire for order. "Police Spies" speaks from the voice of personal experience, avoiding the tedium which usually accompanies that exercise:

> Start a system of official spying
> and you've introduced anarchy into your country.

"Peace and War" has a shrewdness tantamount to wisdom, with its two pungent aphorisms: 'People always make war when they say they love peace' and 'It's bad taste to be wise all the time'. At their worst Lawrence's aphorisms are opinions, the safety-valve for his celebrity. The poems read like the transcription of an interview. But here, at their best, they combine in a compact and swiftly moving argument, concluding:

> For everyday use, give me somebody whimsical, with
> not too much purpose in life,
> then we shan't have war, and we needn't talk about
> peace.

One should not be wise all the time. But when he is as acute as this, Lawrence justifies James Reeves's praise for the author of Pansies, as having 'a good ear for the rhythms of common speech, an instinct for economy of expression'.[1]

It is easy to exaggerate the bitterness and anger of Pansies: they are equally the expression of a whimsy 'with not too much purpose'. Rhys Davies, to whom Lawrence recited them, thought them 'light-hearted'.[2] Their laughter may be sardonic, but it is laughter, and play is a decisive factor in the composition of many of the pensées. They give scope to one of the attractive and Victorian aspects of Lawrence's personality — his love of parlour games. Some are occasional or album-verse, having the unambitious good-humour and faint lewdness that befits the genre. Others borrow from songs: both "Britannia's Baby" and "Amo Sacrum Vulgus" can be sung to "Charlie Is My Darling". A more demanding form is a kind of syllogism, a ringing of changes within a set grammatical pattern. "When I Went to the Film" is a looser

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1. A Vein of Mockery: Twentieth-Century Verse Satire, ed. James Reeves, (London: Heinemann, 1973), p.5-6.

2. Rhys Davies, Print of a Hare's Foot: An Autobiographical Beginning, (London: Heinemann, 1969), p.143.

specimen of this form, a catalogue straggling at too great length to its conclusion. But the strict sorites and paradoxical conclusion of "Wages", conveying a Shavian pleasure in mental acrobatics and shock, are a complete success. "To Women, As Far As I'm Concerned" is the most extended of these rhetorical games:

> The feelings I don't have I don't have.
> The feelings I don't have, I won't say I have.
> The feelings you say you have, you don't have.
> The feelings you would like us both to have, we neither
> of us have.
> The feelings people ought to have, they never have.
> If people say they've got feelings, you may be pretty
> sure they haven't got them.
>
> So if you want either of us to feel anything at all
> you'd better abandon all idea of feelings altogether.

The familiar verse often makes fun of the trials and tribulations incidental to the publishing of Lady Chatterley's Lover and the exhibition of paintings at the Warren Gallery in London. The neatest and most playful is perhaps "Conundrums", a series of not-too-difficult riddles leading to the catechism:

> Tell me what's wrong
> with words or with you
> that you don't mind the thing
> yet the name is taboo.

The condensed ambiguity lies in the strongly exclusive or weakly inclusive 'or'. Lawrence also composed more or less amusing lampoons and caricatures of magistrates, critics, policemen and Home Secretaries.

To compare Lawrence's satire to caricature is not entirely to devalue it, but to describe its generic characteristics. The tendency in Pansies is to set up a type for the English middle classes, like Ronald in "The Noble Englishman" or the Oxbridge man of "How Beastly the Bourgeois Is", or to characterize all England as John Bull. Individuals, like Thomas Earp, are transmogrified into animals with exaggerated, traditional traits. The poetry functions like a political cartoon. It draws on other, easily forgotten funds of demotic art. One technique is the revamping of dead or dying metaphors. Simply by taking

seriously the metaphoric implications of a cliché like 'the salt of the earth', a satisfying, short reflection is put together. In "Change of Government" Lawrence imitates the horrified tone of backyard gossip. He interlards his diction everywhere with biblical and proverbial phrases, with such tags as 'It is a fearful thing' and trite saws like 'New brooms sweep clean'. But these odds and ends of language are used consciously so as to reawaken the potential significance of daily speech. Memories of ephemeral folk rhymes are incorporated in the poems — "'I sat with the duchess at tea'", for example, in "A Rise in the World". An irreverent version of a hymn is borrowed to begin "The Saddest Day", and in "Stand Up —" Lawrence writes his own parody.[1] "Broad-casting to the G.B.P." cautions programmers of entertainment for general consumption that nursery rhymes are hot stuff, all sex, politics and violence, and much too strong for the Great British Public. Echoes of balladry in "Auto-da-Fé" — 'Oh he has put his prince-nez on, and stoutly has stepped down' — help to belittle the actions of the magistrate who declared Lawrence's paintings obscene, by setting them in a mock-heroic framework.

This use of the resources of demotic art is integrated with Lawrence's themes, especially with his attack on the class structure of English society. Lawrence does not only borrow, he creates low art. The pensées were intentionally not high art, abrasively anti-lyrical, defiantly 'real doggerel'.[2] They were designed as a bourgeoimeter, Lawrence explained:

> But you have to face the fact that the Socialists dislike the Pansies much more than the aristocrats or even the cultured bourgeois do: ergo, the Socialists are merely little bourgeois over again. [3]

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1. See Poems, ed. Pinto, p.1025.
2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.1106, 15 Dec. 1928.
3. Willie Hopkin Collection, Nottingham Public Library, 30 August 1929.

Some of the finest poetry in Pansies is the aggressive comic doggerel of "Nottingham's New University", "Red Herring" and "A Rise in the World", where the unpretentious form, the dialect and the well-aimed abuse all help to expose the fraud of 'higher' values. The very invective has a liberating effect. It is refreshing to be told 'It was all cat-piss to me', or to share in the mock slowness of the recognition 'they were all a bloody sham'. Puncturing pretensions is invigorating, but "When I Read Shakespeare" proves that Lawrence could attack true icons as well as false. His aim is more accurate in "Willy Wet-Leg", where he refuses to tolerate the claims of affected martyrdom:

> I can't stand Willy wet-leg,
> can't stand him at any price.
> He's resigned, and when you hit him
> he lets you hit him twice.

Again, the adoption of the popular voice allows Lawrence to extend his lower register considerably, in the direction of sexual innuendo. "A Played-Out Game" has some telling ribaldry at the expense of the rat-race and the bitch-goddess, Success:

> Our poor daddies got on,
> and then could never get off again.

The plebeian coarseness of tone does truncate symbolic resonances latent in the imagery. Symbols become emblems. But occasionally, from his own reflection and the popular idiom, Lawrence is able to mint an aphorism that has a timeless ring to it. 'The father eats the pear and the son's teeth are set on edge' is one example, from "Tarts". "After All Tragedies Are Over" ends on another instance of this flat, emblematic imagery, that acquires a proverbial quality:

> It is the moon that turns the tides.
> The beaches can do nothing about it.

