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Author: Gerald Doherty

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**SEXUALISING SACRIFICE:
THE CASE OF *LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER***

GERALD DOHERTY

Sacrifice is not a term that immediately springs to mind in relation to D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928). Usually reserved for those personal acts of renunciation or self-abnegation that anticipate some greater reward, supernatural or otherwise, sacrifice seems to have little, if anything, to do with those ecstatic energy surges that fuel the Lawrence novel. Theorists have frequently used an economic model to interpret the dynamics of these self-motivated givings and takings that constitute personal sacrifice. Indeed as Dennis Keenan suggests, the "Christian doctrine of sacrifice", which promises superabundant returns on pious investments, has "subtly worked its way into the heart of ... numerous late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century theories of sacrifice".¹ Expectations of future recompense or remuneration however disguised, as Jacques Derrida notes, underwrite even such exalted acts as the biblical Abraham's (averted) sacrifice of his only son Isaac.² Early on in his writing career, Lawrence repudiated the utilitarian foundation of sacrificial acts, especially of the personal kind. A 1912 letter highlights the *quid pro quo* of the sacrificial transaction: "The worst of sacrifice is that you have to pay back. It's like giving a present that was never asked for" (*IL* 486). Lawrence's rigorous resistance to renunciation, maintained for the rest of his life, turned on an alternative, more affirmative ethos of the greater courage required "to assert one's desire and need than it does to renounce" (*IL* 486).

With their profoundly anti-sexual bias, economic understandings of sacrifice work against the erotic, pragmatically perceived as a wasteful expenditure of physical energy for which more profitable uses exist. Lawrence's life-long fascination was with sacrifice's alternative dimension – the primordial ritual theatre of expiation, death and regeneration – which, unlike personal desires that are "superficial,

temporary", embraces those "impersonal, great desires that are fulfilled in long periods of time" (*LCL* 320). Lawrence's sexualisation of sacrifice revolves around the radical opposition between these two dimensions of desire. That such "great desires" are expansively erotic, especially in their power to transform and transfigure, is clear from the start of his writing career. Already in *Sons and Lovers* (1913) Paul's "primitive" desire for Clara – "strong and blind and ruthless" (*SL* 397) – projects the untrammelled "wild life" of the cosmos itself as the foil to, and escape from, the narrow confines of the personal, sacrificial love between him and Miriam. In subsequent novels, the sacrificial relationship appears as hostile and conflictual, personal in its limitations, and destructive in its divisive force. Alone among the novels, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* assimilates a primordial sacrificial ritual to the positive dynamics of erotic love – at first sight a strange mismatch that the present essay attempts to shed light on.

The latent homologies between sex and sacrifice are strikingly present in many theories of sacrifice, without, however, being openly acknowledged as such. Already in their collaborative work *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Functions* (1898) – "the definitive perspective on sacrifice for the twentieth century" –³ Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss posit a three-stage sacrificial drama: entry into the sacred arena, the death of the victim (the climactic moment) and the return to the profane world.⁴ Walter Burkert's rephrasing of this tripartite model makes the sexual analogy even more apparent as an "inhibited, labyrinthine beginning" (phallic entry) precipitates a "terrifying midpoint" (orgasmic crisis), which secures a "victorious, affirming" conclusion (loving communion).⁵ Based on a Judeo-Christian gestalt, this was the mythopoetic typology that most engaged Lawrence in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, partly because of its homology with the sexual act, and partly because of its adaptability to novelistic narration, which demands rich and climactic configurations of the life/death dimensions of erotic love. Omitting the "entry" stage from their taxonomies (though in his novel Lawrence intensifies its

significance), most theories of sacrifice, however, reduce these three stages to two: expiation and communion which, like entry, are also pivotal to the novel's erotic progression.⁶ While the first stage (expiation) rids the participants of contaminating faults or defects, the second (communion) draws them together through affective recognitions and bondings. In the novel's sexualisation of these two stages the sharply focused object of expiation in the first four encounters is Connie's resistant female self-will, dissolved by *the* two most powerful sacrificial instruments – fire and water – the purgative flames of Mellors's desire and the turbulent "dark waves" that cleanse her of her defects.⁷ In turn, the fifth and sixth encounters are novelistic types of intimate communion: the celebratory phallic worship of the fifth and the ceremonial flower-liturgy of the sixth integrate both lovers in the community-of-two they inaugurate.⁸ The seventh encounter is anomalous in so far as its harsh expiatory violence violates the tender sacrificial ethos the novel already embraces.

