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DYING GODS AND SACRED PROSTITUTES:
COMPLICATING MYTHIC ARCHETYPES
IN D. H. LAWRENCE'S FICTION

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Master of Arts

in

The Department of English

School of Graduate Studies

Rhode Island College

2008

Nearly eighty years after his death, D. H. Lawrence remains a contentious figure in literary criticism. His popularity has waxed and waned through the decades, as various schools of criticism have offered fresh interpretations of (and judgments about) his work. A striking feature of much Lawrence criticism is its tendency to classify and interpret Lawrence's fiction in terms of binary two-category systems, regardless of the school from which the critics write. Lawrence is alternately macho and effeminate, a misogynist and a champion of women's experiences, a traditionalist and a rebel. So, too, his works are classed as aesthetically greater (Sons and Lovers, Women in Love) and lesser (The Plumed Serpent), and within them can be found no end of binaries: light and dark, the rational and the intuitive, nature and society, and, of course, masculine and feminine. I believe that to gain a fuller understanding of Lawrence's fiction, we must transcend binary categorization, both within Lawrence's fiction and in our notions of him as a writer. This can be done by combining seemingly opposing viewpoints, looking at the points of tension that resist our attempts at classification, and examining Lawrence's own depictions of binaries, their complications, and their reconciliations.

In this spirit of combination and synthesis, I draw from the work of two different traditions in Lawrence criticism: feminist criticism, which has itself split into two opposing camps, and anthropological/mythological criticism, which has frequently been guilty of understanding Lawrence's fiction in terms of the binaries that can be found in Lawrence's mythic imagery. My hope is that combining these two schools of thought will strengthen both. Each approach can shed light on unresolved (or unasked) questions in the other, and combined they can provide fresh insight into Lawrence's fiction.

The Feminists

Kate Millett's critique of D. H. Lawrence's fiction in Sexual Politics is arguably still the most famous and influential feminist reading of Lawrence. Her scathing indictment of Lawrence's misogyny and phallogentrism continues to inform feminist criticism today, nearly forty years after its publication. Some other feminist critics have taken up the cry and continued to find sexism throughout Lawrence's work. Almost any feminist critic attempting to rehabilitate and reappropriate Lawrence today feels compelled to answer these charges. I am no exception.

Millett argues that much of Lawrence's fiction is concerned with a religious celebration and worship of the phallus, but even in the passages she examines I see a more complex combination of issues at work. While she sees extended description of the naked male body in Lady Chatterly's Lover as "a revelation of the sacrament itself," an indication of the divine status Lawrence bestows on the sexual male (238), I see objectification of the male body by the female viewer. Not only can the man be read as vulnerable, exposed and surveilled here – a status typically reserved for the female object of desire – the narrative point of view is aligned with Connie, the viewing female. Millett claims that "in his last years [Lawrence] championed primitive societies, where he was reassured male supremacy was ... a religious and total way of life" (250), but, as I will later discuss in more detail, I see more complicated treatments of these societies, in which Lawrence and his narrators sometimes champion and sometimes are repulsed by their primitive subjects. Millett focuses her analysis of the primitive on moments in which "Lawrence's dark outsiders, whether Mexican Indian or Derbyshire collier, focus their ambition on the 'white man's woman' – the Lady" (244), without noting the reciprocal attraction Lawrence's white women often feel for "dark outsiders," or, indeed, the larger and widespread

theme of attraction to someone who represents the other, a theme which many of Lawrence's male and female characters embody in a variety of contexts.

Millett also argues that Lawrence's female characters are required to "relinquish ... self, ego, will, individuality" (243), but I have found many passages in which female characters assert their wills and not only resist male attempts to control them, but actively control men as well. Ursula and Anton from The Rainbow leap to mind, but Millett dismisses Anton Skrebensky as a sacrifice Lawrence is eager to make in order to demonstrate "how monstrous the new woman can be" (262). By focusing her analysis on male characters enforcing their will on female characters, Millett again overlooks a larger Lawrencian theme. In much of Lawrence's fiction, men and woman approach each other in a combative, sometimes violent way, and romantic relationships often take the form of battles of wills, with the outcome variously favoring the man, the woman, both, or neither.

James Twitchell, in his 1979 article, "Lawrence's Lamias: Predatory Women in The Rainbow and Women in Love," identifies what he sees as a repeating pattern of combative relationships between weak men and the femme fatales who prey on them. Twitchell argues that, with the exception of Tom and Lydia in The Rainbow, male-female romantic relationships "are not harmonious" because of "the desires of the females to know, to control, and finally to possess [their] [men]" (83). Twitchell "admit[s] it seems unfairly reductive to place the blame for human incompleteness, or human discontinuity, primarily on the female, but Lawrence does" (83), at least in The Rainbow and Women in Love. While Twitchell's theory is provocative, especially in its application of vampire lore to Lawrence's "man-devouring female[s]" (83) and their need for "energy transfer" through kissing or sucking (85), it is also "unfairly reductive," to use

Twitchell's own words, skimming over the long back and forth battle between Will and Anna in The Rainbow, for example. Twitchell attributes this anti-woman position to Lawrence himself, reminding us "how truly dangerous Lawrence felt the predatory female could become if not resisted" (91), but the critic's own biases lurk beneath the surface, occasionally peeking through in statements such as, "Women in Love is a decisive turning point in Lawrence's treatment of character, for in it he makes a transition from strong women who destroy men to positive men who destroy women" (94). Although citing Charles Rossman's argument at this moment, Twitchell chooses to describe women who destroy men as merely "strong," while men who destroy women are "positive." He explains that in the novels that follow Women in Love, the "female role is still not one of equality; as a matter of fact with the exception of Connie Chatterly it is still lopsided, but now in the other direction" (94) – but controlling men barely rate one full paragraph, while dangerous vampire women require pages of vitriolic contempt, which Twitchell deftly ascribes to Lawrence himself. While Twitchell's argument seems to work in direct opposition to Millett's, highlighting texts in which Lawrence's women are predatory and powerful rather than helpless victims, the conclusion is the same: Lawrence is a misogynist whose work repeatedly argues for the necessity of controlling and subjugating women – for their own good as well as the benefit of society at large.

In "The Defeat of Feminism: D. H. Lawrence's The Fox and 'The Woman Who Rode Away,'" R. P. Draper, unlike Millett and Twitchell, finds in The Rainbow and Women in Love "a quality of inwardness and sympathetic understanding [in] [Lawrence's] presentation of the modern, independent-minded woman" (244). He finds a "cruder attitude" in The Fox and "The Woman Who Rode Away," however, which together he calls "Lawrence's answer to the

suffragettes” (244). According to Draper, March and Banford in The Fox are “putting into practice the notion of female independence and equality with the male” through their lesbian relationship and all-female household (245). Lawrence consequently punishes this transgression: “the union is barren. Their farming is not a success ... their hens prove infertile, and they panic when one of the heifers is about to calve” (Draper 245). In this reading of the text, Henry ultimately triumphs by killing Banford and marrying March. An even more striking defeat, and one which Draper argues Lawrence intended as an answer to modern, feminist women, can be found in March’s transformation. According to Draper, “the needs of [March’s] real self” are in conflict with “the false demands and protests of her modern woman’s independent self” (246). Gradually “feminist assertion gives way” to allow room for “the emergence of true femininity” (248). In “The Woman Who Rode Away,” Draper asserts, Lawrence’s “attack on modern feminism receives its sharpest and most explicit expression” (250) when the independent woman is sacrificed by the patriarchal Chilchui Indians. In both stories “the fate of the independent modern woman remains the central concern of the tale,” and “we feel the woman to be the object of compassionate rescue and of vindictive outrage” (250). According to Draper, “Lawrence is not content that the woman should die she must also be converted” (251). The modern woman must become appropriately passive, but paradoxically, she must, at least on the surface, actively choose her passivity. In short she must consent to being broken.

In his article Draper inadequately addresses several moments in these stories that work against his theory. He admits, “There is some truth in Banford’s” negative assessment of Henry (248) and calls this “an important piece of authorial self-criticism” (249), but Draper still argues that “Lawrence approves rather than condemns” Henry’s attitude and behavior. I read this

differently. The combination of several passages presenting Henry as a sulky, petulant little boy and the closing elegy for March's surrendered happiness and independence complicate the matters of authorial identification and sympathy. Draper characterizes the descriptions of the woman in "The Woman Who Rode Away" as "derogatory, yet seeming to carry Lawrence's approval" (253), but fails to adequately address the narrator's strong identification with the woman or the story's hesitation to depict the actual moment of sacrifice, as other critics have noted.

Taken together, these arguments depict Lawrence's fiction as sadomasochistic pornography in which women are either dominatrices running wild with power, or cowering victims who have been (thankfully) whipped into submission. I would certainly not deny that these elements can be found in Lawrence's fiction, much of which is erotically charged and/or concerned with interpersonal power struggles. It is in the reduction of Lawrence's work to only and ultimately misogynist ire that I must part company with this branch of feminist criticism. Rather, I choose to align myself more closely with those modern feminist critics who seek to rehabilitate Lawrence from his Woman-Hater pigeon-hole. Barbara Schapiro explains the conflict among feminist critics by observing, "Since his death the debate has swirled about two poles: on the one hand, Lawrence's strong feminine identification and empathy with women, and on the other, his undeniable misogyny" (1). Schapiro further explains that "some feminist critics" of the first camp "are seeking to reappropriate Lawrence" in a number of ways, many of which are related to examining Lawrence's self-contradictions, narrative techniques, and "deep-rooted female identification" (2). Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson and Linda Williams have contributed to this newer feminist project by emphasizing Lawrence's use of female

subjectivities and gazes to “authoriz[e] each character’s experiences as equally legitimate, presenting competing centers of ‘authenticity’” (Lewiecki-Wilson qtd. on Schapiro 2).

Carol Siegel works to reappropriate Lawrence by examining the competition between female and male voices in his fiction and observing that Lawrence’s misogynist statements are too flexible and contradictory to amount to a full-scale anti-woman philosophy (Schapiro 2). In “Border Disturbances: D. H. Lawrence’s Fiction and the Feminism of Wuthering Heights,” Siegel argues, “Feminist critics, whether their focus is thematic, historical, psychological, or cultural, tend to see Lawrence as the masculine Other against whom the feminine can be defined” (60). She goes on to demonstrate ways in which the opposite is true for Lawrence: if feminist critics define femininity in reference to Lawrence, in Lawrence’s fiction “masculinity/maleness are understood only as symbolic statements whose reference is woman” (64). Male characters in much of Lawrence’s work can be read as “functioning as expressions of the wild half of woman” and “not posited as specifically male, but ... instead, a displaced aspect of the woman” (64). Thus “in a reversal of the usual order,” male characters become the other, defined only in relation to women (64). Siegel defines Lawrence’s mission in writing as “the articulation of female experience both for and to women” (62), and to that end “he must write the female voice as well as being written by it” (66). Women for Lawrence become the center against which men are defined partly through Lawrence’s use of (or appropriation of) the female voice in his narration (Siegel 62).

Carol Dix’s work on Lawrence also falls into this newer feminist school. She states in the introduction to D. H. Lawrence and Women, “The one theme running through my book is that, far from degrading women, far from treating them as inferior objects, as Lawrence is

accused of by Kate Millett, he saw more in women, and the feminine principle, than did most of his contemporaries” (x). Complementing Siegal’s ideas about women as the constant against which men are defined, Dix argues that in Lawrence’s fiction, “it is women who explore, progress, advance, think and feel. The real heroes of all his novels are the women. Male characters never have such big parts to play, nor are they seen so wholly and roundly. The men turn up and perform as secondary characters, relating to the women, or needed by them as props” (12). In writing “from the feminine point of view,” Dix argues, Lawrence also inserts himself into his novels “in the guise of ... female characters” (12). As other critics have more bluntly stated, “Lawrence was a woman in a man’s skin” (Daleski qtd. on Siegal 13). While I do not go quite that far in examining Lawrence’s own gender identity, I do place myself within this more recent feminist tradition that, rather than classifying Lawrence’s work as unremittingly misogynist, seeks to explore Lawrence’s often quite complicated treatments of gender.

The Anthropologists

An older method used to study Lawrence, one that seems to have been more popular in the mid-twentieth century than it is today, is an anthropological and mythological approach. John Vickery, Haskell Block, Judith Ruderman, Scott Sanders, and Charles Glicksberg are among the scholars who have documented the fact that Lawrence read anthropological studies such as Sir James George Frazer’s The Golden Bough. These critics have used Lawrence’s journals and letters to prove his interest in anthropological studies of comparative mythology, and have drawn connections between these studies and elements of Lawrence’s fiction. Furthermore, they have traced these studies’ influence in Lawrence’s nonfiction, particularly in

places in which Lawrence articulated his own mythological/religious goals. In his 1952 article, “Cultural Anthropology and Contemporary Literature,” Haskell M. Block explains this critical method by saying, “The role of cultural anthropology in contemporary literary criticism is of special significance, not merely because of the ways in which critical values have been affected, but because anthropology provides an index to many of the preoccupations of the great creative thinkers of our time” (46), including T. S. Eliot, William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, and D. H. Lawrence (48). Block cites previous critics who proved that Lawrence read anthropological work by Frazer, Jane Harrison, and Gilbert Murray (all members of the Cambridge school) and takes this as reason enough for using these anthropological studies in his criticism.