Although this return to proletarian origins does add to the generic and tonal range of Lawrence's verse, it should be noticed that a line of tough, prosaic deflation was essential to the free verse of Birds, Beasts and Flowers. In "Peach" such undercutting was a part of the

dramatic play of voice. In Pansies disillusioned or amused satire, lyricism and didacticism have been fragmented into separate poems, disintegrating the patterns of meaning that had been created by their conjunction. The compound is reduced to a mixture, with satire and moral harangue predominant. In the introduction to Pansies Lawrence claimed that an organizing principle, such as was evolved in Birds, Beasts and Flowers, did link the discrete 'thoughts':

> Each little piece is a thought; not a bare idea or an opinion or a didactic statement, but a true thought, which comes as much from the heart and the genitals as from the head ... They are thoughts which run through the modern mind and body, yet each of them combining with all the others to make up a complete state of mind. [1]

But, to adapt Byron, 'What after all can signify the site/ Of poets' lucubrations?'[2] By whatever organ or organs in concert it is stimulated, didacticism remains didactic in utterance. Pansies gives no evidence of an organizing principle any more coherent than of assorted poems, produced by a single mind, engaged in free association and reflection. Lawrence's pensées are not 'apparently' but in fact 'irrelevant thoughts that scurry in different directions, yet belong to the same nest'.

If a unifying theme does run through Pansies, it is the impending collapse and supersession of modern society, perhaps of all humanity. Most poems fit into this general foreboding. Their refrain is 'the house will come down'. It is not a preoccupation that brings out the best in Lawrence's writing. In the leadership novels it impelled him to envisage the fabric of a regenerated society and the 'lords of life' who would rule it. The first of these demands on Lawrence, the social prophet, excluded him from his novelistic métier, forcing upon him the thin make-believe of the political revolutions in Kangaroo and The Plumed Serpent. The second, the perception of the mana

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1. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.417.
2. Byron, Don Juan, XI, xxxiv.

or vitality in man as a social animal, seemed as well malgré lui, more a programmatic attempt to extend the range of his vision than a response to the promptings of his Romantic and realist sensibility. The heroes, on whom the new order was to be founded, were always chosen from the safely historical past or visualized in the hypothetical future. Nevertheless, Lawrence continued to conceptualize and test his political ideas with a dogged wilfulness, as if the effort of imagining a new world would bring it to pass. Some of their creator's determination rubbed off on to the novels' protagonists, faced with a similar task of liberation from, and active transformation of, their social milieu. Jack Grant in The Boy in the Bush plays cricket with such intentness that he seems able to move the ball by 'the magic of will'; and when at last forced to kill his enemy, he does so, not so much by accurate shooting, as by an exercise of mystic will.[1] Don Ramon of The Plumed Serpent is engaged in actively renovating a decadent Mexican society by resurrecting the Aztec pantheon. At the novel's climacteric Ramon's wife magically invokes Christ to kill her husband, to take his life in order to save his soul. Instead she is killed; for Ramon, too, is in contact with the supernatural, with the powers of an animistic cosmos. Although he does not overtly summon these powers — '"The Omnipotent," came the voice of Ramon speaking quietly, as if to her, "is with me, and I serve Omnipotence"' — nonetheless, he acts rather as a lens, serving to focus destructive forces on his wife.[2] His religious activity being aimed at reconnecting man with a living universe, Ramon becomes like the arch-magician, able to wield impersonal, supernatural forces at will. It is a disturbing apotheosis, and the disturbance seems to originate in Lawrence's inability to find in man a centre of religious

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1. The Boy in the Bush, pp.125, 315.

2. The Plumed Serpent, p.357f.

value as simple or as easily accessible as that which he found in living things. Lawrence, like Kate at the end of The Plumed Serpent, is unable fully to accept or finally to reject the possible consequences of reconnecting social man with a magical, animistic cosmos.

The animals of Birds, Beasts and Flowers emanated an, as it were, magical potency in their own right. Lawrence's human figures, however, must first be transfigured by potencies from the natural world. There are the riders seen by Jack Grant, that seem like angels in a furnace, 'aureoled figures kicking up dust like sundust': there are the fisherman of "For the Heroes Are Dipped in Scarlet", 'red all over, rippling vermillion' with the light of sunrise on the Mediterranean: there is Don Cipriano, his body turned to 'a piece of fire' by the morning sun reflected from the lake.[1] These momentary gods in human form resemble the Cumberland shepherds of Wordsworth's memory. Silhouetted against the sky on the high fells, or 'glorified/ By the deep radiance of the setting sun', this giant-like presence of Wordsworth's childhood could still be acknowledged as an 'imaginative form', instilling 'love and reverence/ Of human nature'; but he was 'for the purposes of kind, a man/ With the most common'.[2] Whereas Wordsworth emphasizes the quotidian ordinariness of the man and the divinity of the vision, Lawrence persists in the conviction that vision must be revelation, even though this leads towards a perfectibilism which he mistrusts. Man should have a connection with his circumambient universe as vivid as that divined in "Eagle in New Mexico"; and on this rapport could be built a society of men that were really men:

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1. The Boy in the Bush, p.125; The Plumed Serpent, p.441; and cf. Frieda Lawrence, "Not I ...", p.268.

2. Wordsworth, The Prelude, VIII, 390-428.

> Men should group themselves into a new order
> of sun-men.
> Each one turning his breast straight to the sun of suns
> in the centre of things,
> and from his own little inward sun
> nodding to the great one.

Such men, it is explained in "Classes", would as natural leaders create a social order of implicit obedience:

> There are two classes of men:
> those that look into the eyes of the gods, and these are few,
> and those that look into the eyes of the few other men
> to see the gleam of the gods there, reflected in the
> human eye.

The present class-system is deadening, but the 'aristocrat of the sun', drawing his nobility 'direct from the sun', would not 'need one social inferior to exalt him'.

Lawrence's "Aristocracy of the Sun" is not un-Shakespearean in symbolic outline:

> [Bolingbroke.] See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,
> As doth the blushing discontented sun
> From out the fiery portal of the East,
> When he perceives the envious clouds are bent
> To dim his glory and to stain the track
> Of his bright passage to the occident.
> [York.] Yet looks he like a king. Behold his eye,
> As bright as its the eagle's, lightens forth
> Controlling majesty ... [1]

Lawrence himself may have recognized the affinity, describing his sun-man as intrinsically a king, and betraying some nostalgia for a time before 'the beheading of the king-father', Charles I, when the king was recognized as the anointed representative of God to the people.[2] Both Lawrence's sun-man and Shakespeare's sun-king would be classified by Frazer as late variants of the divine king, a ruler mediating between the elemental forces of Nature and his society. For the Elizabethans monarchy by divine right was the extant political system. By satirizing the shortcomings of individuals within a scheme of universal harmony, in such plays as

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1. Shakespeare, Richard II, III, iii, 62-70.