The expiatory/communion gestalt Lawrence cultivates in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* concludes an extended series of sexualisations of different sacrificial models and motifs, the most significant of which we can briefly pause to reflect on. His two early novels *The Trespasser* (1912) and *Sons and Lovers* explore the traditional nineteenth-century novelistic version of expiatory sacrifice – the eradication of the disruptive sexual "beast" in the human, as a prelude to more spiritual forms of communion. In a memorable scene in *Sons and Lovers*, for example, Miriam's passive acquiescence as sexual victim – "she had given herself up to sacrifice, like a creature awaiting immolation" (SL 333) – identifies Paul as the ritual sacrificer, which in turn makes him feel "sexless, or dead" (SL 334), thus signalling the beginning of the end of the affair. Already sexuality and personal sacrifice, as an act of self-abnegation, make impossible bed-fellows. Concentrating Lawrence's anxiety-fuelled gender concerns – those female usurpations of the active male role as sexual sacrificer, which invariably end in catastrophe (Mellors's marriage to Bertha Coutts is

exemplary) – both of Ursula's moonlit erotic encounters with Skrebensky in *The Rainbow* (1915) enact such an inverted sacrifice. After Ursula offers herself to the moon-goddess in "consummation" instead of to her lover (*R* 296), her hands, like "metal blades of destruction" tear him apart (*R* 297), annihilating the "distinct male" in him (*R* 300). While in *Women in Love* (1920), Ursula and Birkin aspire to a consummate love beyond sacrificial constraint or renunciation, where each one's desire is fulfilled in the other (*WL* 320), their counterparts Gerald and Gudrun are masters of a sadistic, sacrificial power play that frustrates their erotic energies and that in the end disintegrates their relationship. At the collective level, Gerald is also a ruthless sacrificer: as the "high-priest" of the industrial machine (*WL* 231), he offers up, as if to a god, the disfigured bodies of the miners, who abjectly submit to their own victimisation (*WL* 230–1). At the other end of the sacrificial spectrum, the love-making in *Aaron's Rod* (1922) enacts an exotic Gothic sacrifice, which is also perversely personalised. Using Aaron as a "mere magic instrument", the usurping and vampirish Marchesa figuratively sucks his "innermost heart's blood", destroying "his godlike phallic power in the flesh", reducing his body to "carion" (*AR* 273). Already in *Aaron's Rod*, the "leadership" ethos redirects sacrificial activity away from the phallus-annihilating Marchesa to Aaron's submissive "yield[ing]" to a "more heroic [male] soul" (*AR* 299) – a move that effectively neutralises the ever-present threat of female usurpation, in much the same manner as, in *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), Cipriano's repudiation of Kate's clitoral orgasms secures his sexual authority over her (*PS* 422).

Lady Chatterley's Lover is the sole Lawrence novel to adapt the orthodox Judeo-Christian model of sacrifice (expiation/communion) as the numinous archetype that restores the mythic power of the phallus to recreate the female in the image the male desires her to take. As such, it resembles another structural model, first identified by Frank Kermode in 1962, which links the seven-stage "amorous action" in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to the opening of the Seven Seals in the *Book*

of *Revelation*.⁹ Kermode's concentration on the seventh (anal) encounter to the exclusion of equally significant rituals in the first six encounters has been much criticised.¹⁰ By contrast, Charles Burack shows in comprehensive detail that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is structured as a religious initiation rite in two phases – destructive and sacralising – which he explores in convincing depth.¹¹ The present (sacrificial) model focuses on the sexualisation of sacrifice itself, showing how sacrifice infiltrates the erotic sequences, creating sharp gender divisions, while at the same time providing expansive figurative grounding and support for phallic eroticism and for the complementary modes of female sexual transformation. Unlike earlier sexualisations of sacrifice, such as the romantic *Liebestod* (a commonplace topos in nineteenth and early-twentieth-century literature), which symbolically assimilates female sexual surrender to sacrificial immolation without intimating detailed correspondences, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* correlates the Judeo-Christian typology of sacrifice with specific stages of erotic arousal climax: and the phallic expiation of female "sins" and "defilements" is the necessary prelude to the orgasmic "communion" which consumes the erotic energies released through preliminary purgings and cleansings.

Before turning to a close-up of these sexualised sacrificial dynamics in the novel, it is important to locate Lawrence's considerable knowledge of sacrifice, as well as the gender origins of his compulsive attraction to its ritual practice. As to the former, the most obvious source is his biblical grounding in the Protestant evangelical tradition (Congregationalism),¹² which includes detailed prescriptions for strong sacrificial rites – altars, burnt-offerings, holocausts in *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Exodus* – in addition to those much-analysed oedipal dramas, involving Abraham's averted sacrifice of his only son, Isaac (*Genesis* 22: 1–18), and Jephthah's fortuitous sacrifice of his daughter (*Judges* 11: 29–49). The *Book of Leviticus*, for example, sharply distinguishes between the two types of sacrifice that structure the erotic sequences in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*: strong

expiatory sacrifices, which are types of sin-and-guilt offerings, and alimentary or communion sacrifices, which are festive peace offerings.

The second major source of Lawrence's knowledge of sacrifice was the cultural anthropology he read during 1913–18, particularly the works of E. B. Tylor, J. G. Frazer and Jane Harrison, in which the expiation/communion gestalt took on increasing significance as an interpretative code.¹³ Already in *Primitive Culture* (1874), Tylor claims that one of "the best-marked rites of the world is that of offering by fire" (expiation), followed by "sacrificial feast[s]" or "sacred banquets", and Frazer, later on in *The Golden Bough* (1890), also recognised the centrality of sacrificial acts of "expiation" and "atonement".¹⁴ With Hubert and Mauss's *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Functions* (1898), the distinctive though complementary relation between the two sacrificial types is firmly established: "expiatory sacrifices proper become entangled with communion sacrifices" to form a continuous sequence.¹⁵ Together they establish relations of power, purpose and empathy between the human and the divine or, as in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, between a sacralised language of love and a secularised rhetoric of erotic ecstasis.