While Block is content to use anthropology simply because it was an acknowledged interest of his primary texts’ authors, I would argue for the utility of anthropology and mythology even in readings of authors with no known expertise or interest in this area. Myths, especially those whose basic frameworks transcend specific localities, give voice to common experiences and express basic human dramas. Even authors who have not read Frazer or other cultural anthropologists draw on a wealth of story frames and archetypes. The same can be said of readers, who use archetypal stories and characters to make meaning in the texts they encounter. Exploration of these frames and characters is one of many tools available to literary critics. Although Block’s article is mainly concerned with justifying the use of anthropology in literary criticism – and pointing out its shortcomings from a formalist viewpoint, as when he says, “We may conclude that the use of anthropological concepts can contribute to an enlargement of artistic experience only in combination with an approach grounded in the aesthetic value of a work of art” (54) – he does state that for Lawrence and other modernist authors, “the structure

..., the development of primary themes, the significance of even the most recondite allusions, all can be clarified to some extent by anthropological reference” (49). More specifically, Block argues that Quetzalcoatl, as found in The Plumed Serpent, can be read as one of “Frazer’s dying gods” (49), but he does not elaborate on the significance of this connection.

Charles Glicksberg, writing at about the same time as Block, argues that for Lawrence, “The savage was the new savior. But since the savage disappointed him when he had a chance to study him at close range, he turned to anthropology and archaeology for inspiration and supporting material,” finding Frazer and others like him “fruitful for creating a ‘new religion’” (100). Glicksberg states that Lawrence “began to take a passionate interest in totemism, fertility rites, myths of resurrection, and the ancient gods, finding a wealth of stimulating material in myths and the religious rites of old” (100). Glicksberg’s project is not to pursue these threads in Lawrence’s fiction, however, but to explain Lawrence’s “poetic myth-making” (101): the philosophy and religion Lawrence creates in his nonfiction, and the antithetical relationship between this new religion and science. Like several other critics making use of comparative anthropology, Glicksberg does not delve into specific reflections of mythology in Lawrence’s fiction. He focuses on the new religion Lawrence creates in Apocalypse and Fantasia of the Unconscious; I find much more provocative the new religion Ramón and Cipriano create in The Plumed Serpent.

Like Glicksberg, Scott Sanders explores dualisms that he says “ru[n] through literary modernism like a geological fault” (417). While Glicksberg calls the two sides of this divide science and myth, Sanders refers to them as “reason and intuition” (417). Sanders argues that in order to restore balance to a society they saw as skewed toward science, rationality, and linear

thinking, modernist writers emphasized the intuitive, holistic, and mystical. “For the modernists, all aspects of primitive culture, and in particular myth and folklore, held an enduring fascination” (421), since these writers found in primitive cultures and folklore peoples and stories that seemingly existed entirely in the realm of intuition and faith – the realm Sanders calls the “left-handed” side of the split. In both Glicksberg’s and Sanders’s readings of Lawrence, therefore, the author is assigned firmly to one side of a binary divide: the myth and intuition side.

What both writers fail to address in their examinations of binaries, however, is Lawrence’s own use of binary categories throughout his fiction – binaries that he frequently disrupts or reverses. Sanders begins to explore the paradoxical nature of such categories when he discusses “writers celebrating the inarticulate” (424) and critics using “analytic, logical, conceptual” and categorizing tools, and thus “subvert[ing] the central purpose of modernist literature, which is to affect us sensuously, holistically, paralogically” (425). He does not address the paradoxes Lawrence sets up in his fiction, however. Typically the left-handed intuitive qualities are grouped with “feminine,” while right-handed logical ones are “masculine.” Sanders even makes this connection himself (418). Lawrence reworks these binaries by frequently associating women with culture, scientific or rational thought, the mind, coldness, and economic power. Men often represent nature, intuitive wisdom or blood consciousness, the body, heat, and purely physical power. To further complicate the matter, although the characteristics associated with male characters (intuition, sensuality) are supposedly traits Lawrence favors, his narrators are often most closely linked with cold, rational, female protagonists. The binary categories are disrupted once more in Lawrence’s fiction by such descriptions as dark sun in The Plumed Serpent and masculine moonlight in The Rainbow. I believe the key to navigating through these

seeming contradictions and paradoxes lies in a different conceptualization of the binary categories Lawrence employs. Rather than firmly championing one half of a split, Lawrence's fiction works toward reconciliation of opposites, dynamic balance between extremes, and the unity of male and female.

Even in Lawrence criticism not explicitly concerned with his use of anthropology, mentions of archetypes and mythical stories, usually taken from Frazer, sometimes creep in. Judith Ruderman, arguing in 1979 that Giovanni Verga's devouring mother figures inspired some of Lawrence's motifs and characterizations in The Fox and elsewhere, also mentions that Frazer's work can enrich our understanding of Lawrence's use of the fox as a symbol of "the corn spirit" (157). In this section of her article, which is almost an aside to her argument, Ruderman departs from her examination of the parallels between Verga's and Lawrence's fiction to explain, "Sir James Frazer, whose Golden Bough had its impact on Lawrence, provides a gloss for March's dream of the fox 'yellow and bright, like corn' when he surmises that a tribal conception of the fox as an embodiment of the corn spirit may have some connection with" an agricultural fertility ceremony involving foxes (157). In contexts like this one, Frazer is used minimally, merely to fill in gaps in our understanding of Lawrence's symbolism. In this case it serves as an example of how Lawrence uses animals differently from Verga. While this can be illuminating or thought-provoking, I believe it also raises a number of interpretive questions that Ruderman leaves unaddressed. What is the corn god's typical role or function in the myths and rituals Frazer researches? If the fox is a representation of Frazer's corn god, what does that mean in the larger context of the story? I hope to address some of these issues later. For now I simply

want to highlight the limited and cursory way in which some critics have selectively used The Golden Bough and other studies of comparative mythology in readings of Lawrence.

John B. Vickery's work on Lawrence includes the most sustained application of Frazer to the fiction that I have found. Perhaps this is due to Vickery's explicit focus on The Golden Bough rather than on Lawrence as the center of his project. In "The Golden Bough and Modern Poetry," published in 1957, Vickery sets out to prove Frazer's influence on Lawrence and several other authors. He argues that "Frazer showed [modernist poets] that myth can be simultaneously an ancient tale reaching back to the origins of time and man, the explanation of a ritual, and a metaphoric, poetic account of profound psychological truths" (287). Vickery demonstrates that in Lawrence's poetry and fiction, these psychological truths take the form of "individual[s] go[ing] through critical stages of transition which are analogous to the death and rebirth of vegetation" discussed in The Golden Bough (278). As a kind of caveat, Vickery acknowledges, "Needless to say, in the majority of instances it is impossible to demonstrate that The Golden Bough itself is the direct and immediate source. However, in the larger and looser sense of 'influence' it is impossible not to see Frazer's work as the point at which most of the myths, symbols, and concepts used by the poets entered literature" (273). Despite this warning to be cautious in conclusively assigning influence, in 1973, in The Literary Impact of The Golden Bough, Vickery goes on to "resolve Lawrence's fiction into six main categories, which constitute a progression from the obvious and apparent to the subtle and hidden presence of myth and ritual" (321). Within these six mythic categories, Vickery further classifies "four main kinds of story" in Lawrence's fiction (324). While the parallels Vickery draws are insightful and illuminating in understanding Lawrence's use of mythic characters and tales, his tendency

toward categorization can be reductive and oversimplifying. To classify a story or novel as enacting the drama of the sacred marriage highlights certain aspects of that text, but might also overlook ways in which that text participates in the dying and reviving god story – and, more importantly, ways in which the text might revise, question, or subvert all the mythic constructs it uses.

Perhaps because this anthropological approach to Lawrence's fiction has not been used as often in recent decades, proponents of this method tend to overlook many questions of gender, and this leaves significant gaps in our understanding of Lawrence's mythic projects. This approach also tends toward oversimplifications, such as those in Vickery's arguments, applying mythic constructs to Lawrence's projects without adequately addressing the points at which Lawrence's work slips away from these categories or resists traditional myths. Binary categories that remain static and constant in mythology are often reversed or otherwise challenged in Lawrence's fiction. Furthermore, even in mythic stories specifically about gender, such as the sacred marriage, Lawrence's narrators often strongly identify with female protagonists rather than male.

My current approach to Lawrence's fiction, then, combines a feminist approach with an anthropological one with the goal of strengthening both. The examination of Lawrence's uses of mythological categories and constructs, although no longer quite in fashion, can help further Lawrence's feminist rehabilitation by bringing attention to some of his most complicated treatments of gender. If Lawrence uses Frazer and other anthropologists in creating his new religion, it is important to examine which mythic elements he retains and which he changes. If these changes happen along gender lines, as they often do, it is crucial to any critical approach

using gender as a focusing lens that we examine these revisions. Conversely, a focus on gender can resurrect the anthropological approach to Lawrence's fiction, updating it, complicating it, and making it relevant to present-day literary criticism. Let us now turn our attention to Lawrence's texts and the mythic or archetypal figures and plots they employ.

The Stranger

John B. Vickery argues, "One of the most important individuals to function archetypally" in Lawrence's fiction "is the stranger, who, as in The Golden Bough, is a disturbing figure because of his aura of fertility and his apparently magical powers to influence others" (Literary Impact 302). The arrival of a stranger figures largely in The Fox, a novella in which a young man returns to his grandfather's farm to find that it now belongs to a lesbian couple, Banford and March. According to Frazer, the corn god or spirit is sometimes represented by a stranger or visitor in primitive cultures. "[P]assing strangers were regarded as manifestations of the corn-spirit escaping from the cut or threshed corn, and as such were seized and slain" (Frazer 439). In more recent times, Frazer explains, "All over Germany it is customary for the reapers or threshers to lay hold of passing strangers and bind them with a rope made of corn-stalks, till they pay a forfeit" as part of an agricultural fertility ritual (429). In Europe and other parts of the world, Frazer emphasizes, "The task falls to the women alone" to capture and ransom the stranger (430). Although the stranger is no longer sacrificed, as Frazer explains he once would have been, the examples given in The Golden Bough enumerate the ways in which he might be seized, bound, and held hostage to appease vegetation spirits and ensure a bountiful harvest.

Given this anthropological background, it would not seem out of place for March and Banford to capture and ransom Henry the moment he appears on their property, in an attempt to restore fertility to the farm through his presence. Not only is Henry a stranger appearing suddenly on a barren farm, he also bears resemblance to the corn god through his connection to the fox, as Ruderman observes (157). That the plot does not play out in a traditional mythic way suggests that there is something more complicated in Henry's identity as the stranger. This complication could be the other facet of the stranger explored by Frazer: his propensity for casting spells and influencing people.

As Frazer explains, "of all sources of danger none are more dreaded by the savage than magic and witchcraft, and he suspects all strangers of practicing these black arts" (194). Although Vickery claims, "In The Fox, Lawrence, like Frazer, deals with ... the rites of propitiation and purification by which [the stranger] is incorporated into the communal life of the farm" (Literary Impact 302), I see a conspicuous lack of purification rites in the story. If performed, these rites would "guard against the baneful influence exerted voluntarily or involuntarily by strangers" (Frazer 194), but when Henry appears on the farm, no such rites take place. Instead we are told, "Suddenly both girls started, and lifted their heads. They heard a footstep – distinctly a footstep. ... The back door opened softly" (13). Henry lets himself into the farmhouse, and after a brief conversation in which he doesn't even tell the women his name, March is "already under the influence of his strange, soft, modulated voice" – she "stare[s] at him spell-bound" (14). Perhaps if the proper purification rites (or even knocking on the door) had been observed, Henry would not have such strong, magical influence over March. Rather than functioning in the stranger's role of representative of the corn god and restoring fertility,

Henry only exerts the dangerous magical influence of this archetype, because his powers are not controlled.

Rather than reading The Fox as Lawrence's punishment for unnatural and independent women, then, as Draper does, it is possible to read it as an exploration of the hypnotic and magical powers of the stranger and a warning about the consequences of not properly assimilating him into the existing community. Gender roles do play a part here, because in Frazer's examples it is male strangers who represent the corn spirit and female villagers who perform the fertility rites. Read from this perspective, the women in The Fox are not punished for what they do but for what they do not do. Banford dies and March is broken, but this is less a consequence of their barren relationship than of their failure to properly incorporate Henry into their community and use him to restore fertility to the farm. After Henry "wins" by subduing March, she still feels "Something was missing. Instead of her soul swaying with new life, it seemed to droop, to bleed, as if it were wounded" (67). This stranger, rather than restoring life to the farm and to March, destroys it when the women allow his "terrible pure will" (65) to conquer their resistance. As I have previously noted, Twitchell argues that for Lawrence, women are dangerous when not controlled by men, but here in The Fox it is a man who becomes dangerous when not controlled by women. The end of the novella is not the joyful triumph we would expect if Henry and his actions carried Lawrence's full assent and blessing. March

fights against sleep as if sleep were death. She seemed to stretch her eyes wider in the obstinate effort and tension of keeping awake. She *would* keep awake. She *would* know. She *would* consider and judge and decide. She *would* have the reins of her own life between her own hands. She *would* be an independent woman to the last. –But she was

so tired, so tired of everything. And sleep seemed near. And there was such rest in the boy. (70)

Despite the attractive option of rest March sees in “the boy,” though, Henry is still “waiting for the surrender” at the end of the story (70). Even if we are to assume that he ultimately triumphs over March, Henry feels that England “seemed to have stung him with poison” and sometimes reflects “bitterly that he ought to have left her. He ought never to have killed Banford. He should have left Banford and March to kill one another” (70). Henry receives as much of Lawrence’s pity and punishment as either of the women – perhaps more. As the story closes, Henry speaks to March not with joy or victory, but “pain in his voice” (71). Although associated with fertility, in this use of the archetype the stranger proves menacing and dangerous – far more dangerous than the barren, unnatural women.