2. Phoenix, p.555-56; Phoenix II, p.483; and cf. pp.477, 291.

Richard II and King John Shakespeare created a richly humanist political drama, from a paradigm which of itself threatened to reduce individuals to cyphers or units. Lawrence's foreseeing 'a new order/ of sun-men' in the leadership novels was, to enforce the distinction, purely hypothetical. His satire, much of which is contained in the poetry, was directed largely against the extant political system, and lacks more specific correlatives or simple human drama. The novels tend to shadow forth a new world, the poetry to record a recoil from the old. As in the novelistic satire, which aimed to 'lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness',[1] so in the sardonic satire of the poetry can be felt a quality of spiritual will, as if the very passion of rejection could assuage social evils and individual sufferings.

It would be a convenient fiction to conjoin and dismiss the leadership novels and Pansies, Nettles and More Pansies as products of Lawrence's political obsessions, and hence inferior and extrinsic to the works produced in answer to his deeper and abiding sensibility. This categorization has some truth to it, but it should be admitted that Lawrence's dalliance with natural aristocracy or hierocracy persisted into Apocalypse and Last Poems, despite his asseveration in 1928 that 'the hero is obsolete'.[2] Nonetheless, reading through More Pansies, a new mood can be detected, of pastoral withdrawal and relaxation from imaginative political struggle. The verities of relationship with the natural world and the creative mystery are reasserted on the individual plane. In lieu of the arrogant, quasi-magical ambition to set the world to rights, a quiet religious acceptance of what is right with the world, of a private, unbroken communion, makes itself felt. Despite what man has made of man, he may still

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1. Lady Chatterley's Lover, p.104.

2. Letters, ed. Moore, p.1045, 13 March 1928.

enjoy the epiphanies celebrated in "Trees in the Garden", "The Gods! The Gods!", "All Sorts of God", "For a Moment", "The White Horse" and "What Are the Gods?" — the moments when:

> .. looking into a great full lime-tree of summer
> I suddenly saw deep into the eyes of god:
> it is enough.

This unforced acceptance of revelation allowed Lawrence to recover the heights of his poetic power. Such poems as "Bavarian Gentians" have at their source a quiet gratitude and humility:

> No every man has gentians in his house
> in soft September, at slow, sad Michaelmas.

It might be held that this religious reverence underlies all of Lawrence's finest poetry, in Look! We Have Come Through! —

> And so I cross into another world
> shyly and in homage linger for an invitation
> from this unknown that I would trespass on.

— and in Birds, Beasts and Flowers:

> Someone was before me at my water-trough,
> And I, like a second comer, waiting.

In these volumes the phenomenal world, in becoming as if divine, had first to be transubstantiated by a mystery, of sexuality or natural vitality. In Last Poems, as Lawrence hinted in what might stand as an introduction, "Gladness of Death", the mystery is bestowed by 'the great adventure of death':

> I shall blossom like a dark pansy, and be delighted
> there among the dark sun-rays of death.
> I can feel myself unfolding in the dark sunshine of death
> to something flowery and unfulfilled, and with a strange
> perfume.

> Men prevent one another from being men
> but in the great spaces of death
> the winds of the afterwards kiss us into blossom of manhood.

In the last months of his life Lawrence was able to create the 'odd, wintry flowers' of "Shadows", poems of a dignity and sureness 'such as my life has not brought forth before, new blossoms of me'.

As if to signal a renaissance, the first poems of Aldington's note-book, MS A, return to the Mediterranean dawn-world of Sea and Sardinia and Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Attention is no longer directed to the tiny life of a rose cyclamen, but to the greater elemental realities of sun, moon and sea. In this context the defilement of the modern world, exemplified by a P. & O. steamer 'and all the other stinkers', dwindles 'like a small beetle walking the edge'. In the light of the moon especially, which gives earnest not only of waning death but of waxing regeneration,[1] the poet sees returning a new yet ancient breed of men:

> And now that the moon who gives men glistening bodies
> is in her exaltation, and can look down on the sun
> I see descending from the ships at dawn
> slim naked men of Cnossos, smiling the archaic smile
> of those that will without fail come back again ...

To the poet dying, return seems more imminent. Nostalgia for the lost ancient world is replaced by a certainty in its eventual restoration; for the ancient gods are everywhere immanent in the phenomenal world. Dionysus and the men of Dionysus, and gods yet earlier than this Eastern parvenu, appear, not as momentary visions, but as permanent denizens of the world and of human experience, dwelling particularly on the fringes of death. As the 'King of glory' will come in through the uplifted, 'everlasting doors' of the Psalms (xxiv, 7), so we may have faith that:

> This sea will never die, neither will it ever grow old
> nor cease to be blue, nor in the dawn
> cease to lift up its hills
> and let the black ship of Dionysos come sailing in
> with grape-vines up the mast, and dolphins leaping.

The verse-line is more relaxed, less vigilantly expressionist than in Birds, Beasts and Flowers. Instead it suggests another mode of inward

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1. See Phoenix II, p.483; Apocalypse, p.48f. Aldington states that Lawrence's lunar symbolism has an 'inner personal meaning [which] is clear only after one has thoroughly absorbed Apocalypse' (see Poems, ed. Pinto, p.596-97). In fact, the symbolism never seems this abstruse or private.

attention, a waiting for what Geoffrey Grigson has called 'the grand elegiac trigger-lines', or Lawrence himself, the line that makes us 'prick our ears like an animal at a strange sound'.[1] These opening poems can boast at least one of these Arnoldian touch-stones:

> The dawn is not off the sea, and Odysseus' ships
> have not yet passed the islands ...

With the benefit of hindsight, it is yet more encouraging to note how the pathos of this lyric celebration is heightened by juxtaposition with quotidian reality: 'wait, wait, don't bring me the coffee yet, nor the pain grillé'. Lyric and demotic strains are more intimately compounded in "Red Geranium and Godly Mignonette". In this poem the complexity of personal voice that is heard in Birds, Beasts and Flowers has been once more accomplished. A.Alvarez has carefully assessed the balance of tones:

> It is hard to know whether to emphasize more the ease and originality of the piece, or its tact. There is neither a jot of pretentiousness in the poem, nor of vulgarity ... There is no disproportion between the colloquial liveliness of the opening and the equally alive tenderness of the close. The wit is not a flourish; it is a poetic means; it preserves the seriousness from sentimentality and overstatement, as seriousness keeps the wit from flippancy. [2]

But the sprightliness of changing registers, from comic fantasy to histrionic fulsomeness, from demotic undercutting to a dramatic simplicity of presented emotion, is more than a 'poetic means':

> But imagine, among the mud and mastodons
> God sighing and yearning with tremendous creative yearning,
> in that dark green mess
> oh, for some other beauty, some other beauty
> that blossomed at last, red geranium, and mignonette.

It is a restored completeness of vision and response, a whole act of attention.

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1. Geoffrey Grigson, Poems and Poets, (London: Longmans, 1961), p.192; Phoenix, p.323.