But Lawrence not only sexualises anthropological and theological speculations about the nature of sacrifice, he also enmeshes them in a dense historical matrix, reflected both in the arts of poetry and painting, which, as in Yeats's *A Vision* (1925), reached their peak of perfection in the Renaissance and in the dynamics of erotic love in a sacrificial age. In *Study of Thomas Hardy* (written in 1914), and, more incisively in a short essay 'The Theatre' (1916), he locates sacrifice within a trinitarian historical structure, which unfolds in three distinctive eras. Identified with the "kingly, imperial, aristocratic", the first era, mainly pagan and Greek, divinises the flesh (*TI* 146). Strongly self-assertive, first era sexuality is a "transport of the Ego", an uncomplicated ecstasy of "power and glory", infused by the imperial model that inspires it, and free from expiatory guilt or atonement (*TI* 146). Because its sexuality is, however, entirely notional, it finds no place in Lawrence's fiction, which engages modernist crises in sexual relations, fuelled by a

sacrificial and redemptive ethos, typical of the contemporary era. The first era's stranglehold on European culture is mirrored in virtually all of Lawrence's fictions (Birkin and Ursula in *Women in Love* alone try to escape it), where sex and sacrifice are homologous rituals with the phallus as the expiatory instrument that at once pierces (female) flesh, and precipitates the orgasmic "death" of the victim. Torn between the desire for "renunciation" and for "consummation" (*TI* 147) – the continual friction between opposing drives – each partner pursues his/her satisfaction "against a hostile opposite" (*2L* 636), each taking turns to yield to the other. Because dualistic sacrificial hierarchies (male/female, spirit/flesh, guilt/atonement) generate those abrasive oppositions that fuel the orgasm, they are also its source and its cause. (Such antipodal dualisms also account for Lawrence's life-long insistence on simultaneous orgasms which, in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, are the external signifiers of an internal fulfillment.) Instead of vigorously asserting the self, as the pagans did, the Judeo-Christian era of sacrifice weakens and dissolves it: instead of being consummate, this "consummation" is "fallible false" (*TI* 147). Until the coming of the third era of "Consummate Marriage" (*STH* 127), there shall only be "this separateness ... this suffering, this delight this imperfection" (*STH* 55). While three of these attributes exemplify the negative dynamics of sacrificial sex, the fourth ("delight") points to those transitory ecstasies enjoyed briefly by honeymooners, like Will and Anna in *The Rainbow*, and more extendedly by Connie and Mellors in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, where the separation of the lovers, and not renunciation, is the ultimate threat. For Lawrence, the arrival of the third "consummate" era is always deferred.

Through his sexualisation and secularisation of sacrifice (there are no divine interventions or influxes in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*) Lawrence structures the erotic sequences. In so doing he also reverses the traditional Western association of sacrifice with a mutilated body (the crucified Christ), transmuting its expiatory violence into "tender" rites of lustration by fire and water, culminating in the blissful

communion (shared orgasm) between the two lovers. This characteristically modernist internalisation of an external primordial rite reinforces the gender dichotomy of the erotic transaction. While Mellors assumes his preordained role of male sacrificer, who initiates, controls and concludes the action, Connie is the sacrificed "victim" whom Mellors's purgings and purifications recreate and revitalise. As recent critics of sacrificial systems – Nancy Jay, William Beers, Luce Irigaray, Dennis Keenan, and Kathryn McClymond among others – make clear, orthodox understandings of sacrifice are patriarchal, sexist and frequently misogynistic, thus "resembling the traditions they claim to illuminate".¹⁶ Prioritising the male role, sacrifice is an arena from which women are for the most part excluded – the more expiatory or bloody the sacrifice, the more rigorously the ban is enforced.¹⁷ In most cultures, as McClymond puts it, "men have created the rules, dominated the ritual activity, and transmitted the oral and written sacrificial traditions".¹⁸ Indeed, the exclusion of females may have more fundamental roots than the mere guarding of male prerogatives. These roots may lie in the sacrificial traditions that Jay maintains resemble each other in their "association of femaleness with what must be expiated",¹⁹ a claim that throws significant light on the purification of specifically female generic defects Connie undergoes in their first four encounters.²⁰ In all of this, a sacrificial ideology is reinforced by a Western dualistic metaphysics – a phallogocentric economy that identifies the female body with material substance, which the male spirit, embodied in the phallus, penetrates and finally masters.²¹