The Rainbow provides several examples of strangers who are more fully or more appropriately assimilated into an existing community. In each of these cases, the stranger becomes part of a heterosexual relationship and an already fertile family. Perhaps these strangers are less of a threat because of the privileged status Lawrence grants successful male-female relationships, because they are welcomed by the family, and, most importantly, because they undergo a series of ritual encounters that carefully and properly connect them with the existing community. The use of this archetype in The Rainbow can be identified in the scenes in which a character is explicitly introduced as a stranger or foreign in some way, and in the presence of magical influence or spells in those scenes. When Tom meets Lydia, she is literally a foreigner and a stranger. The first time Tom sees her, “‘That’s her,’ he said involuntarily” (29). The involuntary nature of this instant recognition and affinity suggests that Tom was in some sense

spellbound by Lydia, as does the fact that he “went on, quiet, suspended, rarified. He could not bear to think or to speak, nor make any sound or sign, nor change his fixed motion. He could scarcely bear to think of her face. He moved within the knowledge of her, in the world that was beyond reality” (29). The spell continues beyond Tom’s brief contact with Lydia: “He walked about in this state for the next few days. And then again like a mist it began to break to let through the common, barren world” (30). By referring to the common world as “barren,” Lawrence invites the converse association of Lydia – the stranger – with fertility.

As he begins to get to know Lydia, Tom retains “a profound satisfaction that she was a foreigner” (32) – in fact, this is the main reason he feels drawn to her. Lydia also feels drawn to and under the power of Tom, a stranger to her. When the narrative shifts to her point of view in the proposal scene, we see from her perspective Tom’s “blue eyes, strangely impersonal,” and we are told that she speaks, “as if hypnotised” and “feel[s] herself created, will-less, lapsing into him, into a common will with him” (44). Even after the intimacy of the proposal scene, Tom reflects on his way home, “They were such strangers, they must forever be such strangers, that his passion was a clanging torment to him. Such intimacy of embrace, and such utter foreignness of contact! It was unbearable. He could not bear to be near her, and know the utter foreignness between them, know how entirely they were strangers to each other” (48). The strangeness between them is “unbearable” but also compelling, exerting a mystical influence similar to what Frazer attributes to strangers in The Golden Bough: Lydia’s “impulse was strong against him, because he was not her own sort. But one blind instinct led her, to take him, to have him, and then to relinquish herself to him” (The Rainbow 54). Even much later in their lives, when Lydia’s hair is “threaded now with grey,” “[s]omething she represented was alien there, she

remained a stranger” (225). The important difference between The Rainbow’s use of the stranger and The Fox’s is that here Tom and Lydia approach each other carefully, gradually. Their intimacy slowly builds through their ritualized courtship, so that even though in some sense they remain bewitchingly foreign to each other throughout the marriage, the strangeness between them is never dangerous. It is properly controlled and used to make their relationship fertile.

Similarly when Anna meets Will, he represents the stranger. Although they are related, and Lydia likes Will precisely because he is “not quite an outsider” (107), Anna and Will “had looked at each other, and seen each other strange” (110). When they first meet, a “spell was cast over [Anna]” (108). In a description reminiscent of Tom’s bewitchment by Lydia, Anna, “went about the house unnoticing, not noticing [her parents], moving in a spell as if she were invisible to them. . . . She went about absorbed, obscured for awhile. Over [Will] too the darkness of obscurity settled. He seemed to be hidden in a tense, electric darkness, in which his soul, his life was intensely active, but without his aid or attention. His mind was obscured” (108). Once again the presence of spells and magic signals the use of the stranger archetype throughout the relationship. Even after they are married, Anna sees Will as “strange, attractive, exerting some power over her” (155) and Will “loved [Anna] for her childishness and for her strangeness to him, for the wonder of her soul which was different from his soul” (158).

In addition to the continual emphasis on spells and magical influence between Will and Anna, one of the most important scenes between them takes place during the corn harvest, emphasizing the connection between the stranger and the rites of the corn god. Working in the cornfield, Anna is described “grasping her hands in the tresses of the oats, lifting the heavy corn in either hand, carrying it, as it hung heavily against her, to the cleared space, where she set the

two sheaves sharply down, bringing them together with a faint, keen clash” (133-4). Will does the same in a neighboring row of corn, and they alternate as they stack sheaves, establishing a ritualistic rhythm: “They worked together, coming and going, in a rhythm, which carried their feet and their bodies in tune” (114). The ritual intensifies as “[i]nto the rhythm of [Will’s] work there came a pulse and a steadied purpose” (115). Finally Will “overtake[s]” Anna, “and it was his privilege, to kiss her” (115). Frazer enumerates rituals surrounding threshing and binding of corn in The Golden Bough, and in each example the process is a race, with the person finishing last suffering some minor symbolic penalty, or sometimes becoming the designated representative of the corn god (426-8). In The Rainbow, because Will ultimately triumphs over Anna, he claims a kiss as his prize. The association with the stranger corn-god fertility rites here is unmistakable. This ritual’s function in The Rainbow is to bind Anna and Will together and to mitigate any harmful influence either could exert on the other as a stranger.

As with Tom and Lydia, Anna and Will are strange to each other without being threatening because of the rituals they undergo. The one exception to this safety occurs between Will and the girl he meets in Nottingham. Will is literally a stranger to this girl, and he “seemed to hold her in his will” (213), nearly forcing himself on her sexually, until she “flung her hand across and hit him violently” (215). After this encounter, Will’s strangeness is renewed, and Anna is drawn to him once again: ““You have come home very strange,’ she said. And there was an appreciative inflexion in the speech” (217). Anna “liked him better than the ordinary... man she usually knew him to be” and “was very glad to welcome a stranger” (217). The incident in Nottingham highlights the possible dangers of an encounter with a stranger, but when Will

returns home the danger passes because Anna has been through the appropriate rituals. She senses his role as this archetypal figure, but she is protected from it.

Ursula and Anton constitute the next and final major male-female romantic relationship in The Rainbow, and once again they meet as strangers. During Anton's first visit to the Brangwens, Ursula hears "two strange men's voices" from another room (268) and "wanted to turn to the stranger" when she first sees Anton (269). For Ursula, Anton "brought her a strong sense of the outer world" (269). Later, when they kiss, a "terrible and magnificent sense of his strangeness possessed her" (278). Several of Ursula's meetings with Anton are connected with harvests, as when they meet the last time before his deployment "and the hay-harvest was almost over" (282), when they meet again at Tom's "jolly wedding, a harvest supper and a wedding feast in one" (286) and walk by the "new corn-stacks" (287), and again later when they "went toward the stackyard" and Anton "saw, with something like terror, the great new stacks of corn" (298). Indeed, according to Vickery, "Frazer's association between vegetative and human fertility is dramatized" throughout The Rainbow "by such events as the synchronization of the corn harvest with the last months of Lydia Brangwen's pregnancy, the relating of the sheaving to sexual attraction in the case of Will and Anna, and the juxtaposing of the autumnal harvest and the marriage of Fred Brangwen" (Literary Impact 318). This emphasis on natural fertility often occurs in the same moments as mentions of magical spells or influence and even the word "strange." Combined, these factors signal Lawrence's uses of the stranger archetype by referencing both his connection with the corn god and his magical ability to cast spells.

In moments harkening back to the other major relationships of the book, Anton is described as strange to Ursula, and their courtship is strongly tied to the rituals of harvest,

connecting them to the corn-god rites Frazer describes. The difference here is that Ursula is never strange to Anton, and while he at times feels under her power, she is never described as spellbound by him. In this permutation of the stranger archetype, then, the familiar character overcomes the stranger. Tom and Lydia are both strange to each other and both feel under the other's influence at least some of the time. Will and Anna push the stranger archetype in a slightly more dangerous direction: they are both strange to each other, and they both exert semi-magical influence over each other, but Will is occasionally a menacing figure, and their encounters are often described with more violent language. With Anton and Ursula this archetype operates similarly to the way it does in The Fox. Ursula is never strange to Anton, just as Banford and March are never strange to Henry – they are the centers against which Anton and Henry are defined and found strange. The crucial difference is that Anton is ineffectual and finds himself controlled and influenced by Ursula in scenes that emphasize not his connection to fertility and the corn-god, but hers. Henry's strangeness and power is never mediated, so he dominates; Anton is assimilated too well and Ursula claims his power as her own. In many ways The Rainbow can be considered variations on a theme. One theme presented and varied through each generation is the use of the stranger archetype, and we see three possibilities acted out in the Brangwen family.

Although comparative anthropological approaches to Lawrence's work have gone slightly out of fashion in recent decades, the one holdover from this kind of study seems to be an examination of Lawrence's use of the primitive. James Cowan, Brett Neilson, and Phyllis Deery Stanton are among the scholars who have examined Lawrence's fascination with and use of the primitive in his fiction, in terms of settings, characterization, themes, and even narrative

technique. Cowan reads Lawrence's "pilgrimage to the promise of America" as a hero's quest similar to the type defined by Joseph Campbell. "Lawrence's American journey, the most important of his many travels," Cowan argues, "was ... essentially a quest for the symbols and myths whereby what he regarded as the waste land of modern western civilization might be revived" (1). Cowan goes on to connect what Lawrence found in America to his concept of history, his "romantic values," his "quarrel with Christianity" and the "symbolic structure" of his American-set fiction, to borrow from Cowan's chapter titles.

Stanton agrees that "D. H. Lawrence defined, envisioned, and articulated a personalized version of the *primitive* that intuitively possessed the answers to what he believed were many of the problems of Western civilization" (59, italics in original). Unlike Cowan, however, Stanton emphasizes the fact that "in each of the places he encountered the peoples who seemed to fit his conception of primitive ... he was disappointed by the actual human specimen" (59). Stanton's self-stated purpose is "to show the detrimental and destructive elements of the historically persistent project of objectifying Native cultures, the ... legacy of processing the Native American through Western consciousness" through an analysis of Lawrence's use of the Native American primitive (60). She explains certain elements of Lawrence's fiction and non-fiction through what we know about his personal experiences with Native American cultures.

Neilson examines primitivism in Lawrence's fiction at the level of his narrative techniques. He explains, "I argue that [Women in Love and The Plumed Serpent] deploy a strategy that I call 'narrative primitivism.' By this I mean that they imagine the primitive as a nonnarratable quality, which returns to destabilize their progressive time schemes" (310). He argues that Lawrence moves from what Neilson calls a feminine primitivism in Women in Love

to a masculine primitivism in The Plumed Serpent. Neilson argues that “this negotiability of gender in the Lawrentian primitive unsettles the heterosexual logic by which identification and desire are mutually exclusive,” (311) allowing for bisexuality and homoeroticism in both texts.

These are a few of the uses of the primitive in Lawrence’s texts that have received critical attention in recent decades. In addition to these ways of reading Lawrence’s primitivism, I believe Lawrence’s primitive characters can also be read as fitting into the stranger archetype. Characters classified as primitive clearly represent something other and strange against which normative characters are defined. Stanton quotes Marianna Torgovnick to explain “‘primitivist discourse’”:

Because this discourse is almost always employed as a means for critiquing Western civilization, [Torgovnick] argues that it is consequently ‘fundamental to the Western sense of self and Other.’ Lawrence inherited many of his beliefs and understandings about indigenous peoples from this tradition and ... based much of his critique of his own culture on the comparison he was able to make with the primitives of the world. (60)

Thus, just as Siegal argues that Lawrence’s men are others against whom female characters can define themselves, so too do primitive strangers provide points of comparison for Western or non-primitive characters.

The word “strange” is inserted into these comparisons, such as in “The Woman Who Rode Away,” when the woman observes the “strange scent of incense, strange tense silence,” “the strange uplifted savage sound of men singing round the drum,” and describes “[s]trange men” and “their eyes, with that strange glitter” (26, 32). In The Plumed Serpent, Kate describes her native Mexican husband explicitly as a stranger, saying, “He is such a stranger to

me,” (452) and realizing, “She could not *know* him. ... She had to leave him, dark and hot and potent, along with the things that *are*, but are not known. The presence. And the stranger. This he was always to her” (464, italics in original). Stanton describes the simultaneous attraction and repulsion Lawrence felt when he encountered Native Americans: “Before he came to America, he had envisioned this connection, this ‘awakening,’ which would tie him to these primitives and ultimately to his imagined antediluvian race. What he had not envisioned was his fear and his physical revulsion to these people” (69). Stanton calls this a “classic colonialist, primitivist move,” part of the shared experience of Western “primitivist discourse” (69). I would argue that in addition to experiencing this phenomenon himself, Lawrence also represents this simultaneous attraction and repulsion in his fictional characters, and that this is also part of what Frazer describes as the shared worldwide experience of encountering a stranger. Frazer lists instances of cultures afraid of the influence of strangers even to the point of “fearing to look upon” them, but also enumerates the careful rituals these people used to reconcile strangers to them when “they could not restrain their curiosity” (195). Like Lawrence with the Native Americans, his characters are drawn to and repulsed by primitive strangers, as if lured to them but also sensing the danger they pose.