2. A.Alvarez, "Lawrence's Poetry: The Single State of Man", Novelist, Poet, Prophet, ed. Spender, p.221.

The vision of Lawrence's final period is not that of his middle period. He was now able to state, with a succinctness and a pungency that made poetry out of the metaphysic, the doctrine of physicalism, and the equilibrium between the One Life and the living individual:

> Even the mind of God can only imagine
> those things that have become themselves ...
>
> The lovely things are god that has come to pass ...
> The rest, the undiscoverable, is the demi-urge.

These extracts from "Demiurge" and "The Body of God" demonstrate that Pansies are not a cul de sac, but a training and disciplining of poetic speech. In "The Man of Tyre" Lawrence is able pithily but delicately to tell a parable of the right relationship between the One and the Many:

> Lo! God is one god! But here in the twilight
> godly and lovely comes Aphrodite out of the sea
> towards me!

In the first lines of "The Man of Tyre" Lawrence alludes to a popular catch; but the reference is not designed to mock the Greek's monistic god, despite the poet's conviction that 'Monism is the religion of the cut-off'. It harks back to E.B.Tylor's proposition that the English folk-song in question has its roots in an ancient Hebrew counting-verse, inculcating first and last that 'God is one'.[1] Folk tradition, the parable hints, has depths of experiential meaningwhich are too readily forgotten. For all its odd cultural resonance and easy clarity, the physicalism of Last Poems is a changed 'dynamic idea' from that which underlies Birds, Beasts and Flowers. It resembles the resurrected vision of Christ in The Man Who Died, and this in turn resembles Lawrence's 1911 elegies, poems such as "Corot" with a wave-like anima or fiery demiurge coursing through them:

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1. Letters, ed. Moore, p.994, 3 August 1927; p.1084, [? 2 Sept. 1928]; Tylor, Primitive Culture, I, p.87.

> The man who had died looked nakedly on life, and saw a vast resoluteness everywhere flinging itself up in stormy or subtle wave-crests, foam-tips emerging out of the blue invisible, a black and orange cock or the green flame-tongues out of the extremes of the fig-tree. They came forth, these things and creatures of spring, glowing with desire and with assertion. They came like crests of foam, out of the blue flood of the invisible desire, out of the invisible sea of strength, and they came coloured and tangible, evanescent, yet deathless in their coming. [1]

The accentuation is not on single lives, but on incarnate Life, that creates in the rebirth of spring or disintegrates in autumnal death. As David Cavitch observes, the later writings reveal impatience 'with the complex details of objective reality'. The sensuous outlines of the discrete and concrete have faded. Lawrence is absorbed instead with 'the solitary experience that alone is real to him any more',[2] with 'The stream of my life in the darkness/ Deathward set'. He is engrossed by:

> .. the pain of falling leaves, and stems that break in storms
> and trouble and dissolution and distress
> and then the softness of deep shadows, folding, folding
> around my soul and spirit, around my lips
> so sweet, like a swoon, or more like the drowse of a low, sad song
> singing darker than the nightingale, on, on to the solstice
> and the silence of short days, the silence of the year, the shadow ...

Keat's symbolism for disintegration has a more literal interpretation now. The process is not one of self-initiated or intensifying reduction. The poet surrenders to the physical rhythms of life and death with an apparently total serenity, a calm knowledge that:

> .. my life is moving still
> with the dark earth, and drenched
> with the deep oblivion of earth's lapse and renewal.

It is the acceptance of "To Autumn". Elsewhere, too, Lawrence turns to Keats as to a kindred spirit. "Whales Weep Not!" contrasts the

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1. Love Among the Haystacks, p.133.

2. David Cavitch, D.H.Lawrence and the New World, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp.201, 205.

eternally unfulfilled figures on the Grecian urn to the whales' unending, oceanic sexual fulfilment 'in the waters of the beginning and end': 'and Aphrodite is the wife of whales/ most happy, happy she'. In "Sleep and Waking" 'the sleep of God', during which the 'world is created afresh', is akin to Keats's comprehending the imagination in terms of 'Adam's dream', or the religious metaphors by which Coleridge defined imagination.[1]

Like many of the poems in Birds, Beasts and Flowers, "Butterfly" has the format of an existential encounter. The altered balance in Last Poems between individual life and the unitary life- and death-urge can be evaluated in it. Important symbols and themes intersect in the poem. The butterfly that sips dirt off the poet's shoe, lifting its 'veined wings', is obeying the law that the psyche or spirit must be always incarnate, sharing the body's needs and desires. The autumnal wind, 'polished with snow', that whisks the insect 'in a strange level fluttering ... out to sea-ward, white speck', brings to mind both "Sorrow" and the symbolic ordination of The Rainbow, where verticality implied spiritual aspiration, and horizontality the ongoing rhythms of physical life. The rainbow itself is a symbol: 'Will you climb on your big soft wings, black-dotted,/ as up an invisible rainbow'? The rainbow was always to Lawrence 'a good symbol', a 'pledge of unbroken faith between the universe and the innermost'.[2] But here the rainbow is invisible, for the continuance of life is only in death, and death is unembodied and unknown. Cavitch states that, unlike "Snake", "Butterfly" contains no explicit interpretation of its imagery;[3] but a decisive value judgement is made, if it does not wholly detach itself from the symbolism: 'it is enough! I saw you vanish into air'. The pathos of

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1. Keats, Letters, p.37; Coleridge, Biographia, pp.49, 167.

2. Kangaroo, p.173.

3. Cavitch, Lawrence and the New World, p.210.

life's disappearance is a sufficient religious mystery without the addition of a spiritual corollary. The imminence of death imbues all the phenomenal world, garden, geraniums, wind, butterfly and sea, with symbolic and mythic significance for the observer. The butterfly has not entirely lost its autonomy as a living thing; yet it is not its immanent life, but its part in death, that the poet communes with. "Butterfly" harks back to Lawrence's elegies more than to his animal poems. Death gives to the scenic details, slightly though precisely painted in, an added dimension of meaning, such as Lawrence himself found in the Etruscan tombs:

> This sense of vigorous, strong-bodied liveliness is characteristic of the Etruscans, and is somehow beyond art. You cannot think of art, but only of life itself, as if this were the very life of the Etruscans ...
>
> [Yet] there is a mystery and a portentousness in the simple scenes which go deeper than commonplace life. It all seems so gay and light. Yet there is a certain weight, or depth of significance that goes beyond aesthetic beauty. [1]

An analysis of the two major achievements of Last Poems, "Bavarian Gentians" and "The Ship of Death", can be used to recapitulate some features of the later verse, and of Lawrence's poetry in general. Both poems have a foundation in biographical fact. There was a room in September, a 'bare room in the mean village inn' with 'a great bush of pale blue autumn gentians as the only furnishing'.[2] The letters mention an orchard at Rottach-am-Tegernsee that may have provided the actual basis for the symbolism of falling fruit, from which "The Ship of Death" takes its measured beginning.[3] The suicide of a young, volatile friend was the stimulus for the Hamlet-like self-questionings, 'And can a man his own quietus make/ with a bare bodkin?'[4] Even the

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1. Etruscan Places, p.136-37.
2. Ed. Nehls, III, p.426.
3. Letters, ed. Moore, p.1188, 30 August 1929.
4. See Moore, Intelligent Heart, p.422; cf. Shakespeare, Hamlet, III, i, 75-76.