This attribution of transcendental powers locates the male as the active sexual celebrant with the female as the passive recipient of his vitalising seminal powers. The crucial Lawrentian term denoting this exchange is paradoxically not semen, which merely fertilises the female, but blood, which, as in Judeo-Christian sacrifice, is the "essence of life", a potently numinous substance and a strong expiatory agent that cleanses the "sanctuary of contamination" and "expunges Israelite sin".²² This is a significant aspect of Lawrence's belief in "the blood,

the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect" (*IL* 503) – a belief he sexualises by relating it to "the living rush of the ever new blood ever renewed" that erects and engorges the phallus.²³ The polluting opposite of this "purifying sacrificial blood", as Jay notes, is "menstrual blood" – which Lawrence terms "the dead spilled blood" that "can but stink at last" (*TI* 156).²⁴ As "the column of blood, the living fountain of fullness in life", the phallus is a highly efficacious expiatory agent that "wash[es] away all sin" and "the old corruptions".²⁵ Sexuality and sacrifice are thus inseparable partners in recreating powerful gender dichotomies. Purging the female of her natural defects, the male reconstitutes her as the mirror of his sacrificial aspirations to regenerate and reclaim her.

Of course, Lawrence was not alone among modernist writers in engaging with sacrifice, both as an archetypal myth that infuses contemporary life with numinous meanings and values and as a primordial enactment of its two major phases – expiation and communion – though no other modernist invests it with the same eroticised, mythopoetic intensities as he does in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. From a sacrificial perspective, a brief consideration of three other modernists – T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats and James Joyce – will establish close correspondences as well as radical differences, starting with Eliot, who in his essay on *Ulysses*, coined the phrase "mythical method" to characterise the manipulation of "a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity".²⁶ Though the word sacrifice does not appear in *The Waste Land*, its absence as expiatory ritual generates the poem's most devastating effects. It appears in disguise, as it were, through the mediations of its two most potent agents – water and fire – whose regenerative powers are no longer efficacious, and, as a consequence, no "communion" exists in the wasteland. In its multiple guises, for example, water configures the elemental lack that desiccates and disintegrates landscapes (I), pollutes and begrimes rivers (III), and drives refugees to seek relief from the thirst that afflicts them (V).²⁷ Its absence, as expiatory agent, affects both exterior structures and spaces,

and interior mental recesses, including those of the wasteland's inhabitants, who are unaware of their need for redemptive catharsis. Appearing only once in a major context, the fire-motif, by contrast, points insistently to the root-source of the wasteland's sufferings of which the other defects are mere symptoms. The compulsive repetition – "Burning burning burning burning" –²⁸ evokes not those expiatory fires that purge and purify, but those libidinal names of desire that (as in the Buddha's fire sermon) point to the etiology of human distress and dissatisfaction. If *The Waste Land* laments the absence of a sacred propitiation, Eliot's *Four Quartets*, by contrast, triumphantly affirms orthodox Judeo-Christian sacrifice as the core determinant of redemptive purpose and destiny.²⁹ The fourth quartet 'Little Gidding' (1942) is, in effect, a sustained meditation on the cathartic force of strong sacrifice – the refining "fire" that expiates "sin and error" (IV, 1–7) and, more graphically, the "intolerable shirt of flame" (IV, 11) that, by immolating the flesh, frees the spirit for its final communion (V, 43–6). Indeed, water and fire are specifically named as the two major sacrificial agents, whose redemptive purpose, if repudiated, mutates into its opposite – destruction and death (II, 17–24). Eliot's orthodox affirmation of expiatory doctrine has unexpected resonances in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in Mellors's fiery purgings of Connie's "sin and error" (her "queer female mind" [LCL 172]) and in his "pentacost flame" (LCL 301) that, despite separation, secures the continuing communion between the two lovers.

Yeats, by contrast, politicises sacrifice while keeping its basic structures in place, most notably in one of his major poems 'Easter 1916' (1921), where violent expiatory action – the execution of the leading insurgents of the Easter Rising assumes the status of a national discourse transcending the limitations of the personal self. In its purging of false consciousness – the "casual comedy" (I, 37) that preceded the Rising – the poem also creates a newly transformed communal identity, the founding "communion" myth of the Irish Free State.³⁰ Indeed the poem sharply distinguishes (as Lawrence also does) between the self-

interested *do ut des* of mere personal sacrifice, which “can make a stone of the heart” (I, 58) and collective ritual sacrifice, in which victims individually named in the poem (II, 74–80) undergo a radical aesthetic transfiguration. From being political jesters whom the poet privately mocked for wearing “motley” (I, 14), they are “changed, changed utterly:/ A terrible beauty is born” (I, 16–7). As an expiatory drama on a national scale sacrifice induces the same revolutionary transformation as, for Lawrence, simultaneous orgasms do on an individual scale. Thus Connie’s sacrificial “death” in the fourth encounter (“she moaned ... as a sacrifice, and a new-born thing” [LCL 174]) theatrically recasts her aesthetic perception of Mellors’s body. From being a “foolish, impudent”, even “disgusting” thing that she previously mocked (LCL 172), his body is transmogrified into an object of “unspeakable beauty” that fills her with “awe” (LCL 175). As the agent of an ineffable change, sacrifice at once cuts off the past from the present, and foreshadows the shape of future becomings.