In “The Princess,” Dollie sees Romero’s face as “a savage grotesque” (190), but Romero is the “only man that intrigued her at all” (187), and she feels “some peculiar link between the two of them” (198). Dollie is “elated into her true Princess self” when with Romero (190). In “The Woman Who Rode Away,” the unnamed female protagonist is “overcome by a foolish romanticism more unreal than a girl’s. She felt it was her destiny to wander into the secret haunts of these timeless, mysterious, marvellous Indians of the mountains” (8). She follows this

destiny unwaveringly, but sometimes sees her primitive companions as animals, savages, children, or inhuman, such as when she describes one man who tends to her: “He seemed very gentle and thoughtful, and on his face and in his dark eyes was a curious look of triumph and ecstasy, that frightened her a little. ... [H]e would look at her with this strange soft glow of ecstasy that was not quite human, and terribly impersonal, and which made her uneasy” (22). In “Sun,” Juliet notices a peasant neighbor while staying in Greece, and although she “and he had become intimate, across the distance. They were aware of one another” (543) and she wonders, “Why shouldn’t I meet this man for an hour, and bear his child?” (544), when he sees her naked, “she backed away behind the bushes, silently, and retreated whence she had come. And she wondered a little resentfully over the silence in which he could work, hidden in the bushy places. He had that wild animal faculty” (544). She is simultaneously drawn to and scared of the peasant. When Yvette meets Joe in The Virgin and the Gypsy, Joe “looked back into her eyes for a second, with that naked suggestion of desire which acted on her like a spell, and robbed her of her will” (80), and “she wanted somebody, or something to have power over her” (82), but there are times when she shies away from Joe and doesn’t even want him to look at her. In The Plumed Serpent, Kate’s “fascination” with Don Ramón “was tinged with fear” (71), she “was at once attracted and repelled” by the natives’ dancing (133), and “even [the native Mexicans’] beauty was repulsive to her” (333). Describing Don Cipriano, the man she would eventually marry,

Kate saw the sigh lift the soft, quiescent, cream-brown shoulders. The soft, cream-brown skin of his back, of a smooth, *pure* sensuality, made her shudder. The broad, square, rather high shoulders, with neck and head rising steep, proudly. The full-fleshed, deep

chested, rich body of the man made her feel dizzy. In spite of herself, she could not help imagining a knife stuck between those pure, male shoulders. If only to break the arrogance of their remoteness. (201, italics in original)

Here, as elsewhere, Kate's attraction and repulsion to the primitive stranger are intricately tied, and the narration seamlessly presents both feelings at once. Lawrence's fiction draws a connection between the primitivist discourse Stanton describes and the stranger archetype presented in The Golden Bough. Both Stanton and Frazer describe simultaneous, contradictory impulses of attraction and repulsion, bewitchment and fear. Both discourses also characterize the other with a strong aura of fertility.

The connection between the primitive, the natural world, and fertility may be a cliché or a stereotype of primitivist discourse, but it operates nonetheless in Lawrence's fiction set in America. In "The Princess," Dollie wants to experience the true wilderness of the mountains, because in her mind it is connected to Romero: "And she just had a fixed desire to go over the brim of the mountains, to look into the inner chaos of the Rockies. And she wanted to go with Romero, because he had some peculiar kinship with her, there was some peculiar link between the two of them" (198). Her statement that she "can't bear to go away" until she's seen some "bigger animals," like "a deer, or a bear, or a mountain lion" (191) can be read as her desire to see Romero himself, in his dangerous, animal aspect. In "The Woman Who Rode Away," the Chilchui are connected with fertility through the ritual they perform. The man who tends to the woman explains the purpose of the sacrifice: "So we can bring the rain down out of the blue meadows, and up out of the black. And we can call the wind that tells the corn to grow, when we ask him, and we shall make the clouds to break, and the sheep to have twin lambs. And we shall

be full of power, like a spring day” (31). Juliet, in “Sun,” associates the peasant with fertility by desiring to have his child. She barely knows him, and yet he “would have been a procreative sun-bath to her, and she wanted it” (545). In The Plumed Serpent, Ramón’s hymns also emphasize natural fertility through their imagery: “The trees put forth their leaves in their sleep, and flowering emerge out of dreams, into pure I Am. The birds forget the stress of their dreams, and sing aloud in the Now, I Am! I Am!” (194).

Finally, the ability to spellbind other characters and exert one’s will over others is also present in Lawrence’s primitive strangers. The woman in “The Woman Who Rode Away” experiences feelings of powerlessness and the breaking of her will repeatedly as she succumbs to the Chilchui’s influence. Toward the beginning of the story she knows “if she had any will of her own left, she would have turned back, to the village, to be protected and sent back to her husband. But she had no will of her own” (11). As the story progresses, she “was uneasy sometimes, feeling she had lost the power over herself. She was not in her own power, she was under the spell of some other power,” and “she lived on, in a kind of daze, feeling her power ebbing more and more away from her, as if her will were leaving her” (24, 28). In “The Princess,” “the peculiar spell of anger carried the Princess on, almost unconscious, for an hour or so,” and Dollie “closed her eyes and let her consciousness evaporate away” (198, 202). In The Virgin and the Gypsy, when Yvette visits Joe, her “will had departed from her limbs, he had power over her: his shadow was on her,” she “was only aware of the dark, strange effluence of his bathing her limbs, washing her at last purely will-less. She was aware of *him*, as a dark, complete power,” and she “followed simply, followed the silent, secret, overpowering motion of his body in front of her. It cost her nothing. She was gone in his will” (101, 102, 103, italics in

original). In The Plumed Serpent, “[Kate] looked at [Don Cipriano], almost hypnotised with amazement” (260). Later, “she sat spell-bound, in a sort of eternity... watching Ramón” (322). Again referring to Cipriano, “Almost she could *see* the black fume of power which he emitted, the dark, heavy vibration of his blood, which cast a spell over her” (340, italics in original). “There was something dark and lustrous and fascinating to her” in the native Mexicans she meets. “She knew herself under the spell” (423). Just as in The Fox and The Rainbow, these strangers cast spells. The primitive strangers are more like Henry than the Brangwens, though, since most of the primitive characters are not involved in intimate romantic relationships, and most do not take the requisite time and ritual preparation to negate their dangerous powers. The Chilchui, Romero, Ramón, and Cipriano all prove at least somewhat threatening to the normative characters under their spells.

It is interesting to note that in all cases of the primitive stranger – that is, when race or ethnicity marks a character as a stranger – the stranger is male, and the normative character he relates to is female. In these cases Siegal’s assertion is doubly true: female characters are the center both in terms of gender and race, while primitive men are the variable others, defined relationally, and against whom the normative women define themselves. This consistent gendering of the encounter with the primitive adds an interesting power dynamic to the relationships: the men are more physically powerful, associated with intuition and lust, and able to cast spells, but the women occupy the dominant position much of the time due to racial and economic power, and Lawrence associates them with intelligence and spirituality. Rather than cast characters in such a way that one easily dominates the other, Lawrence seems to take pains to carefully match the characters who encounter and struggle with each other. In non-primitive

stranger stories, those in which both actors are white Westerners, the role of the stranger is more fluid, shifting between men (Henry, Anton) and women (Lydia), and is sometimes even shared by both members of a relationship (Will and Anna). The association with fertility and the power to influence others is thus gendered – it still appears primarily, if not entirely, in heterosexual romantic relationships – but it is gendered in a fluid, non-essentialist way. It is not only men or only women who can occupy this role. In his use of binary categories in conjunction with this archetype, Lawrence also often reverses traditional characterizations, associating men with fertility or women with solitude and individuality. The stranger is one of Lawrence's most commonly occurring archetypes, but each instance varies the story and explores new possibilities. Lawrence does not simply insert a myth into his fiction, he revises and crafts that myth to fit a number of different stories and purposes, revealing and emphasizing themes of the individual versus community, the possibility of truly knowing even the people closest to us, and the power dynamics involved in gendered or raced interactions.

The Virgin and the Sacred Prostitute

According to Vickery, two of the other key archetypal figures used by Lawrence are the virgin and the sacred prostitute. Lawrence, he argues, uses what he had learned from The Golden Bough about the religious role, the sacrificial character, and the fertility associations of virgins to a twofold end. On the one hand, he endeavors to picture contemporary virgins who possess just these qualities so that the sense of regarding life with reverence, awe, and delight, as he thought Frazer's early civilizations did, will be borne in upon his readers. On the other hand, he also sketched

pitilessly the virgins of the modern world who lack the divine potency of their predecessors and whose lives are therefore compounded of hesitant timidity and self-centered arrogance. (Literary Impact 304-5)

According to Vickery, Kate of The Plumed Serpent and Yvette of The Virgin and the Gypsy exemplify the first category; “[b]oth point up the lack of fulfillment and the inadequacy of Miriam and her bitterly satirized concomitant, Dollie Urquhart” (Literary Impact 305) of Sons and Lovers and “The Princess.”

In his discussion of the sacred prostitute, “a concept largely alien to Western and contemporary minds” (Literary Impact 303), Vickery argues that “Lawrence utilizes this notion both to explore the inner recesses of the marital temper and to deepen his rendering of the man’s reactions to the woman as stranger” (Literary Impact 303). Citing a moment of Tom Brangwen’s fear regarding Lydia’s previous relationships, Vickery explains, “Lawrence here conveys the subtle interrelation of archetype and realism so that what emerges is the suggestion that to husbands wives may always be thought to have played the sacred prostitute with the men of their earlier life” (Literary Impact 303-4). I would argue that Vickery focuses too much on female promiscuity and not enough on the sacred, for example by choosing not to explain why all a woman’s sexual relationships can necessarily be considered part of this mythic story. Both of Vickery’s readings here (of the virgin and the sacred prostitute) are consistent with the evidence Frazer presents about the roles of virgins and sacred prostitutes in primitive cultures, though.

Frazer argues that “stripped of their fabulous element,” stories of “virgin mothers and divine fathers ... mean no more than that a woman has been gotten with child by a man unknown; and this uncertainty as to fatherhood is more easily compatible with a system of

kinship which ignores paternity than with one which makes it all-important” (153). The rest of his treatment of virgins concerns the Vestal Virgins, their rituals, and the tending of their famous fire. These explanations of virgin birth stories and virgin priestesses further elucidate Vickery’s brief mentions of “the religious role” and the seemingly contradictory “fertility associations of virgins” (*Literary Impact* 304-5). In Frazer’s treatment of sacred prostitution, he explains, “In Cyprus it appears that before marriage all women were formerly obliged by custom to prostitute themselves to strangers at the sanctuary of the goddess,” and that “[w]hatever its motive, the practice was clearly regarded, not as an orgy of lust, but as a solemn religious duty performed in the service of that great Mother Goddess of Western Asia” (330). Frazer goes on to explain that in these rites in service of the Goddess, her consort is played by “a lover, or rather a series of lovers, divine yet mortal, with whom she mated year by year” (331).

Both of these archetypes emerge from times and places that were pre-patriarchal – where maternity was more important than paternity, and where men did not dictate or police women’s sexuality. Frazer recognizes this fact in the cultures he studies, but seems reluctant or unable to approach them without the biases of his own time. While he is willing to characterize the male lovers as “divine yet mortal,” human incarnations of deities, he does not extend this reading to the sacred prostitutes, who can correspondingly be seen as human incarnations of the Goddess herself. Similarly, Vickery finds the sacred prostitute archetype in Lawrence’s fiction but analyzes it mostly in terms of the distance and strain it places within relationships, while ignoring its sacred functions. The sacred prostitute is, for Vickery, simply a promiscuous female stranger.

Despite his concurrence with Frazer's information regarding these archetypes, I believe that Vickery's analysis is not completely adequate in examining Lawrence's uses of them. In aligning his argument closely with Frazer's work, Vickery misses some of the revisionary elements of Lawrence's projects. First of all, for Lawrence, virginity is renewable. The very reason Vickery can place Kate Leslie, a mother of two and thrice married by the end of The Plumed Serpent, in the category of "virgin" is because, for Lawrence's female characters, virginity is never permanently lost. When a man Kate describes as "savagely suave" and possessing a "soft barbaric nearness" brings her into a dance, she "felt a virgin again, a young virgin" (The Plumed Serpent 142). While "watching the bud of her life united with [Cipriano's]," "she felt her own childhood coming back on her. The years seemed to be reeling away in great circles, falling away from her" (430). "How else, she said to herself, is one to begin again, save by refinding one's virginity? And when one finds one's virginity, one realises one is among the gods" (431). Here virginity is not only renewable, it is also a magical or religious state of being.

Similarly in "The Princess," Dollie cherishes her isolation and intactness before her encounter with Romero and is able to return to that state afterwards. When she wakes up freezing in the night, while camping with Romero, "more deeply than anything she wanted to keep herself intact, intact, untouched, that no-one should have any power over her, or rights to her. It was a wild necessity in her: that no-one, particularly no man, should have any rights or powers over her, that no-one and nothing should possess her" (208). More important to her than "warmth" or "protection" is her desire to remain "untouched" or virginal. "She never wanted to be thus assailed and handled, mauled. She wanted to keep herself to herself" ("Princess" 208).

After she has sex with Romero, “[s]he felt like a victim” (209). This feeling occurs before any rape. The act of consensual sex – which Dollie initiates – robs her of her power and sense of self, because it robs her of her feeling of remaining intact and untouched, apart from men. “She wanted to regain possession of all herself, and in some mysterious way, she felt that he possessed some part of her still” (210). As the story continues, this is exactly what she does. After Romero throws away Dollie’s clothes, keeping her confined to his cabin, she exclaims, ““You think you can conquer me this way. But you can’t. You can never conquer me. ... I don’t want to be with anybody against my will. I don’t dislike you: at least, I didn’t, till you tried to put your will over mine. I won’t have anybody’s will put over me. You can’t succeed. Nobody could. You can never get me under your will”” (212). Although Dollie feels as if Romero still has a piece of her, “her spirit was hard and flawless as a diamond” (212). Romero’s next move is to rape Dollie, and after this event she again thinks, “If only, only she could be alone again, cool and intact. If only she could recover herself again, cool and intact!” (213). By the end of the story, she accomplishes this goal. She becomes “slightly crazy” and doesn’t correctly remember the events that took place in the mountains, but “she had recovered herself entirely. She was the Princess, and a virgin intact” (216). Twice in this story Dollie recovers her virginity – once after consensual sex and once after being raped.