'food/ and little dishes' with which the ship is outfitted may be a memory of 'the kitchenino' which Frieda and Lawrence carried with them on their carefree holiday to Sardinia.[1] The memory enables one of the finest passages in the poem:

> 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
> with its store of food and little cooking pans
> and change of clothes,
> upon the flood's black waste
> upon the waters of the end
> upon the sea of death, where still we sail
> darkly, for we cannot steer, and have no port.

Lawrence was able in all his mature verse to balance little things against great, to reveal the poignant frailty and courage of the individual pitched against vast, elemental forces. It seems, in addition, that his re-reading of Shakespeare was not all dismissively critical; that he paid close attention to the quasi-comic moments interpolated in high Shakespearean tragedy. It is the effect created when Cleopatra entertains the 'rural fellow' with his basket of figs, before again fixing her mind on 'Immortal things', and taking her own life.[2] A human dimension is restored to a great tragic, or even mythic figure. Pity is added to terror. Lawrence's theme is equally august. An earlier draft of the poem had had epic pretensions: 'I sing of autumn and the falling fruit'.[3] But the pathos of the familiarly and vulnerably human is thrust into the arena of fatal and universal powers. 'Brute force and overbearing may', Lawrence conceded, 'make a terrific effect. But in the end, that which lives lives by delicate sensitiveness.'[4]

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1. Sea and Sardinia, p.10.
2. Shakespeare, Antony and Cleopatra, V, ii, 232-312.
3. Poems, ed. Pinto, p.976.
4. Etruscan Places, p.126.

Analogues for the 'little ship' and the impending darknesses can be found in the earlier poetry, in the MS 5 versions of "Blue" and in "The Shadow of Death". In "The Ship of Death" these darknesses, 'The upper darkness ... heavy on the lower', finally overwhelm the bark:

> There is no port, there is nowhere to go
> only the deepening black darkening still
> blacker upon the soundless, ungurgling flood
> darkness at one with darkness, up and down
> and sideways utterly dark, so there is no direction any
> more.
> And the little ship is there; yet she is gone.
> She is not seen, for there is nothing to see her by.
> She is gone! gone! and yet
> somewhere she is there.
> Nowhere!

A Romantic source can be found for the symbolic scenario in Shelley's "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills", where the soul, as mariner, is pictured voyaging across the 'sea of Misery':

> Day and night, and night and day,
> Drifting on his weary way,
> With the solid darkness black
> Closing round his vessel's track;
> Whilst above the sunless sky,
> Big with clouds, hangs heavily,
> And behind the tempest fleet
> Hurries on with lightning feet,
> Riving sail, and cord, and plank,
> Till the ship has almost drank
> Death from the o'er-brimming deep;
> And sinks down, down, like that sleep
> When the dreamer seems to be
> Weltering through eternity;
> And the dim low line before
> Of a dark and distant shore
> Still recedes, as ever still
> Longing with divided will,
> But no power to seek or shun,
> He is ever drifted on
> O'er the unreposing wave
> To the haven of the grave.
> (5-26)

Disparities between the two passages can be pointed out. Reductively speaking, Shelley's ship stands for the body passing over the seas of life towards death, and 'the haven of the grave'. It is harder to specify the meaning of Lawrence's boat, but 'the longest journey' it undertakes is into death, and possibly through death to a landfall that is new life. Notwithstanding, there are grounds for supposing that some

residual memory of Shelley's lines formed the basis for the expanded symbolism of "The Ship of Death". In 1911, when Lawrence's attention was monopolized by Shelley, he wrote in "A Drama" of the 'small ark' of the body, and of setting forth:

> Upon these awful waters of Life and Death,
> .. in my fragile, arkward boat, between
> The two immensities ...
> To founder at last within the dreadful flood ...

Lawrence's ship in Last Poems does not sail under an undividedly Shelleyan flag, however. Its freight of associations includes Noah's ark, Isis' barge on which she searched for the dismembered Osiris, and most importantly, 'the little bronze ship of death', left to bear the Lucumo to the other world, which Lawrence knew of in the Etruscan tombs.[1] Criticism of Shelley's poetry has surmised that he, too, may have attached broadly mythic connotations to his symbolic boats, which seem sometimes to travel a neo-Platonic, intermediate space between becoming and being.[2] Guided by his more modern interest in anthropology and archaeology, Lawrence steered into an interstitial realm of mythic speculation, or rather suggestiveness, that is uniquely his own.

Since Christopher Hassall's study of Etruscan Places, it has been generally accepted that Lawrence's comments on Etruscan art can be reapplied to his poetry, with illuminating results.[3] It is useful to compare the connection between life and death which is adumbrated in "The Ship of Death", with what Lawrence claims to have been the Etruscan view. The Etruscans saw death as 'a natural continuance of life. Everything was in terms of life, of living', Lawrence explains.[4] Contemplating

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1. Etruscan Places, p.107.
2. See Neville Rogers, Shelley at Work, (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p.96-97.
3. See Christopher Hassall, "D.H.Lawrence and the Etruscans", Essays by Divers Hands (Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature), XXXI (1962), 61-68.
4. Etruscan Places, p.109.

death from the point of view of the dying, Lawrence's attitude to the relatedness of life and death was modified. In bereavement he had seen death in terms of the living: the dead had continued life as psychological tributaries of their loved ones. Though he would not posit an after-life to distract from this life, he now entertained the idea that death might, in some unknown way, be a further journey or adventure, a continuance or renewal after crisis. Some critics have found this implication in "The Ship of Death" distasteful or inconsistent. Chaman Nahal goes so far as to prefer the markedly inferior MS B version, because it leaves undecided whether the soul is reincarnated or the body resurrected:[1]

> The flood subsides, and the body, like a worn sea-shell
> emerges strange and lovely.
> And the little ship wings home, faltering and lapsing
> on the pink flood,
> and the frail soul steps out, into her house again
> filling the heart with peace.