Like Lawrence, Joyce too sexualises sacrifice, preserving its logical structure intact while recreating new “blasphemous” contexts and outcomes. A single pivotal episode in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen’s writing of the villanelle, must suffice to show parallel structures to those used by Lawrence, despite startling divergences in erotic conception and action. Critics like Christine Froula have finely explored the homologies between Stephen’s writing performance and female procreation (“In the virgin womb of the imagination the word was made flesh”) without, however, recognising sacrifice as the paradigm that regulates Stephen’s performance.³¹ In many religious traditions, including the Judeo-Christian, sacrifice, as Jay notes, is opposed to “childbirth as birth done better ... and on a more exalted level than ordinary mothers do it”.³² Though the first words of the villanelle are conceived in the womb, their final articulation is such a birth done better – a more controlled, disciplined and bloodless product in the traditional, metaphysical masculine mode than the unpredictable and sanguinary natural birth-process.

As "a priest of the eternal imagination", Stephen twice performs sacrificial rites of expiation before the final communion is accomplished.³³ In the first phase Emma's "wilful heart" that spurns and rejects him is the female defect to be eradicated.³⁴ Stephen's "brutal" sparagmos shatters her image and scatters its fragments, before a Eucharistic communion reunites them in a "hymn of thanksgiving".³⁵ The second phase involves a more radical purgation: the liquidation of biological femaleness itself, the "strange humiliation" and "dark shame" of her womanhood, as a prelude to the climactic erotic communion that follows.³⁶ As Emma sacrifices herself ("Her nakedness yielded to him") she enfolds him in the cleansing waters of those creative "liquid letters of speech" that compose the villanelle.³⁷ Now purified, divinised, she becomes the sacred object of worship to whom "sacrificing hands upraise/ The chalice" of a now chastened and sanctified blood.³⁸

Despite the abyss of misunderstanding that made Lawrence and Joyce impossible readers of each other's work (to take a pertinent example, Stephen's onanistic sexuality is of the kind that Lawrence condemned as the "greatest tragedy of our day")³⁹ both writers transgressively assimilate the religious to the secular – the Judeo-Christian sacrificial typology to erotic sequences and consequences that amplify their archetypal significations. While Lawrence, however, embraced his myth with an uncritical intensity that, at least partly, blinded him to its ideological implications, Joyce subversively dissected and deconstructed his myth, as Froula argues he does in the villanelle.⁴⁰ To a more detailed working through of this myth in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, we now turn our attention.

1. Personal Sacrifice

Lady Chatterley's Lover opens with a sequence of private acts of self-abnegation without ritual overtones – the renunciation of something of personal value with more rewarding remunerations in mind. As the kind of strategic sacrifice which, as we noted, Lawrence rejected, its

precalculus of profit and loss devalues the contract. Already in the opening pages, Clifford Chatterley sacrifices his life for a patriotic ideal and is rewarded not with a hero's status, as he might have anticipated, but by being crippled for life (*LCL* 5). Here personal sacrifice mutates into a national myth that still keeps the economic exchange basis firmly in place. In a parallel fashion, the first sexualisations of Connie's sacrifice operate according to the *do ut des* logic of personal renunciation – the premeditated reserve of erotic energy to preserve the autonomous self. Offering her lover the free gift of herself, she allows him to “expend” himself, after which she comes to her leisurely “crisis”, using him as a “tool” (*LCL* 7–8). Referred to euphemistically as a “yielding” or “giving” (*LCL* 7), the term sacrifice has insistently negative connotations, signifying the predominance of personal loss over gain, of disaffection over passionate growth and commitment. Contemplating her naked body in her bedroom mirror, for example, Connie for the first time questions her life-long devotion to Clifford (“What was the good of her sacrifice” [*LCL* 72]), especially if the reward for such self-abnegation is not spiritual enhancement, but a slow etiolation, writ large on the “slack” slopes and curves of her sexual body (*LCL* 70). Precisely because it excludes the impersonal, archetypal dimension that infuses sex with a numinous energy beyond the pragmatics of personal need and cupidity, the sacrificial exchange deflates and depresses the victim.

A major function of Connie's brief affair with the playwright Michaelis is to expose the intimate relation between economic and sexual models of sacrifice. Introduced initially as a type of “big-business-man” (*LCL* 22), Michaelis makes use of Clifford for exactly the same self-interested motives as Clifford makes use of him (they are both famous authors). At the erotic level, Michaelis's three engagements with Connie exemplify sex in the Lawrentian era of sacrificial love, where the friction between renunciation and consummation disintegrates the relationship (*TI* 147).⁴¹ In the struggle between two highly self-conscious egos for libidinal pleasure and profit, each takes turns to yield to the other (renunciation) in order to