Part of the reason virginity is renewable for Lawrence’s women is the fact that for these characters, virginity is more a spiritual or mental state than a physical one. For the women in Lawrence’s fiction, virginity symbolizes not only youth and innocence, but, more importantly and more often, independence from men and society, self-reliance, and self-determination. Sex with Romero means that “he had got” Dollie. She feels that he tries to impose his will on her,

conquer her, possess her, and make her feel like a victim – all before he rapes her. In “The Princess,” Dollie’s dream of snow symbolizes her virginity, since it is both cold and white: “She dreamed it was snowing, and the snow was falling on her through the roof, softly, softly, helplessly, and she was going to be buried alive. She was growing colder and colder, the snow was weighing down on her. The snow was going to absorb her” (207). Here her virginity seems like a negative condition, a stifling limitation that might ultimately kill her. The same imagery operates in “Sun,” where repeated descriptions of Juliet as cold and frigid connect to her failing health. She describes her breasts as “[f]ruits that would wither and not mature” until she travels to Greece (530). There, she rapidly regains health while described as melting in the sun: “Her weary, chilled heart was melting, and, in melting, evaporating” (531). The same cold and hot imagery is used briefly but tellingly in “The Woman Who Rode Away”: “But as the days grew shorter and colder, when she was cold, she would get a sudden revival of her will, and a desire to go out, to go away. And she insisted to the young man, she wanted to go out” (25). Through most of this story the woman exists in a state of semi-consciousness as she gradually relinquishes her will to the Chilchui. The cold revives her from her spell-stupor and she temporarily reasserts her will on her own behalf. Kate Leslie spends most of The Plumed Serpent “want[ing] to get out, to disentangle herself again” (63). “[S]he made up her mind, to be alone ... Not to be touched by any, any of the mechanical cog-wheel people. To be left alone, not to be touched. To hide, and be hidden, and never really be spoken to” (114). Much later in the book, after Kate has begun to become entangled, she still thinks, “Only to be alone! Only that no one should speak to her. Only that no one should come near her!” (336). Kate’s isolation is connected to her distance from her children, her repeated refusals to marry, and her continued insistence on independence

and separate residences even after she is married. In short, her solitude is connected to her sexuality. Like Dollie Urquhart, she is not a virgin physically, but she is one emotionally.

Taken together, these representations of virginity or frigidity could suggest that Lawrence views these states as unhealthy, unnatural, or in some way detrimental. Indeed, the importance of the sacred marriage story in his fiction seems to lend support to this idea as well: true connection between people and a true and positive new religion is possible through sex, so denying sex to oneself or others would surely be condemned. If the slight variations in each telling of this tale are examined, however, a more complex rendering of virginity emerges.

In “The Princess,” we see the possibility and importance of regarding virginity as a state of mind rather than body. Although Vickery sees Dollie as a “bitterly satirized” Miriam, (*Literary Impact* 305), her way of viewing virginity might have been helpful to Miriam, who “lay to be sacrificed for [Paul], because she loved him so much” (*Sons and Lovers* 334). Like Dollie, Miriam finds sex emotionally painful; unlike Dollie she is unable to regain her intactness afterwards and remains in “bondage” to Paul, “fastened to him” (342). Dollie’s renewable virginity might make her cold and isolated, but it also allows her to survive a traumatic experience. In “The Woman Who Rode Away,” it is the warmth and stupor of the woman’s connection to society and men that is truly dangerous to her. The cold air revives her, along with her individuality and her desire to live. Isolation and individuality function here similarly to the way they do in “The Princess” – they are associated with frigidity and cold, but also contain life-saving possibilities. In “Sun,” it is coldness and frigidity that is associated with Juliet’s relationship with her husband. Her body is described as “rosy, rosy and turning to gold” (533) when she is alone, asserting her individual will. Although she desires a connection with a

neighbor, she does not follow through on this impulse, and the narrative of the story ends before she reunites sexually with her husband. In fact, she asserts her will over her husband's when she refuses to go home, and this act is portrayed sympathetically. Even her husband "glanced at her again and again, furtively, but with growing admiration and lessening confusion" (541). Here Juliet's growing independence is warm, healthy, and encouraged.

Although in each of these instances frigidity or virginity is at least partially or occasionally described as a negative condition, Lawrence's narrators strongly identify with the female protagonists, and understand their reasons for desiring this state. The narration of The Plumed Serpent stays closely focused on Kate, one of Lawrence's most stubbornly isolated female characters, including entire chapters in which she ponders marriage, her place in Ramón's new religion, and her inability to return to Europe. At times Kate recognizes that the men around her want her to submit her individuality to a larger group identity and purpose, but she resists this, and her resistance is treated seriously, even poetically:

Yet she could not be purely this, this thing of sheer reciprocity. Surely, though her woman's nature was reciprocal to his male, surely it was more than that! Surely he and she were not two potent and reciprocal currents between which the Morning Star flashed like a spark out of nowhere. Surely this was not it? Surely she had one tiny Morning Star inside her, which was herself, her own very soul and star-self! But he would never admit this. The tiny star of her very self he would never see. To him she was but the answer to his call, the sheath for his blade, the cloud to his lightning, the earth to his rain, the fuel to his fire. (424)

In this passage we mainly learn about how Cipriano views Kate, but her disappointment with this view carries the narrator's sympathies.

For Lawrence, then, virginity is a complex concept that can serve many different functions. Characters embodying the virgin archetype are almost never as simple as Vickery would have it, with Kate and Yvette on one side, Miriam and Dollie on the other. The same characters demonstrate multiple conflicting facets of this archetype, illustrating both the upsides and drawbacks of isolation, individuality, and intactness. Most importantly, they demonstrate that virginity is a state people can enter and leave at will, not a locked physical reality. As with his use of the stranger archetype, Lawrence again uses an archetypal framework, but changes it to reflect his own concerns, and further his own projects. Much of Lawrence's fiction is concerned with characters' internal conflicts between personal desires and societal responsibilities, as illustrated in this early scene in "The Woman Who Rode Away":

"I shall go alone," repeated the large, placid-seeming, fair-complexioned woman, with peculiar overbearing emphasis. And the man silently, unhappily yielded.

"Why are you going alone, Mother?" asked her son, as she made up parcels of food.

"Am I *never* to be let alone? Not one moment of my life?" she cried, with sudden explosion of energy. And the child, like the servant, shrank into silence. (9, italics in original)

The figure of the virgin represents one side of this conflict, with its pros and cons. The other side of this struggle, community, is represented by the sacred prostitute.

Like the virgin, the sacred prostitute is also a more complex concept than it appears in The Golden Bough. Frazer, in his examination of temple prostitution, concludes, "If we survey

the whole of the evidence on this subject ... we may conclude that a great Mother Goddess, the personification of all the reproductive energies of nature, was worshipped under different names but with a substantial similarity of myth and ritual by many people of Western Asia” (331).

Frazer suggests several ways in which prostitution might have served such a deity: in some places it seems the prostitutes were required to “dedicate to the goddess the wages earned by this sanctified harlotry” (330), in some cases Frazer argues that the women “believ[ed] that by this conduct they propitiated the goddess and won her favor” (331), and in many of the societies he studies he argues these rites are “deemed essential to the propagation of animals and plants” (331) – that is, the rituals were a form of sympathetic magic. Nowhere does Frazer observe or suggest that the sex might be a sacred ritual in its own right. Vickery goes slightly further in allowing for this possibility. In some ways, to Vickery, a sacred prostitute is a stranger who has sex, as in his treatment of Lydia Brangwen, but he briefly discusses the “ability to fuse the religious and the sexual” in his treatment of Women in Love, where he says Julius Halliday is unable to recognize “that Minette in acting as the harlot is actually also the object of his real worship” (Literary Impact 304). “When, however, the man is sufficiently integrated to accept these two apparently disparate modes, he can experience their fusion without anxiety or revulsion,” as Somers does in Kangaroo (Literary Impact 304). Vickery then quickly shies away from this religious/sexual woman and returns to his treatment of the sacred prostitute as a kind of stranger.

To fully understand the way Lawrence uses this archetype, I believe it is necessary to learn more about her historical role. Barbara G. Walker explains that “prostitute-priestesses dispensed the grace of the Goddess in ancient Middle-Eastern temples. They were often known

as Charites or Graces, since they dealt in the unique combination of ... mother-love, tenderness, comfort, mystical enlightenment, and sex” (820). “Harlots,” according to Walker, “were also sorceresses, prophets, and seers” (820). Sacred sex was not only used to earn money or stimulate agricultural fertility, it was a holy service for which worshippers would pay, much as one might purchase a votive candle today or make a donation after giving confession. In service of the Goddess, priestesses would embody her through sex and allow worshippers to experience the divine female firsthand. In Lawrence’s fiction, various female characters assume a role similar to this, with a sexual-mystical connection, with varying resultant degrees of personal fulfillment and responses from the men around them.

In the passage cited by Vickery, Tom Brangwen is vaguely aware of Lydia’s potential to act the part of sacred prostitute. Tom’s “heart always filled with fear, fear of the unknown, when he heard his women speak of their bygone men as of strangers they had known in passing and had taken leave of again” (165). Ultimately, though, this potential in Lydia is not realized, and it remains merely a passing fear. I agree with Vickery’s treatment of this passage as a reminder that men and women might always remain strangers to one another, that even married people are “separate people with separate destinies” (The Rainbow 165). There are several other places in The Rainbow where the sacred prostitute archetype is more fully fleshed out.

Both Anna in The Rainbow and Juliet in “Sun” engage in mystical/sexual rites without including any mortal men. Once again demonstrating the variations within his use of archetypes, Lawrence writes Juliet mating with the divine through the sun and Anna through the moon. Juliet “was thinking inside herself, of the sun in his splendour, and her mating with him. Her life was now a whole ritual. She lay always awake, before dawn, watching for the grey to colour to

pale gold, to know if cloud lay on the sea's edge. Her joy was when he rose all molten in his nakedness, and threw off blue-white fire, into the tender heaven" (532). This ritual is expressed in both sexual and religious language. Juliet possesses a "conviction that the sun *knew* her, in the cosmic carnal sense of the word" (532-3 italics in original), and she feels that through her sun-baths she herself begins to embody something divine and powerful:

By some mysterious power inside her, deeper than her known consciousness and will, she was put into connection with the sun, and the stream flowed of itself, from her womb. She herself, her conscious self, was secondary, a secondary person, almost an onlooker. The true Juliet was this dark flow from her deep body to the sun. She had always been mistress of herself... Now she felt inside her quite another sort of power, something greater than herself, flowing by itself" (535).

Similarly Anna dances naked in the moonlight while pregnant, "lifting her hands and her body to the Unseen, to the unseen Creator who had chosen her, to Whom she belonged" (170). In a more overtly sexual earlier version of The Rainbow, this reads, "lifting her hands and her body to the Lord, to the unseen Lover whose name was unutterable" (3). Here not only does Anna dance alone before the Unseen, she believes that through her dance "her husband was delivered over" (170). "She would dance [Will's] nullification, she would dance to her unseen Lord. She was exalted over him, before the Lord" (170). Juliet acts as a prostitute-priestess without using any man in her rites. Anna takes this a step further. "Her face was rapt and beautiful, she danced exulting before her Lord, and knew no man," but she also dances Will's "non-existence" as "[h]e waited obliterated" (171). Lawrence gives these female characters mystical-sexual experiences, but also explores the implications of this female power. The

traditionally male-female ceremonies are revised so that the male role is played only by a deity, the female by a human who becomes like a goddess. The human men are left behind or even hurt.

Ursula's sacred prostitution carries this experiment one step further still. She includes Anton in her sexual rites, but nearly kills him in the process. In her early "confused heat of religious yearning," Ursula wants "Jesus to love her deliciously, to take her sensuous offering, to give her sensuous response" (267). A little later, she again hints at sacred sexuality, but still in a Christian context when she tells Anton, "'I don't think it a profanity – I think it's right, to make love in a cathedral'" (276). At the time Ursula and Anton mean two different things when they talk about "love-making," but this still foreshadows Ursula's eventual role as sacred prostitute. Finally, while walking with Anton, Ursula breaks free from her Christian-based understanding of sacred sex:

She turned, and saw a great white moon looking at her over the hill. And her breast opened to it, she was cleaved like a transparent jewel to its light. She stood filled with the full moon, offering herself. Her two breasts opened to make way for it, her body opened wide like a quivering anemone, a soft, dilated invitation touched by the moon.

She wanted the moon to fill in to her, she wanted more, more communion with the moon, consummation. (296)

In the aftermath of this communion with the full moon, "[l]ooking at [Anton], at his shadowy, unreal, wavering presence a sudden lust seized her, to lay hold of him and tear him and make him into nothing" (298). Anna dances Will's annihilation while he watches on but is excluded; Ursula fully includes Anton in her religious-sexual experience but destroys him anyway. Finally

“she held him there, the victim, consumed, annihilated. She had triumphed: he was not any more” (299). After this encounter, as if remorseful for what she’s done, but still reveling in her own power, Ursula “began to caress [Anton] to life again. For he was dead. ... She would bring him back from the dead without leaving him one trace of fact to remember his annihilation by” (299). In The Rainbow, Lawrence writes female characters experimenting with tremendous sexual and mystical power, and explores the possible negative consequences for nearby men. Still, although the reader feels Will’s pain and Anton’s terror, the narration is mostly focused on Anna’s strange but beautiful joy and Ursula’s thrilling power.