However, the symbolism, even in this passage from MS A, does little to clarify theological ambiguities. The transition from a black to a pink flood recalls the colour transformation in "New Heaven and Earth", which restored new life in this world. The simile of the shell gains much of its odd, unsentimental power by an unstated association with the fragile but worn appearance of a new-born baby; and this subliminal suggestion, coupled with the statement that the soul returns to her house, points to reincarnation. It is said that 'the body dies'. The soul, presumably in separation from the body, launches out on a 'fragile ship'. But the vehicle for this metaphor is never stipulated. Again, it seems, though one cannot be dogmatic, that the soul and the ship are also annihilated in the darkness. Thus, it cannot be determined whether 'the little ship/ drifting, beneath the deathly ashy grey/ of the flood-dawn' is the same ship as set forth. Post hoc does not

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1. Chaman Nahal, D.H.Lawrence: An Eastern View, (New York: Barnes, 1970), p.245-48.

certify propter hoc. Nor is it certain whether the oblivion was literal death or the lesser oblivion of "Shadows"; nor whether the shore on which the soul disembarks is of this world or another. Lawrence need not be propounding a concept of resurrection any more mystical than that put forward by Tommy Dukes, for whom death takes place in this life, and resurrection is allowing 'those that come after, even if they aren't my children ... to make the ascent on to a new earth'.[1] The division of the darkness in "The Ship of Death" parallels Jesus' reawakening in the tomb, as described in The Man Who Died; and in this parable Christ is taken down from the cross before literal death.[2] At the same time, Lawrence conjectures in "Difficult Death":

> Maybe life is still our portion
> after the bitter passage of oblivion.

For Lawrence, these attempts to define an intellectual or doctrinal attitude towards death would seem impertinent. Death is a mystery, to be felt and understood, not known and reduced to teleological definites. The poem actively resists the kind of inquisition to which it has been tentatively subjected. Again and again the ship, the waters and the dawn assert themselves as symbols, not allegorical figures. Persons of almost any creed could read into "The Ship of Death" their own persuasion; yet the poem does not suffer from vagueness or sentimentality. It apprehends and celebrates, in symbolic or artistic form, a religious mystery. Lawrence communicates the wonder, despite the fact of death, of resurgent life everywhere. For him, without prying into the mechanics of propter hoc, 'it is enough'. Lawrence left a guide for the modern reader, on how to approach the symbolism of "The Ship of Death":

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1. John Thomas and Lady Jane, p.70.

2. Love Among the Haystacks, p.127-28.

> Man thought and still thinks in images. But now our images have hardly any emotional value. We always want a "conclusion", an end, we always want to come, in our mental processes, to a decision, a finality, a full stop ... Every full stop is a mile-stone that marks our "progress" and our arrivel somewhere. Whereas of course there is no goal. Consciousness is an end in itself. We torture ourselves getting somewhere, and when we get there it is nowhere, for there is nowhere to get to.
>
> While men still thought of the heart or the liver as the seat of consciousness, they had no idea of this on-and-on process of thought. To them a thought was a completed state of feeling-awareness, a cumulative thing, in which feeling deepened into feeling in consciousness till there was a sense of fulness. 1

With "Bavarian Gentians", it is interesting to trace, as R.W.Harvey has done,[2] the development and refinement of this 'old pagan process of rotatory image thought' through the four versions of the poem. "Bavarian Gentians" does not have a Romantic source, but it does belong to a recognizably Romantic genre, the lyric to a flower. 'The meanest flower that blows' could give Wordsworth 'Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears'.[3] The reverberations of Lawrence's cumulative symbols are a means of specifying and deepening Romantic sentiments, of sounding psychological or religious levels which Wordsworth was content to intimate. In its first version Lawrence's poem was little more than a colour notation of 'dark-blue gloom/ in the sunny room', though the depth of colour of the flower did suggest a progression of sensuous perception:

> How deep I have gone
> dark gentians
> since I embarked on your dark blue fringes ... 4

The poem at this stage has a possible literary source in H.D.'s "Eurydice" (which Lawrence knew from Some Imagist Poets, 1917), where an image of autumnal crocuses is presented:

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1. Apocalypse, p.90-91; and cf. pp.86, 93.

2. R.W.Harvey, "On Lawrence's 'Bavarian Gentians'", Wascana Review, I (1966), 74-86.

3. Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality", 206-07.

4. See Poems, ed. Pinto, p.973-75.

Fringe upon fringe
of blue crocuses,
crocuses, walled against blue of themselves,
blue of that upper earth,
blue of the depth upon depth of flowers --
lost!

The second version breaks out of the limits of imagism, developing the symbol of the flower as a 'dark doorway' to a mythic underworld. Blue was always associated for Lawrence with death and the unknown. Concentrating on the emotional situation of the perceiver more than on the flower, he transforms the observing of depths of colour into a frightening yet wonderful descent, with Persephone into Hades. In the third version, usually accepted as the best draft, and in the fourth, Lawrence discovers the symbol for which he has been searching. Describing the flower at first as an autumnal sheaf or communion cup, he finally lights on the symbol of a torch. The image is a little formalist, lacking the visual acuity of earlier flower poems: only a very stylized flambeau would resemble an actual gentian. But the flower is the means by which the poet journeys beyond the self and the object 'to the sightless realm' beneath. The journey is recreated by the appreciative, ritualistic, trance-like repetition, in slow rhythm, slowly effacing awareness of daylight and difference to plumb the mysteries of blueness, darkness and descent.

The similarity between this descent and Lawrence's exploration of the Etruscan tombs, their 'figures half-obliterated on the walls', has been remarked on.[1] Yet the ancients had other uses for subterranean caverns than tombs. The Athenians, at the festival of Thesmophoria, used to make sacrifice into caves, in order to participate in the autumnal descent of Persephone, and of all vegetative life, beneath the earth. In particular, Lawrence's evocation of a descent to attend, as wedding-guest, the marriage of Persephone and Dis, recalls Frazer's reconstruction

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1. See Horace Gregory, Pilgrim of the Apocalypse, p.116.

of the Eleusinian mysteries:

> In the great mysteries celebrated at Eleusis in the month of September the union of the sky-god Zeus with the corn-goddess Demeter appears to have been represented by the union of the hierophant with the priestess of Demeter, who acted the parts of god and goddess. But their intercourse was only symbolical, for the hierophant had temporarily deprived himself of his virility by an application of hemlock. The torches having been momentarily extinguished, the pair descended into a murky place, while the throng of worshippers awaited in anxious suspense the result of the mystic congress, on which they believed their own salvation to depend. After a time the hierophant reappeared, and in a blaze of light silently exhibited to the assembly a reaped ear of corn, the fruit of the divine marriage. [1]

Again, disparities abound. The gods and goddesses are ill-assorted, and the aim of the ceremony, as Frazer construes it, does not coincide with the climax of the poem. Lawrence may have had other accounts of the worship of Demeter and Persephone to fall back on. It is the structure of the rite and the symbolic structure of Lawrence's poem that correspond. The mysteries and "Bavarian Gentians" both express, in ritual or in mythic form, by the symbols of darkness, descent and marriage, hope of regeneration and reconcilement with death. It is plausible that the memory of an anthropologist's reconstruction of the Orphic mysteries or of the rites of Demeter did prompt Lawrence to extend his poem from the brief imagistic note or superficial Romantic lyric which it had been in origin. The poetic means, for conjuring rather than decoratively citing Persephone and Pluto, are Lawrence's invention; and it is his sensibility, belonging peculiarly to Last Poems, that enables him to imagine and to move in this underworld, passing beyond individual or animistic life to an interstitial space, where death and birth are one. But it may be ventured, with regard to Birds, Beasts and Flowers, "The Ship of Death" and "Bavarian Gentians", that Lawrence found the building materials to extend the structure or metaphysic of his imagination in his anthropological reading and interests.