double the orgasmic pay-off (consummation).⁴² Thus a certain non-synchronicity, a deliberate postponement or withholding that works well in the economic transaction fails abjectly in the erotic one, where the Lawrentian ideal – simultaneous orgasm – is the yardstick by which the failure is judged. In an oscillating erotics, Connie initially “g[i]ve[s] herself” to Michaelis (*LCL* 26), sacrificing her climax to his, while in the second encounter, his premature coming (an economy of instantaneous loss) compels her achievement of her own “orgiastic satisfaction” (*LCL* 29). The third, however, infringes a more fundamental law than mere synchronicity – that of male precedence which virtually all sacrificial systems espouse. Having sacrificed himself “with all his will and self-offering” to allow Connie to come her “wild crisis”, Mike immediately attacks her for “run[ning] the show” (*LCL* 53), when a sacrificial gender dynamics dictates that he, as male, should reap the main profits. As one of the “crucial blows” of Connie’s life (*LCL* 54), this shock-observation collapses the economic foundations upon which her previous sex-encounters were based. It also prepares the way for a radical shift in sacrificial perspectives – from those restricted transactions of personal pleasure to impersonal and primordial orgasmic bliss – modes that elude conscious control or precalculation.

2. Tender Expiations

In Connie’s first four encounters with Mellors, sexuality loses its power to transform only if aggressive entry threatens the female body, negating instead of enhancing its natural vitality. Because in such a “[c]ounterfeit sexual act”, as Lawrence calls it (*LCL* 370), there is neither “blood-communion”, which expiates female faults, nor completed fulfilment, the phallus is a “sword and a lancet” that induces knowledge of separation, “apartness” (*LCL* 370).⁴³ In this new love dispensation, phallic entry is decisive, signalling the difference between a destructive expiatory drama and a pliant and tender penetration that determines the

tenor and tone of the subsequent action. At the pragmatic level, such entry also mirrors the Jewish sacrificial law that seeks to ameliorate the “pain and violence” of sacrifice, and reduce its traumatic effects.⁴⁴

The obsessive preoccupation with entry, referred to twice in the space of a short paragraph, reflects the difference between strong sacrifice that mutilates the body, and the new sacrificial sexuality to which Connie’s “soft, quiescent body” offers the invitation (*LCL* 116). Guided by celestial power-constellations beyond his conscious control, Mellors’s “desirous hand” gropes softly as if it knew “how to unclothe her where it wanted” (*LCL* 116). Though the phallic penetration is neither violent nor vengeful, and its expiatory purgings have not yet begun, it is still sacrificial in essence. Assuming the male priestly role, Mellors initiates, mediates and terminates the performance. With its biblical resonances, his “peace on earth” (*LCL* 116, *Luke* 2:14) evokes a communication with those vaster redemptive forces that order the universe.⁴⁵ As if anaesthetised against possible violence, Connie “sleeps” through the performance, much like those legendary victims Walter Burkert refers to, who passively “offered themselves up for sacrifice, apparent evidence of a higher will that commands assent”.⁴⁶

At precisely this pivotal point a sacrificial manoeuvre identifies the future object of expiation – the female fault to be eradicated, before the ritual purification proceeds. Confirming Jay’s claim that in all sacrificial systems this object is “femaleness”,⁴⁷ the authoritative narrator informs us that, in contrast to Mellors’s “mysterious stillness” after the act, Connie’s “tormented modern woman’s brain still had no rest” (*LCL* 117), a symptomatic condition of whose cause she is as yet unaware. As male agent, by contrast, Mellors does not need ritual expiation but the much less sacred and sacrosanct process of being “broken open” (*LCL* 118), released from the defensive shell that at once cuts him off and protects him from the sexual other.⁴⁸ Thus the power to expiate is a natural male endowment not given to females, who through cultural conditioning must learn what their faults are, and what ritual purging entails. Indeed the second encounter reveals exactly how this conditioning works, and how sexual initiation

discloses its need and its purpose. Connie's defensive "will[ing] herself into ... separateness" also compels her to internalise her defect – "she knew, partly it was her own fault" (*LCL* 126) – as she at once accuses and finds herself guilty of a generic deficiency, and thus consciously accepts her role as sacrificial subject of purging and purification.

For the first time, the third encounter orchestrates those major iconographical motifs of expiatory sacrifice – fire and water – assimilating erotic arousal to atavistic ritual cleansings that expand and encompass the sexual action. Because it takes place in the open – in a "dense new part of the wood" (*LCL* 132) – this encounter has prognostications of a sanguinary violence (the hunting down of the prey) that are not fulfilled. "[L]ike an animal" about to be immolated, Connie is made to lie down while, like a potential sacrificer, Mellors observes her "with haunted eyes" (*LCL* 133). Though the entry is scrupulously registered, it is rapidly overtaken by densely compacted figurations which run together the fire, water and bells motifs that punctuate the expiatory action.⁴⁹ While the "soft flames" of Mellors's desire heat Connie up, "melting her all molten inside", the "rippling" of bells heralds a climax that does not take place (*LCL* 133). Mellors's premature ejaculation is the sign that the expiatory work remains, as yet, unaccomplished, while Connie's "clamouring" for "fulfilment" signals her subliminal awareness of what completed purgation entails (*LCL* 133). On Mellors's re-entry, the "strange rhythms flushing up into her ... cleaving [her] consciousness" sacrificially cut off the old self from the new, as "deepening whirlpools of sensation" at once liquidate her resistance and eradicate her obstructive female self-will (*LCL* 134). If as expiatory instrument Mellors's phallus induces Connie's orgasm, her orgasm in turn induces his "seed" to spring into her in an idealised synchronicity ("We came-off together that time") that fine-tunes her climax to coincide with his own (*LCL* 134). Such "coming-off" also marks the difference between self-induced clitoral orgasm which, in Lawrence's theorising, intensifies the female will-to-resist, and the phallic-induced orgasm, which eliminates it.⁵⁰