In The Plumed Serpent, sacred sex involves the full participation of a human male and female, because Cipriano teaches Kate these rites. In what reads like a description of tantric non-orgasmic sex, Kate

realised, almost with wonder, the death in her of the Aphrodite of the foam: the seething, frictional, ecstatic Aphrodite ... It was what she used to call her “satisfaction” ... By a dark and powerful instinct [Cipriano] drew away from her as soon as this desire rose again in her ... And he, in his dark, hot silence, would bring her back to the new, soft, heavy, hot flow, when she was like a fountain gushing noiseless and with urgent softness from the volcanic deeps. (463)

Although it may seem contrary to sacred prostitution, since Kate associates her old “satisfaction” with Aphrodite, and it appears that Cipriano is not allowing her to orgasm, this scene suggests that the sex Kate and Cipriano have is non-orgasmic for both of them. It is something like tantric sex, a form of sex with religious or meditative qualities. Indeed, this might be foreshadowed much earlier in the book, when Ramón, speaking about the power and magic of words remarks

that, “they say *Mani padma Om!* in Thibet” (65). This meditative chant translates to “the jewel in the lotus,” which, among other things, references sacred sexuality. Both Cipriano and Kate embody Aztec gods through their ritual: shortly before one of their sexual experiences, Cipriano tells Kate, “I cannot be the Living Huitzilopochtli, without a bride” (427), and a few pages later “he was the living Huitzilopochtli. And she was the goddess bride, Malintzi” (430). In The Plumed Serpent, then, Kate plays the part of sacred prostitute, but because it is taught to her and controlled by Cipriano, and she never experiences it alone, the men around her remain safe from her female power. Lawrence’s women often flirt or play with the power they find in these sexual rituals without fully understanding its functions or meanings – but they have the power nonetheless, and Lawrence treats it seriously, sometimes even reverently.

In another point of departure from anything Frazer discusses (and another point Vickery does not cover), Lawrence makes a bold, rather feminist leap by combining the archetypes of virgin and sacred prostitute. In ancient societies sacred prostitutes were considered virgins. Walker explains, “The Tantric word for a sacred harlot was Veshya, probable origin of the Goddess’s oldest names in Greece and Rome, Hestia or Vesta, the Hearth-mother, served by the Vestal Virgins who were originally harlot-priestesses” (821). “Holy whores were called ‘virgins’ because they remained unmarried,” Walker continues, and, “Later myths rationalized the perpetual ‘virginity’ of lascivious fertility-goddesses by periodic hymen-renewing ceremonies” for the benefit of the more literal-minded (822). Walker is clear, though: “‘Holy Virgin’ was the title of harlot-priestesses of Ishtar, Asherah, or Aphrodite. The title didn’t mean physical virginity; it meant simply ‘unmarried.’ The function of such ‘holy virgins’ was to dispense the Mother’s grace through sexual worship” (1048-9). In a similar move, in Lawrence’s fiction,

sacred prostitution and virginity function hand in hand. Ursula, who uses her communion with the moon to act the role of sacred prostitute with Anton, is also often described in virginal terms. As a young girl she dreams that she “would remain the lonely maid high up and isolated in the tower, polishing the terrible shield, weaving it a covering with a true device, and waiting, waiting, always remote and high” (247). Later it is “agony to [Anton], seeing her swift and clean-cut and virgin” (283), and shortly before his annihilation, he describes her as “cold and hard and compact of brilliance as the moon itself, and beyond him as the moonlight was beyond him, never to be grasped or known” (297). Ursula is simultaneously cold virgin priestess and sacred prostitute.

In one scene between Kate and Cipriano, Kate reflects that she sat, as every real woman can sit, no matter at what age, a girl again, and for him, a virgin. He held her hand in silence, till she was Malintzi, and virgin for him ... His innermost flame was always virginal, it was always the first time. And it made her again always a virgin girl ... And when he comes to me he lays his pure, quick flame to mine, and every time I am a young girl again, and every time he takes the flower of my virginity, and I his. (431)

Part of the religious rite is the restoration and loss of virginity. Ramón tells Kate that ““there must come a goddess; wife or virgin, there must come a goddess”” (347). Ultimately Kate is both wife and virgin goddess. When Kate becomes Malintzi during the sexual ritual, she becomes a virgin again, so that every religious-sexual rite she participates in is like her first. In his elastic understanding of sexuality and modern, fluid way of using sexual categories, Lawrence is remarkably revisionary in his use of ancient archetypes, and also quite prescient

regarding modern trends in feminist anthropology and sexuality studies. Furthermore, just as the virgin plays out both positive and negative implications of isolation and individuality, the sacred prostitute acts as a symbol of community, demonstrating what can be gained and lost through intimacy. The fact that both archetypes coexist in the same characters demonstrates not only that these are fluid, internal states, between which one can navigate, but also that these competing urges can coexist in the same characters simultaneously – which is part of what makes Lawrence’s characters so rich and realistic.

The Sacred Marriage

In addition to existing as an archetypal character in her own right, the sacred prostitute is also frequently used as part of the archetypal story of the sacred marriage. In this story, one or both members of a male-female couple channel divinity as part of a mystical-sexual ritual. Frazer lists many places and contexts in which this ritual takes place: in the temple at Babylon there was “a great bed” where “no human being passed the night... save a single woman, whom, according to the Chaldean priests, the god chose from among all the women of Babylon. They said that the great deity himself came into the temple at night and slept in the great bed; and the woman, as a consort of the god, might have no intercourse with mortal man” (142). In the Eleusian mysteries, Frazer argues, “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” (142-3). In all of Frazer’s examples it is a mortal woman who mates with a god, or two mortals who play the roles of gods, but Walker

describes the sacred marriage as “the union of a king or sacred king (surrogate for the real king) with his Goddess, usually in the form of a priestess-queen impersonating the Goddess” (403).

Vickery observes that “[Lawrence’s] work, like The Golden Bough, is filled with a number of incarnational human forms” (Literary Impact 294). He explains this later as “human beings fulfilling in dramatic ritual the mythic functions of their deities” (Literary Impact 311). Frazer devotes large sections of The Golden Bough to the idea of incarnate human gods: kings and/or priests who are considered divine, who bridge the gap between humanity and the gods. In The Golden Bough, these incarnational humans are men whose kingship is based on their divine status, but Walker describes ancient kings receiving the right to rule through “[m]arriage with the earthly representative of the Goddess, in the form of the queen” (501) and also explains, “Oriental mystics taught that any man was spiritually incomplete until he experienced *bhavanan*, ‘husbandship,’ which linked him to the Goddess as Bhavani or ‘Existence’” (587). Thus, although Frazer attributes the human incarnation of gods to men and Walker to women, the union of the two in sexual rites is critical to the archetypal story. Although Frazer focuses on “the principle of homeopathic or imitative magic” (140) through which these rites were thought to stimulate agricultural fertility as the main reason people participated in these rituals, the union of male and female was also thought to summon or create a divine presence in one or both partners, bestowing the gifts and rights belonging to rulers and/or spiritual guides.

Much of Lawrence’s nonfiction contains a similar idea. He writes of the union of male and female energies to create a distinct, third entity, to transcend human problems, and to forge a new religion and way of living. He writes of this sexual-religious union as the necessary solution to many of the problems of his day, including problems of inequality between the sexes.

Parts of Lawrence's stated philosophy sound very much like the ancient sacred marriage. He emphasizes the importance of "keeping in mind always the near relationship between the religious motive and the sexual. The two great impulses are like man and wife, father and son. It is no use putting one under the feet of the other" (Fantasia 18). This story frame in Lawrence's fiction often also represents the struggle between individuality and community, as the two members of the union simultaneously desire a melding of consciousness and fight to retain their own identities. Dix, citing Lawrence's Study of Thomas Hardy, explains, "Duality ... is the theory that opposites do more than attract, they are firmly held together in eternal combustion; they repel, attract and at base are firmly linked. Lawrence saw the duality in everything: in being a human being, 'For every man comprises male and female in his being ... A woman likewise consists of male and female'" (54). Dix continues, "The man/woman relationship is seen by Lawrence as a double reconciliation of opposites. For man and woman not only have to meet as opposites, but also to reconcile the opposing forces within themselves. Dividing them into men and women is arbitrary, which is where Lawrence was really one step beyond his latter-day feminist critics" (57). Lawrence explored these ideas of duality, attraction and repulsion, and reconciliation of male and female in his fiction, through the story of the sacred marriage. "More than a mere legal marriage, he strove for 'absolute mystic marriage'" (70), Dix explains, quoting from Lawrence's letters, and as Birkin explains in Women in Love, "It is death to oneself – but it is the coming into being of another" (Dix 71). Vickery also quotes Birkin "groping early in Women in Love when he asserts that 'there remains only this perfect union with a woman – sort of ultimate marriage – and there isn't anything else'" (315).

This mythical story can be seen played out repeatedly in The Rainbow, where it is enacted in four relationships in three successive generations. In each telling of the sacred marriage story, the components and the outcomes vary. In Lydia's description of her past relationship with Lensky, "she became his slave, he was her lord, her lord. She was the girl-bride, the slave, she kissed his feet, she had thought it an honor to touch his body, to unfasten his boots. For two years, she had gone on as his slave, crouching at his feet, embracing his knees" (238). Reverence and religious awe are present in this description, but they are markedly one-sided. Lensky "incorporated her in his ideas" (238), but "He had never known her. He had lain with her, but he had never known her. He had never received what she could give him. He had gone away from her empty. So, he had never lived" (239-40). This sounds remarkably similar to the Oriental belief cited by Walker that a man is not spiritually complete until he is married. In this case, although legally married, Lensky and Lydia are never truly married together the way Tom and Lydia are later. Lydia reflects that, in contrast with Lensky, Tom "had made himself immortal in his knowledge with her" and had "become her man, one with her" (240).

At the beginning of Tom's relationship with Lydia, he "desired to find in a woman the embodiment of all his inarticulate, powerful religious impulses" (21). After Lydia visits the farmhouse, Tom "submitted to that which was happening to him, letting go of his will, suffering the loss of himself, dormant always on the brink of ecstasy, like a creature evolving to a new birth" (38). Lydia, too, feels "the pain of a new birth in herself" (39). "A shiver, a sickness of new birth passed over her, the flame leaped up him, under his skin. She wanted it, this new life from him, with him, yet she must defend herself against it, for it was a destruction" (39). The

destruction Tom and Lydia feel is of their old, individual lives and selves. The new birth is that of their new life and identity together, the union of two entities to make a third, combined yet distinct entity. During the proposal scene this imagery is used again: “He returned gradually, but newly created, as after a gestation, a new birth, in the womb of darkness. Aërial and light everything was, new as a morning, fresh and newly begun. Like a dawn the newness and the bliss filled in. And she sat utterly still with him, as if in the same” (45). Religious and mystical overtones accompany Tom and Lydia’s betrothal, as the “strange, inviolable completeness of the two of them made [Tom] feel as sure and as stable as God” (46). After they have been married two years, Tom and Lydia’s sexual relationship sounds even more mystical and ritualized:

She waited for him to meet her, not to bow before her, and serve her. She wanted his active participation, not his submission. ... Their coming together now, after two years of married life, was much more wonderful to them than it had been before. It was the entry into another circle of existence, it was the baptism to another life, it was the complete confirmation. ... At last they had thrown open the doors, each to the other, and had stood in the doorways facing each other, whilst the light flooded out from behind on to each of their faces, it was the transfiguration, the glorification, the admission. (90-1)

As several critics have observed, the marriage of Tom and Lydia is as close as Lawrence comes to fully realizing his vision of the sacred marriage. Twitchell describes “a central melody: two people meet and enter into what is described as a ‘battle for life itself.’ This struggle to evolve a lasting relationship is completed early on in the novels [The Rainbow and Women in Love] with the marriage of Tom Brangwen and Lydia Lensky” (82), and all “later relationships are not harmonious” (83). Although I disagree with Twitchell in assigning the blame for this entirely to

Lawrence's women, I agree with his observations about the success and failure of male-female relationships in The Rainbow. "[T]he danger of aiming for the perfect passion, eroticism, deepest feelings is that the balance or 'equilibrium' is hard to maintain, and the likelihood is that one would go over the top," Dix explains (77), and in most other attempts at this kind of religious-sexual bond, either the man or the woman dominates the other and throws off the balance of the mystical experience. Here, though, both Tom and Lydia experience moments of power and moments of fear. Both also experience moments of transcendence. "[Lydia] was Woman to him, all other women were her shadows"; Tom was "a kind of Godhead, he embraced all manhood for [his daughter Anna], and other men were just incidental" (79, 100). This second quotation is from Anna's point of view as she observes her parents, which also highlights the balance between male and female, community and individuality. "Anna's soul was put at peace between them. She looked from one to the other, and she saw them established to her safety, and she was free. She played between the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud in confidence, having the assurance on her right hand and the assurance on her left" (91).

In Anna's relationship with Will, the two partners struggle against each other far more than Tom and Lydia do. As with Tom, Will is described "in wonder and birthpain of love" (116) at the beginning of the relationship. During their courtship, "For her, he was the kernel of life, to touch him alone was bliss. But for him, she was the essence of life ... In himself, he knew her. ... And they were together, he and she, at the heart of the secret" (121). Already Anna's power over Will seems stronger than his over her, though: "[S]he clutched him to her, his body the central body of all life. Out of the rock of his form the very fountain of life flowed. But to him, she was a flame that consumed him. The flame flowed up his limbs, flowed through him, till he

was consumed, till he existed only as an unconscious, dark transit of flame, deriving from her” (121). Will and Anna exist “as one person” (121), but the imagery used suggests that Anna derives strength and nourishment from the union, while Will is consumed and dependent. At the beginning of their marriage, Will and Anna spend days existing as “a core of living eternity” (135). They seem to achieve Lawrence’s true sacred marriage:

As they lay close together, complete and beyond the touch of time or change, it was as if they were at the very centre of all the slow wheeling of space and the rapid agitation of life, deep, deep inside them all, at the centre where there is utter radiance, and eternal being, and the silence absorbed in praise: the steady core of all movements, the unawakened sleep of all wakefulness. They found themselves there, and they lay still, in each other’s arms; for their moment they were at the heart of eternity, whilst time roared far off, forever far off, toward the rim. (135)

When they wake from this state, though, Will suggests, “We’ll get up,” and Anna rejects this suggestion, instead commanding Will, “Do get up ... and give me something to eat” (136).