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1. Frazer, The Golden Bough, p.188; and cf. p.616-17.

Possibly it does some disservice to Last Poems to examine them exclusively in the light of Birds, Beasts and Flowers. In the later poems, as the phenomenal world became saturated with a vivid alternation of health and sickness, life and death, myth became for Lawrence an instantaneous mode of seeing and saying. The reader is not gradually educated to this vision. It is in Birds, Beasts and Flowers that Lawrence struggled radically to alter the Romantic vision of Nature. There he revealed to the modern reader the extent to which a potentially mythic vision still lies dormant at the roots of perception. He rediscovered for this century the philosophical viability and undiminished psychological power of a poetry that responds to the animate. Nor has the seed fallen entirely on barren ground. In a literary sense Birds, Beasts and Flowers has been productive. Even within the limited scope of the animal poem, a recognizably Laurentian genre has sprung up, epitomized by the poetry of Ted Hughes, but seen, too, in certain of Sylvia Plath's poems and in a fresh wave of neo-Romantic British poetry in the late 'sixties.[1] Birds, Beasts and Flowers forms a vital link in a still developing tradition from the late eighteenth century. Probably, Lawrence himself would not object to the labelling of this tradition and of his own poetry as 'Romantic': 'To carry on a tradition you must add something to the tradition'. His poetry has not failed to find a readership, or to find among poets an important and productive niche in recent literary history. As long as Birds, Beasts and Flowers continues to cast its aura of wonder, fear and admiration around living creatures, Lawrence himself will continue to demand attention as a major modern poet.

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1. E.g., Sylvia Plath, "Pheasant", Crossing the Water, (London: Faber, 1971); Seamus Heaney, Death of a Naturalist, (London: Faber, 1966); Michael Schmidt, Desert of the Lions, (Salisbury: Carcanet, 1972); W.H.Auden, "The Aliens", "Talking to Dogs", "Talking to Mice", Epistle to a Godson, (London: Faber, 1972).

APPENDIX

Transformations[1]

1. Evening

The houses fade in a melt of mist
   Darkening the thick soiled air,
As an unclean [s]Sodom that shall resist
   God's cleansing[, fiery flare care].

The weary wintry twilight fades,
   The city corrodes in despair
As the soul corrodes when death invades
   Like verdigris' slow impair.

"God, give our sunsets a stain of red,
   Let us pass through [a] the twilight blazed
With a crimson of anguish, we pray Thee, sped
   To the wonder of death amazed."

Yet while the verdigris [slow fires smoulderings] spread
   Through the dying day, here and there
[The street-lamps lemon evening-stars shed]
Lemon [coloured lit] evening street lamps shed
   Small stars of faith [here and there in the air].

2. Morning

The little houses spring like plants'
   Close clustering undergrowth
Of townly foliage that slants
   To the sun and the shadow both.

The bushy houses show one side bright
   As if leaves were sipping the sun,
And one side cunning with shade, where delight
   Mysterious creatures to run.
   Is in deeds [mysteriously deliciously] done whose

And bare / the stems of the street-lamps stand
   At random, meaningless twigs;
For today in the shade and the sunlight bland
   Of the houses, ripen our figs.

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1. MS 5, 62-70. Asterisks within the body of the text refer to indecipherable erasures.

3. Men in the Morning

A gang of laborers on the [wet] piled wet timber
to the sun
That shines blood-red / by the railway siding
Seem to be making out of the stuff of the morning
faery
Something [fay] and fine, the shuttles sliding —

The red-gold globes [globe] of their hands and faces shuttling
Hither and thither across the morn's crystalline frame
as if
Of blue, [like] trolls in ringing cerulean caves
Were
/ Working for sport, winning their wage in a game.

4. The Inanimate, that Changes Not in Shape

Oh stiffly shapen houses that change not
What conjuror's cloth was thrown across you, and, raised,
Revealed you changed, all changed?
and see it and
While we look on [and yet] are not amazed
[How can you be conjured thus, and we]
we
[And we, why are not / amazed.]

You of the resolute shape, O Earth
How is it Someone can conjure thus with you,
Whose are the fingers that touched you,
Whose mouth that breathed thus into you?

The Town[1]

swift
Oh you stiff shapes, / transformation seethes
Throughout your substance; last night you were
A Sodom smouldering in a slow despair,
your
you are o'er [with] fair
Today / a thicket of sunshine, [your] smoke [fair] wreaths.

Tomorrow swimming in a vague dim vapour
in
As fabulous weeded cities sway [beneath] the sea
The morn shall show you; at evening you will be
A group of toadstools awaiting the moon's white taper.

And when I wake some morning after rain
To find the new houses a cluster of lilies glittering
voiced with
In scarlet, [and I hear] the birds' bright twittering
I'll say the bond of ugliness is vain.

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1. Title interpolated.

The Earth[1]

Oh Earth, you spinning clod of [E]earth,
And then, you lamp, you lemon coloured beauty;
Oh earth, you rotten apple rolling downwards,
Then brilliant earth, from the burr of night in beauty
As a jewel-brown horsechestnut newly issued: --
Is not this all true, and is not my duty
To accept you thus, sordid or radiant tissued.

5. The Changeful Animate
Men: Whose Shape is Multiform

Oh laborers, O shuttles across the blue frame of morning,
You feet of rainbow balancing the sky!
Oh you who flash your arms like rockets to heaven,
Who / in lassitude lean as yachts on the sea-wind lie;
You who in crowds are rhododendrons of blossom,
Who stand alone in pride like waiting lamps;

Who grappling down with [work hate] or [pride] hate or passion
Take strange lithe form of a beast that sweats and champs;
You who are twisted in grief like crumpled beech leaves,
Who curl in sleep like kittens, who kiss as a swarm
Of clustered, vibrating bees, who fall to earth
At last like a bean-pod, what are you, oh multiform.

6. Corot

The music of music is stillness, you birds,
Cease [thou] [a moment your shrilling] in reverence
And listen, oh Everything, listen, for words
Foil the [inner delicate] sense

The trees rise tall and taller, lifted
On the subtle rush of cool grey flame
That issuing out of the morn has sifted
The spirit from each [s]leaf's frame.

For the trailing, leisurely rapture of life
Drifts dimly forward, [easily and is] hidden
By noise of small [birds selves] singing: [Oh] fife
Of noisy birds, be you chidden.

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1. Title and possibly the poem itself interpolated.

The grey phosphorescent, pellucid advance
Of the luminous purpose of God shines out
athwart-stream per
Where the lofty trees, [interrupting] chance
Its
Shake flakes of / meaning
[To ripple its meaning] about

The subtle, steady rush of the whole
Gray foam-fringe of advancing God
As he silently sweeps to his somewhere, his goal,
Is heard in the grass of the sod.