Earlier sexualisations of sacrifice, like the romantic *Liebestod*,

identify female surrender with eroticised self-immolation. Connie's "surrender", by contrast, takes shape as a radical regression, the return to a primitive mind-set dear to nineteenth-century anthropologists, such as Tylor, for whom the childlike offering of a gift to a god is a "rudimentary sacrifice" practised by "savages and barbarians".⁵¹ While Connie, however, indulges her new "yearning adoration" (*LCL* 135) of the phallic-god that worked such a powerful catharsis on her behalf, she also fears the regression that identifies her with "savage wom[e]n" who because they lack the modern woman's conscious defiance, become slave-like and "effaced" (*LCL* 136). In Connie's final embrace of the primitive, living itself is transformed into a ritual purging, a "sink[ing] in the new bath of life" (*LCL* 136) that intensifies those rapturous lustrations she has just undergone.

The climactic fourth encounter opens with all the negative indices of an invasive and destructive sacrifice, harshly enacted. The visionary Mellors whose "slender white arms" and "delicate white loins" (*LCL* 66) once aroused Connie as she caught him washing in the backyard, transmutes into a "powerful" naked body whose "violent muscles" fill her with fear: the "peculiar haste of his possession" – his botched entry – further intensifies the effect (*LCL* 171). What Connie needs, as it were, is a second orgasm that completes the phallic work of expiation the first one began. Put differently, she must fully assimilate a sacrificial ideology that confirms male agency, purges femaleness, yet which is non-violent in its mode and intention. As a background to Connie's fears, Christ's crucifixion, which identifies sacrifice with harrowing physical mutilation, is the Western iconographical model to be disavowed. In this new erotic dispensation the mode of entry makes explicit the difference between a brutal blood-sacrifice ("the thrust of a sword in her softly-opened body" [*LCL* 173]), and the "slow thrust of peace ... such as made the world in the beginning", that alleviates Connie's "terror" (*LCL* 174). Such assimilation of sexual entry to an originary cosmogenesis already anticipates the biblical flood-waters that follow, thus completing the second phase of the expiatory drama. Its expiatory function now firmly established, the phallus attracts a

commonplace appellation rather than an inflated symbolic title: as an efficient “plunger” (*LCL* 174) it eradicates blocks or resistances to the free-flow of water.⁵² Propelling Connie on an internalised turbulent sea-voyage, it has two distinct valencies. “[F]rom the centre of soft plunging”, first the “depths parted and rolled asunder”, cutting Connie off from her old self, fuelling her “deeper” journey to an, as yet, undisclosed goal (*LCL* 174). Finally touching “the quick of all her plasm”, the phallus triggers the ultimate “consummation” that transforms her into “a woman” (*LCL* 174). Openly named for the first time, “sacrifice” is the vital clue to the erotic transaction just completed: Connie “moan[s] with a sort of bliss, as a sacrifice, and a new-born thing” (*LCL* 174). Sacrifice, the text suggests, has a potential for *jouissance* that traditional understandings (understandably) ignore or repress. Though Connie’s orgasms break the language barrier that phallic *jouissance* imposes on males – her cries are “inarticulate ... the voice out of the innermost night” (*LCL* 134) – they are still subject to sacrificial constraints that determine their range and intensity.⁵³ Far from unbounded, her orgasms are fettered by a sacrificial ethos that imposes its own gendered logic on what being a “woman” implies. As a primordial ritual recharged with sexual frisson, sacrifice reinforces male/female hierarchies and dictates the limits and goals of conflict-desiring modalities. In the context of Lawrence’s own “pollyanalytics”,⁵⁴ Connie and Mellors still live in a sacrificial era, which rules out the more equalised “Consume Marriage” (*STH* 127) the third era inaugurates. Through her masochistic surrender to purification, and through the orgasmic self-reconstitution that makes her a “woman”, Connie, at least partly, resolves the conflict between renunciation and consummation that dogged her relations with Michaelis and her earlier lovers.

As proof of the efficacy of expiatory sacrifice, Connie’s new vision unfolds through freshly cleansed and clarified senses. Releasing the phallic power to aestheticise the erotic sacrifice works one of its most spectacular transfigurations. As purely tactile sensation replaces visual contact, Mellors’s sexual body, which on earlier occasions repelled her,

becomes an object of “unspeakable beauty to the touch” (*LCL* 175).⁵⁵ Materialising the flesh sacrifice manifests its power to purge its own castrating fears and inhibitions. As the archetypal source of aesthetic sensation – “the primeval root of all full beauty” – the “strange weight of the balls” in Connie’s hand transforms the originary locus of an emasculating anxiety into the radiance of the body-beautiful that fills her with “awe, terror” (*LCL* 175). In aligning the aesthetic with the erotic Lawrence here has his cake and eats it.