Other times Will overpowers Anna, as when “[s]he shrank and became blind. She was like a bird being beaten down. A sort of swoon of helplessness came over her. ... Against such an influence, she was only vulnerable, she was given up” (143). Either way, the equilibrium Will and Anna occasionally achieve does not last forever – it always tilts in favor of one partner over the other. Lydia reminds Anna, “Between two people, the love itself is the important thing, and that is neither you nor him. It is a third thing you must create” (163), but Will and Anna seem unable to enter the mystical-sexual state as frequently or easily as Tom and Lydia do. “Horrible in the extreme were these nocturnal combats,” (176) and although they fight back and forth and

“were very well matched,” (152) ultimately Anna emerges victorious. “[S]he was complete in herself” (166), while “[l]ike a child on its mother, [Will] depended on her for his living” (176). Rather than blame Anna as a predatory female, though, Lawrence seems to suggest that this failure is at least in part Will’s fault, since he “was unready for fulfillment. Something undeveloped in him limited him, there was a darkness in him which he *could* not unfold, which would never unfold in him” (195, italics in original).

The third major couple in The Rainbow, Ursula and Anton, remains even farther from truly achieving Lawrence’s sacred marriage. Toward the beginning of their relationship, in contrast to the language of birth, union, and renewal in the descriptions of the other two generations, Ursula and Anton only see their coming together as a chance for self-assertion and self-identification:

It was a magnificent self-assertion on the part of both of them, he asserted himself before her, he felt himself infinitely male and infinitely irresistible, she asserted herself before him, she knew herself infinitely desirable and hence infinitely strong. . . . She could limit and define herself against him, the male, she could be her maximum self, female, oh female, triumphant for one moment in exquisite assertion against the male, in supreme contradistinction to the male. (281)

The same components are present – the infinite male and the infinite female – but their joining together fails to transcend those two categories and create “the third thing” Lydia speaks of (163). Later when they are together, it “was his will and her will locked in a trance of motion, two wills locked in one motion, yet never fusing, never yielding one to the other” (295).

Whenever they are together, because they cannot yield and fuse as partners in the sacred

marriage, Ursula and Anton become combatants, just as Anna and Will sometimes do. While for Anna and Will this battle is occasionally transcended, for Ursula and Anton it never is. While Anna and Will take turns conquering each other before Anna emerges the victrix, for Ursula it is no contest. She easily and repeatedly bests Anton.

In his variations on a theme in The Rainbow, then, Lawrence moves from a male dominated relationship (Lensky and Lydia) through several other permutations in the progression to a female dominated relationship (Ursula and Anton). Lawrence clearly approves of neither extreme, and although the narrator remains closely tied to Ursula throughout her section of the book, the changing use of the sacred marriage archetype shows how only balance, equilibrium, and transcendence achieve Lawrence's ideal male-female relationship.

The sacred marriage can also be found in The Plumed Serpent between Kate and Cipriano. Kate, in her role as the earthly representative of the goddess Malintzi, sometimes feels herself becoming an embodiment of the mythic category Woman, just as Cipriano becomes the universal Male. "She felt her sex and her womanhood caught up and identified in the slowly revolving ocean of nascent life, the dark sky of the men lowering and wheeling above. She was not herself, she was gone, and her own desires were gone in the ocean of the great desire" (143). Here Kate is beginning to feel the mythic power inherent in herself, the power Anna and Ursula also experience, and Kate's first reaction is to want to be alone: "Kate wanted to hurry home with her new secret, the strange secret of her greater womanhood, that she could not get used to" (144). Kate does not explore her mythic power the way the female protagonists of The Rainbow do, and this idea is not returned to for quite awhile. Much later in the story, Kate can finally see herself marrying Cipriano, because "[o]nce you entered his mystery the scale of all

things changed, and he became a living male power, undefined, and unconfined” (341). Kate sees Cipriano as embodying the category Male, just as he becomes the representative of Huitzilopochtli. Shortly after this realization, Kate undergoes a transformation. “She trembled, and her limbs seemed to fuse like metal melting down. She fused into a molten unconsciousness, her will, her very self gone, leaving her lying in molten life, like a lake of still fire, unconscious of everything save the eternality of the fire in which she was gone” (351). In this state, Kate realizes, “One cannot have one’s own way, and the way of the gods. It has to be one way or the other” (352), and when she returns to a public street, the men around her “understood her presence, and bowed low, looking up at her with flashing eyes. And she knew what it was to be a goddess in the old style, saluted by the real fire in men’s eyes, not by their lips” (352). The men surrounding her watch her, “not the physical woman herself, but the inaccessible, voluptuous mystery of man’s physical consummation” (352). In this scene Kate transcends her individuality and becomes an embodiment both of the category Woman and of a goddess. This is an important step toward the sacred marriage Kate and Cipriano will later attempt to achieve.

Vickery argues that in The Plumed Serpent, “what is even more significant” than the sexual-religious wedding of Huitzilopochtli and Malintzi “is the degree to which ritual overshadows the sexual act itself” (Literary Impact 311). “The function of ritual,” Vickery argues, “is not to furnish opportunities for spectacle, but to inculcate the emotions and states of mind appropriate to the situation” (Literary Impact 311). I agree with this interpretation, especially in light of statements within the novel such as “sex itself was a powerful, potent thing, not to be played with or paraded. The one mystery. And a mystery greater than the individual. The individual hardly counted” (167). I would also argue that the highly ritualized nature of the

union of Kate and Cipriano, as opposed to the spontaneous, unspoken, and naturally occurring mysticism of sex in The Rainbow, is part of why Kate and Cipriano fail to achieve the sacred marriage. Like the other female protagonists, Kate feels the innate power of her status as Woman, but unlike the other women, she is taught how to use, identify, and describe that power by a man with his own specific religious and political agenda.

Thus Kate is often submerged into Ramón and Cipriano's new pantheon and dominated by their plans. The moments when she does not submit to them, she fights against them and asserts her desire to be alone. Kate and Cipriano never truly achieve an equal union, so their spiritual transcendence is fleeting, if it exists at all. While contemplating marriage to Cipriano, Kate "was breathless with amazement ... But surely, surely it would not be herself who could marry him. It would be some curious female within her, whom she did not know and did not own" (260). When she begins to embody the category Woman, Kate is something other than herself, but it is a role she could grow to understand and own. Here she recognizes that the role Cipriano wants her to play is different. Speaking later to Ramón about Cipriano, Kate says, "I feel he just wants something of me; and perhaps I just want something of him. But he would never meet me. He would never come forward himself, to meet me. He would come to take something from me and I should have to let him. And I don't want merely that. I want a man who will come half-way, just half-way, to meet me" (298). Ramón agrees that "it's no good unless there is a meeting. It's no good a man ravishing a woman, and it's absolutely no good a woman ravishing a man" (298), without acknowledging that the system he has created does exactly that, as his later marriage to Teresa will demonstrate. In Ramón's new religion, the women are "ravished" to meet the men's needs. Even as she finally agrees to marry Cipriano,

Kate recognizes, “Her self had abandoned her” (342). “Ah! what a marriage! How terrible! and how complete!” she thinks, “She could conceive now her marriage with Cipriano; the supreme passivity, like the earth below the twilight, consummate in living lifelessness, the sheer solid mystery of passivity. Ah, what an abandon, what an abandon, what an abandon!” (342). Like Lydia with Lensky, Kate is subordinated in the relationship. Cipriano’s control over her upsets the balance, and the transcendence of the true sacred marriage cannot be achieved.

Later Kate condemns Ramón’s marriage to Teresa, because “the togetherness needed a balance. Surely it needed a balance! And did not this Teresa throw herself entirely into the male balance, so that all the weight was on the man’s side?” (436-7). Even in the Quetzalcoatl marriage ceremony, the balance fails. Ramón says that ““man and woman, in presence of the unfading star, meet to be perfect in one another”” (361), but he also instructs Kate to kiss Cipriano’s feet and Cipriano to kiss Kate’s head (362). Ramón says a ““meeting has come to pass, and an abiding place for the two where they are as one star”” (362), but he also instructs Kate to call Cipriano “rain from heaven” and Cipriano to call Kate “earth to me” (362). Just as with Lensky and Lydia and Ursula and Anton in The Rainbow, this sacred marriage fails to achieve transcendence because it is dominated by one partner. Although the relationship between Kate and Cipriano is where Lawrence draws the most explicit parallels to this archetypal myth, through direct statements about embodying categories of Man and Woman, gods and goddesses, the less explicit, less ritualized, and less forced male-female relationships of The Rainbow succeed more often.

In this instance, as in others, Lawrence uses mythic constructs most deftly and effectively when he uses them subtly. In The Plumed Serpent, the mythic story feels rigid and overbearing,

dominating both the novel's themes and plot. In The Rainbow, the mythic story is simply one of many stories present, a piece of the mosaic. Anne Fernihough describes The Rainbow as “a complex tangle of myth and history” which engages with issues of technology, gender politics, and “[t]he connection between industrial capitalism and a certain mode of consciousness” (xv). The Plumed Serpent is the explicit story of the death and rebirth of religion. Since the mythology is almost in the background in The Rainbow, it is more flexible, more easily molded and revised than in The Plumed Serpent, where myth always takes center stage. This malleability allows Lawrence to use the myths to illustrate and work out his other thematic elements, and the ways in which Lawrence changes his source materials often have interesting implications for gendered readings of his texts.

The Dying and Reviving God

An archetypal story running throughout The Golden Bough is that of the dying and reviving god. Although much of his work on this subject has since been challenged and discredited as too reductive, Frazer's most famous contribution to the study of comparative mythology and anthropology was the connection he drew between myths of birth, death, and resurrection across disparate cultures. According to Frazer, Osiris, Adonis, Tammuz, Nemi, and Jesus all fit into this category, as deities who die or travel into an underworld and are resurrected or returned to the world of the living. Walker explains that many of these deities celebrated their births in December and their deaths and rebirths in March, “exactly nine months before the solstitial festival of [their] birth[s] ... The time of his death was also the time of his conception, or re-conception” (77). Many of the myths of dying gods include stories of virgin or otherwise

unique births and marriages with goddesses or queens, as Vickery recognizes when he observes that “Frazer’s drama of the dying and reviving god and his wife-mother-lover” is “one of Lawrence’s major *leitmotifs*” (Literary Impact 294). Although in The Golden Bough the two aspects of this story (the sacred marriage and the death-resurrection) are intertwined, I have found it helpful to consider them separately, since they often function differently in Lawrence’s fiction. Kate in The Plumed Serpent recognizes the connection between the sacred marriage and death, though, when she thinks, “Ah, how could she marry Cipriano, and give her body to this death?” (269-70).

As critics point out, many individual characters in Lawrence’s texts fit the part of the dying and reviving god. In D. H. Lawrence: Myth and Metaphysic in The Rainbow and Women in Love, P. T. Whelan demonstrates how Tom fulfills this role. “His great achievement,” according to Whelan, “is his discernment and willing espousal of his destiny. This makes a hero of him, and now with Lydia he achieves what Jung describes as the goal of every hero of myth: rebirth from the mother” (24). Whelan further states, “As Frazer makes clear throughout The Golden Bough, the Sacred King is a man doomed to die. The myths of the Goddess and her consort always involve the death of the consort, be he Attis – who like Tom was a shepherd – Adonis, or Tammuz, after whom it has been suggested that Tom was named. Eventually, the age of which Tom is king comes to an end in a flood” (25). Even the flood can be read to support this interpretation, since Tom can be said to return to a watery womb, where he will wait to be reborn.

Whelan also reads Anna as a dying and reviving god, although she fails to fully achieve her task, since “the restriction of her life’s purpose to motherhood alone is a renunciation of the

spiritual quest, a spiritual death. In this sense, Anna too dies in childbirth” (28). After this symbolic death, Anna is reborn into a new archetypal role, the Magna Mater. For Whelan, Ursula too is a mythic hero, undergoing “experiences that in myth are attributed to the male” (33) such as visions (39), “spend[ing] some months in thrall to a femme fatale” (40), and finally death and rebirth at the conclusion of the novel. Drawing mythic connections between horses and floods, Whelan argues, “If the experience with the horses represents a deluge, here taking place in the microcosm, then Ursula’s period of illness signifies the many days spent in the ark before the waters abate. But the waters do abate for Ursula, and like Noah and his family coming forth, she experiences a rebirth, with all the old world left behind” (47). Fernihough calls Ursula “a latter-day female Messiah, proffering redemption from a world characterized, as Lawrence saw it, by a masculinism run riot” (xiv).

The woman in “The Woman Who Rode Away” also experiences symbolic death and resurrection, as do Dollie in “The Princess” and Yvette in The Virgin and the Gypsy, although less dramatically. Dollie travels to a place where she feels “death was not far from” her guide (190) and undergoes a series of trials during which she feels that Romero “went about in silence, with a dead-looking face. It was now so dreary, and so like death, she wished he would do anything rather than continue in this negation” (213). Her trip into the mountains can be read as a trip into the underworld, and her return to society as her rebirth.