Is heard in the windless whisper of leaves,
In the far-off labour of men in the field
In the down-ward drooping flimsy sheaves
Of cloud, the morn-skies yield.

In the tapping [of] haste of a fallen leaf
In the flapping of red-roof smoke, and the small
Footstepping tap of men beneath
These trees so huge and tall.

For what can [this] all sharp-rimmed substance but catch
In a backward ripple God's progress, reveal
For a moment [h]His great direction, [ca]snatch
A spark beneath his wheel.

Since God sweeps onward dim and vast
Down every channelled vein of man
Or leaf, and his passing shadow is cast
On each face for us to scan.

Then listen, for Silence is not lonely,
Imitate the magnificent trees
no word of
aloud
That speak not [only] their rapture, but only
Breathe largely [of] the Luminous breeze.

7. Raphael

God shook thy roundness in His fingers' cup
His
in a firmness down
He sunk [firm] Hands [in an ecstasy down] thy [fluent] sides
And drew the circle of His palms, Oh Man,
Along
delighted
[Down] thy limbs [in delight]; [as] they were His bride's.

[God moulded thee in joy]
And [thus so] thou wert God-shapen; His finger
Curved thy Mouth for thee, and his strong shoulder
Planted thee upright: [Oh Man, thou then, Oh Man,] [art proud to art be] remember thou proud to see
In the curve of th[y]ine exquisite [form self] the joy of the Moulder?

[He God] took a handful of light and, rolled in a ball
Compressed it till its [beam light] grew wondrous dark
[And t T]hen He gave [to] / thee thine eyes, Oh Man, that all
Thou seest should be kindled at His Spark.

God put his mouth to thine in a kiss of Creation.
He kissed thee, Oh Man, in a passion of love, and left
The vivid life of his love in thy mouth and thy nostrils:
So keep his kiss from the adult[erer's]ress' theft
[Oh guard thy soul from corruption and from theft.]

And with [h]His blessing bright on thy mouth and thy brow
Thravel[1] thine [education here exile there below], and learn
from His far off Sun to turn
In distance, [can how the sun of life * set]
Earth-clods and clouds to flowers that praise and burn

Do thou, oh travelling apprentice, likewise
Shapen the formless things, and gently touch
The souls of men into the lovely curve
Of harmony, [w]then having done so much

Return where all in beauty stand erect
Where shape and spirit in superb degree
Married make perfect beauty, no defect
Of form or movement or [of soul] harmony.

All matter and all spirit standing upright
[In With] exquisite shapeliness, with linked hands
Shall sing of heaven achieved where every bright
Shape shines alone like melody and where
Shape answers shape in chorus [to the sight of delight]

---

1. Sic.

Where throngs of angels [hastening upon free of all command]
Their several errands here and there shall make
Movement of multitudes
[Concord of movement] surpassing rhythm,
And all their looks, like daisies that awake,
Shall shine to Morn as never daisies shone.

Blue[1]

The world again like a ship steams out of the black sea over
The fringe of the blue, while the sun stands up to watch us glide
Slowly into another day, our night mist melting
From off us, the dew distilled from a night of dreaming, dried.

And I, still dark[startle at ened, am startled by] the bright of the morn
Me who am issued [uncovered naked] with drowned eyes from the night
Where Death, but Death at last become [lovely,] sweet to the mouth,
has [drowned met] me;--
Oerwhelmed I am, and startled, now the sky is clashing with light.

Feeling my darkness undawning, a darkness intact within me
Dwelling secure, -- the shadow [that] my love has left in dying,
[In dying, the] A ghost [that] enriching me/with the presence of
Night, [and seeing] that sees
With surprise the crowds of things in the sunlight jostling and
plying.

What shall I care, though out of the days white envelope
I tear but news of sorrow, and disappointment and pain
What do I care though the very stones should cry me unreal, though
Shine in conceit of substance upon me who [the clouds was] fall like rain

The clouds go glancing down the sky with a wealthy ease
And cast me a shadow of scorn for my share in death. Yet I
Love the Death that takes the place of my love, and fear not
Fortune, knowing another gladness that life can come by.

Yea, though the very clouds have vantage over me,
Enjoying their glancing flight, although my love is dead,
I have in her place a joy, a tent of darkness by day
A place in the tabernacle of night, and love for dread.

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1. MS 5, 74.

Knowing the host, the minute sparkling of darkness which
Vibrates untouched and virile during the grandeur of night,
[But] And which when day crows challenge, [and] scatter[s]ing [her] vivid black motes
Of living darkness, bursts by fretfulness into light

[Runs] Bursts like a fretted arc-lamp into light
Stirred by conflict to shining, which else
Were dark and whole with the night

Runs to a fret of speed like a racing wheel
Which else were aslumber along with the mass of the dark
Swinging rhythmic instead of a-reel.

Is chafed to anger, bursts into rage like thunder
Which else were a silent grasp that held the hea vens
Arrested, beating thick with wonder.

Breaks into beauty like lightning thrusten white
Against what dark opponent we cannot know
Being that moment bereft of sight

Leaps like a fountain of blue sparks leaping
In a jet from out of obscurity
Which was [d]ere Darkness sleeping

Runs into streams of bright blue drops
Water and stones and stars and myriads
Of twin-blue eyes, and crops
Of bright blue flowers, caused by the day 's
Fretting the lovely hosts of ripples
Of darkness into play.

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"The Poetry of D.H. Lawrence: Extending Romanticism"

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A textual study of the College note-books, in which Lawrence collected his early manuscript verse, is correlated with biographical data from the Eastwood and Croydon periods. Some new information on the life is deduced, and a chronology of the early verse is constructed. The chronology enables a systematic study of Lawrence's poetic development, clarifying his affinities with the English Romantics. "Dim Recollections", an unpublished poem, displays a debt to Wordsworth, and echoes of Coleridge, Shelley and Keats are discovered. An historical comparison is made between the Romantic imagination, or the imaginations of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley, and Lawrence's sexual and sensory metaphysic, as revealed in his poetry. The comparison centres on the 'glinting web', a symbol for the interrelatedness of man, woman and natural vitality. Another chapter considers the contributions made by Swinburne, Meredith and Hardy to Lawrence's understanding of sexuality and death.

Analysed as a narrative and symbolic progression, Look! We Have Come Through! points to similarities and differences in Keats's and Lawrence's transcendent moments. The symbolism of Birds, Beasts and Flowers also links poem with poem by patterns of apocalyptic recurrence and the figure of the dark man. The volume's metaphysic, 'physicalism', radically alters the underlying idealism of the Romantic imagination. Lawrence's sensitivity to physical immanence is reinforced by his reading of the anthropologists Frazer, Tylor and Harrison. Utilizing his knowledge of primitive attitudes to the world, Lawrence reinvigorates Romantic Nature, opening new dimensions of myth by techniques comparable to those of other modernist poets -- to T.S. Eliot in The Waste Land, for example. Last Poems again sounds the mythic potential rooted in our perception of the phenomenal world.