Like Ursula with the horses, Yvette experiences a flood. Yvette dies a symbolic death – “She was barely conscious: as if the flood was in her soul” (155) – but she is reborn when “Yvette, fast asleep, started from under the bed-clothes with a scream, as the glass flew” (169).

Her grandmother, called “The Mater” and clearly presented as a representative of the older generation, dies in the same flood to make room for Yvette, the young reborn hero.

The protagonist of “The Woman Who Rode Away” is even more strongly linked with the figure of the dying and reviving god, as Cowan argues. Not only is she “a representative of the white man’s religion,” she is also

identified with Christ as sacrificial victim in a number of significant parallels: her age, thirty-three; her journey of three days, a metaphorical descent into hell; her ritualistic anointment with oil and perfume; her sign of peace to the ancient *cacique*, a symbolic Gethsemane; her cup of liquor, an analogy to the chalice of the Last Supper; her being stripped for the sacrifice; and finally her death for the sins of her race and the redemption of the world. (77)

It is interesting to note that in most of Lawrence’s uses of the dying god story, the typically male hero is recast as a woman, and that in most cases this drama unfolds separately from the sacred marriage story. This highlights points made by several critics who emphasize Lawrence’s syncretic and idiosyncratic use of mythology. Erwin Steinberg describes Lawrence “us[ing] myth to serve his own purposes,” for example by “tak[ing] Frazer’s painstaking attempt to be scientifically descriptive and inquiring and without a qualm turn[ing] it into supposed evidence to support his mystical preconceptions” (94). In less judgmental language, Whelan states, “Lawrence’s mind was eclectic and syncretistic, and his uniqueness as a thinker lies in original combination, rather than in invention” (2-3), and Cowan observes, “For Lawrence’s commitment to a reconciliation between flesh and spirit, pagan and Christian in a new, syncretic religious order is the basis for his ultimate faith that in the reborn man the kingdom of the Holy

Ghost is at hand” (144). The ways in which Lawrence combines, reconciles, and transforms his material often fall along gender lines, making women heroes and men their accessories, reversing traditional gender binaries, and working out possible answers to questions raised by the burgeoning feminist movement of his day. An especially interesting revision of the dying god myth, and one which fits with Cowan’s interpretation of Lawrence’s project, occurs not at the level of individual characterization, but at the level of plot and structure. The dying and reviving god functions as a large, thematic element in both The Plumed Serpent and The Rainbow.

In The Plumed Serpent the dying god is literally the focus of the plot and the protagonists. Ramón’s goal throughout the novel is to expel Christianity from Mexico and restore the worship of Quetzalcoatl. Not only are the central figures of both religions dying and reviving gods, Ramón is attempting to kill and renew religion itself. “Gods die with men who have conceived them,” Kate observes, and, “Even the gods must be born again” (61). Jesus and Quetzalcoatl are often described by Ramón as brothers or as two aspects of the same entity, as in one of his hymns:

My name is Jesus, I am Mary’s Son.

I am coming home.

My mother the Moon is dark.

Oh brother, Quetzalcoatl. (130)

At the same time, though, Ramón argues that ““different peoples must have different Saviors, as they have different speech and different colour. The final mystery is one mystery. But the manifestations are many”” (394). Jesus is described as belonging to white men, in need of replacement by a Mexican god:

Jesus is going home, to the Father, and Mary is going back, to sleep in the belly of the Father. And they both will recover from death, during the long long sleep. But the Father will not leave us alone. We are not abandoned. The Father has looked around, and has seen the Morning Star, fearless between the rushing of the oncoming yellow sun, and the backward reel of the night. So the Great One, whose name has never been spoken, says: Who art thou, bright watchman? And the dawn-star answering: It is I, the Morning Star, who in Mexico was Quetzalcoatl. (136)

Ramón describes his new religion as “the old caterpillar stage of Christianity evolving into something else” (228). Ramón explains “you have to destroy those old things, first” before creating or recreating something else (319), as he does when he and his men remove all Christian symbols and icons from the church and burn them before converting it to a temple for the rites of Quetzalcoatl. In this revision of the dying god myth, Lawrence weaves a tale of two dying gods. Instead of Jesus dying and resurrecting or Quetzalcoatl dying and resurrecting, Jesus dies and Quetzalcoatl is reborn. Lawrence changes the myth from a repeating cycle into an evolution, from a circle into a spiral.

Furthermore, Lawrence uses this story to highlight issues of colonization and national identity. Ramón insists Quetzalcoatl is the right god for Mexico because he is native to Mexico, while Jesus and Christianity have been imposed on native Mexicans by European colonizers. Like Lawrence, Ramón hopes to strip away modern Western belief systems and seeks spiritual fulfillment from more primitive sources. In some ways Ramón’s story is purely his own, localized in one geographical area and political climate, but in other ways Ramón is a symbol of Lawrence himself, through his demolition of old religion and creation of a new spirituality from

the myths of the past. I believe it is because Ramón's goals and interests are so explicitly similar to Lawrence's own that the mythic constructs used feel inflexibly applied and dominate other elements of the book. Perhaps, despite this possibility for identification between Lawrence and Ramón, it is because of the repulsion Stanton documents Lawrence feeling toward Native Americans that Lawrence's narrator is so distant from Ramón and so consistently allied with Kate.

In The Rainbow, the myth of the dying god is more abstractly thematic. Many critics have observed that The Rainbow retells all the most famous and significant myths from the biblical book of Genesis, from the creation and the fall to the flood and the tower of babel. What is important is that this is a revised telling of Genesis, blending in elements from other mythologies. Steinberg explains, "The language is biblical, mythic. It suggests both the Old Testament and The Golden Bough in word choice and concept" (97), while Whelan describes "two mythic schemae" in The Rainbow, "biblical and Wagnerian" (16). Another element simultaneously present in The Rainbow is, once again, the replacement of an old religion with a new one.

Even as he draws from Christian myths, Lawrence writes decisively against Christianity. In the introduction to the Penguin edition, Fernihough writes that while "The Rainbow as a whole is saturated with biblical imagery; yet it is also a novel about the shedding of our Christian heritage, and by the end the church-tower has become a symbol of 'hideous obsolescence'" (xxiii). Fairly early in the novel, the "old clergyman droned on, Cossethay sat unmoved as usual" (33). Anna believes the "outward form was a matter of indifference to her. Yet she had some fundamental religion. It was as if she worshipped God as a Mystery, never

seeking in the least to define what He was” (97), and finds most of the words of the Ave Maria “not right, somehow... not satisfactory, somehow” (98). “She hated [the Church] for not fulfilling anything in her” (146). Anna argues with Will that, ““It is impudence to say that Woman was made out of Man’s body... when every man is born of woman. What impudence men have, what arrogance!”” (162), and when he first marries her, devout Will “stood and gazed and grinned with wonder whilst his Tablets of Stone went bounding and bumping and splintering down the hill, dislodged for ever” (139). Anna sees in the gargoyles in a church the “suggestion of the many things that had been left out of the great concept of the church. ‘However much there is inside here, there’s a good deal they haven’t got in,’ the little faces mocked” (189). Like her mother, challenging biblical teachings, Ursula later questions and dissects verses of the Bible that don’t make sense to her (257-8).

Amidst all of the tearing down of Christianity, there is constant natural life and growth, hinting toward pagan traditions and ancient beliefs. When she is young, anticipating Christmas,

The time came near, the girls were decorating the church, with cold fingers binding holly and fir and yew about the pillars, till a new spirit was in the church, the stone broke out into dark, rich leaf, the arches put forth their buds, and cold flowers rose to blossom in the dim mystic atmosphere. Ursula must weave mistletoe over the door, and over the screen, and hang a silver dove from a spring of yew, till dusk came down, and the church was like a grove. (260)

Here Ursula tries to reinvigorate Christianity with “a new spirit.” Without even consciously knowing it, she tries to make it more like ancient religions, bringing in the natural world and making the church more “like a grove.” Later, as Ursula begins to get closer to Anton and the

mystical-sexual rites he represents to her, “[p]assing the large church, Ursula must look in. But the whole interior was filled with scaffolding, fallen stone and rubbish were heaped on the floor, bits of plaster crunched underfoot, and the place re-echoed to the calling of secular voices and to blows of the hammer” (275). The church is symbolically demolished, and the ancient religions can begin to triumph, such as in the moment when Ursula proclaims, ““I could never die while there was a tree,’ ... standing before a great ash, in worship” (311). Ursula comes to the realization that “all the religion she knew was but a particular clothing to a human aspiration. The aspiration was the real thing – the clothing was a matter almost of national taste or need. The Greeks had a naked Apollo, the Christians a white-robed Christ, the Buddhists a royal prince, the Egyptians their Osiris. Religions were local and religion was universal” (317). In The Rainbow, the dying god is Christianity itself. As in The Plumed Serpent, it is not reborn exactly the same – religion evolves into something new, a composite form created by the characters out of pieces of several different mythologies. The newly born religion offers humanity new hope, new possibilities, and new solutions to the problems facing modern society.

Lawrence as Mythologizer

As Whelan argues, Lawrence’s “uniqueness as a thinker lies in original combination, rather than in invention; to understand him, therefore, it is necessary to follow his footsteps not in one discipline but in many” (2-3). I hope I have proven the first part of this statement through this research – in many ways it is at the core of my argument. Lawrence did not invent the archetypes of the stranger, virgin, or sacred prostitute, and he did not create the stories of the sacred marriage and the dying and reviving god. Although Whelan says we should “follow

[Lawrence's] footsteps," a straightforward influence study, tracing where and when Lawrence came by these mythic elements, would not be a complex enough treatment of Lawrence's fiction. It is in Lawrence's revision, recombination, and variety that his "uniqueness as a thinker," and the focus of this study, lie.

In his use of the stranger, Lawrence explores the meanings of community, how outsiders are perceived and treated, the positives and negatives of assimilation, and the importance of striking a balance between curiosity and caution. He does this using the ancient fertility and magical associations of the stranger, and by showing many possible outcomes of situations in which a stranger approaches a community. He also uses this archetype to question the true knowability of anyone, even loved ones, by rewriting the typically male figure as male and female characters and marrying the two together.

By revising the figures of the virgin and the sacred prostitute, and especially by combining them into one character, Lawrence uses these mythic archetypes to highlight themes of community and the individual in his fiction, exploring the pros and cons of each extreme. The virgin is cold, isolated, and sometimes even lonely, but she is self-sufficient, self-determined, and strong in her independence, and Lawrence's narrators fully sympathize with the attractive lure of this position. Doing what she does for any of the reasons Frazer or Walker suggest, the sacred prostitute is serving her community in the most personal way, and she is giving up the control and power of the virgin's position. She is also gaining spiritual fulfillment, intimacy with others, and a different, divine source of power. Apart, these two archetypes in Lawrence's texts show the results of each extreme; existing in some of the same characters, they demonstrate the fluid,

sometimes ambiguous, and sometimes even fickle nature of characters' feelings about these states.

In his reworking of the sacred marriage story, Lawrence explores the reconciliation of opposites, binaries, and duality. He shows his readers the interconnectedness of religious and sexual impulses, and the possibilities for achieving spiritual enlightenment through sacred sexual rites. He also explores a variety of possible power dynamics in intimate male-female relationships. Quoting from Lawrence's letters, Fernihough explains that "Lawrence found in the relations between man and woman '*the* problem of today'; what was needed, he felt, was 'the establishment of a new relation, or the readjustment of the old one'" (xiii, italics in original). Through the sacred marriage story, Lawrence illustrates possible outcomes of male domination, female domination, and equilibrium in intimate relationships. He disapproves of both extremes, and emphasizes the harmony and religious possibilities of true balance.

Lawrence's use of the dying and reviving god myth is at times the most explicit and at times the most subtle reworking of myth in his fiction. The Plumed Serpent is explicitly about the revival of a dying god and a dead religion; in The Rainbow the rejection of Christianity in favor of syncretism is easily lost in the book's more obvious retelling of Genesis. This myth is also the closest representation to what Lawrence himself was trying to achieve in his travels and some of his writing. Lawrence searched for new combinations of ancient belief systems to restore faith – and something worth having faith in – in the modern world. He sought to assist religion in its death and, more importantly, its rebirth as something different and more evolved. This desire comes through in the use of this story in his fiction. Rather than simply tell the story of a dying and reviving god, Lawrence works with this myth on several levels at once, creating

many characters who undergo resurrection-like experiences, and using destruction and rebirth as overarching themes relevant to the political situations of his time.

The second part of Whelan's statement is also at the core of this project. "[T]o understand [Lawrence], therefore, it is necessary to follow his footsteps not in one discipline but in many" (2-3). In addition to tracing Lawrence's interests in and uses of a wide array of subjects and fields, I believe it is also important to approach his fiction from a number of critical viewpoints. The anthropological/mythological approach helps to identify and make sense of the many archetypal characters and story frames Lawrence uses, but without attention paid to issues of gender, this approach would leave many of Lawrence's most intriguing deviations from tradition undiscussed. Likewise, feminist approaches to Lawrence's fiction have been and continue to be provocative and illuminating in understanding his work, but too often these approaches choose positions on one or the other side of a steep divide, classifying Lawrence either as a woman-hater or a "woman in a man's skin" (Daleski qtd. on Dix 13). The story of the sacred marriage is extremely helpful here for its representations of true equality between men and women and equilibrium between feminine and masculine forces, and the endorsement this myth receives in Lawrence's fiction can help clarify Lawrence's own positions. Used together, feminist criticism and archetypal criticism paint a fuller picture of Lawrence's fiction, and each approach strengthens the other.

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