While closing the traditional gap between species (the aesthetic is rooted in the instinctual drive, which all animals share), Lawrence also confirms Kant’s claim that the ideal of beauty is “only to be sought in the human figure”:⁵⁶ the human body alone possesses the capacity for a sacrificial transcendence which generates the aesthetic, and that animals do not possess. The same sacrificial logic underwrites Mellors’s subsequent purging of the celebrated four-letter words that also severs them from their animal roots: “Animals fuck ... an’ tha’rt a lot besides an animal ... that’s the beauty of thee, lass!” (*LCL* 178). Aestheticising Connie’s body Mellors performs a subtle species separation, de-animalising her sexual energies, socialising her responses, drawing both lovers into the precincts of the exclusively human, which is the necessary condition for the communion rites that soon follow.

3. Communion Rites

Up to this point in the narrative, expiatory rituals have usurped the primary roles, with communion limited to two brief consummatory moments – the shared orgasms that precipitated Connie’s “adoration” (third encounter) and her rapturous response to the male sexual body (fourth encounter). The fifth and sixth encounters, by contrast, foreground communion not, as we noted, in terms of love-feasts and banquets, but through ceremonial rites of togetherness – the dawn-sun inspired phallic worship (fifth encounter) and the decorative flower festival (sixth encounter). In obedience to the logic of sacrifice, on both

occasions expiation still plays a significant role though not in relation to Connie whose purgings (except for the anomalous seventh encounter) are now virtually complete.

As a prelude to the solar rites of communion, Mellors narrates the history of his love-life, including his marriage to Bertha Coutts, which turns on a monstrous reversal of expiatory roles. Instead of sacrificing herself to a male expiatory mandate as Connie has done, Bertha by contrast, sacrifices the sacrificer himself, exposing his basic defect – the libidinal lack that makes him come prematurely. Confounding male sacrificial privilege, her Bacchic sparagmos “tears” Mellors apart, not with a lancet, but with her “woman’s blind beakishness” (*LCL* 202) – the clitoral expression of her female self-will. Inverting the expiatory norm, Bertha usurps the male power to rid Mellors of his defect, not by purging him of it, but by substituting her clitoris for his phallic lack: “She got no feeling off it, from my working” (*LCL* 202). Her sacrificial cut, as it were, castrates an impotent organ that fails to perform its proper expiatory function.

Because Bertha feminises the phallus, using her clitoris as a substitute organ, the fifth encounter that immediately follows aims to restore its symbolic status through ritualised acts of propitiation and worship, as if to a godhead. As a symbol of libidinal flexibility, the phallus may be sword-sharp and aggressive, or pliant and peace-inducing, in a manner the earlier encounters established. Just as for Lacan the phallus is a signifier of loss that needs supplementation, so too the fifth encounter evokes an absence that transmutes into a luminous presence. The dawn-sun that illuminates the erect phallus, “rising darkish and hot-looking” (*LCL* 209), is precisely the cosmic supplement that, as *The First Lady Chatterley* puts it, connects mankind “sensually with the planets”.⁵⁷ In this phallic blazonry, sacrifice mediates between its strong weapon-like mode that “terrifies” Connie (the expiatory syndrome) and its more vulnerable “bud of life” mode (the tenderness syndrome) that unites the two lovers (*LCL* 210).

The overriding motif of the fifth encounter, however, is sacrificial

communion, the “togetherness on oath” (LCL 208) that ameliorates the abrasive gender distinctions that hierarchical phallic worship imposes. Though the phallus, as Mellors claims, is “rooted in his soul” (LCL 211), it is also the lovers’ common property, since as Connie naively insists it is “mine too” (LCL 210). Downplaying the notion of phallic ownership that sacrificially separates and disjoins, a new consensuality upgrades communion that integrates and unites. Thus Connie’s worship, as she kneels down before Mellors (LCL 210), is her return gift to the phallic godhead for her female surrender to its expiatory force. As a fitting memorial gesture, the compressed narrative that concludes the encounter rehearses the high moments of past expiations: the “molten thrilling” that purges Connie of her defects, precipitates the “last blind flush of extremity” that “wash[es]” her soul “transparent” and thus completes the catharsis (LCL 211).

Such symbolic lustrations prepare the way for the sixth encounter, where a literal open-air ritual – the primitive rain-dance – assimilates figural floods and fire to a contemporary backdrop of down-pouring rain and uprising heat: the drenched Connie offers her “full loins and buttocks” in “homage” to the fiery phallic god who pursues her. As a prelude, however, fresh variations on the expiatory motif at once preserve the sacrificial order of precedence (expiation/communion) intact, while extending its range and intensity to include vast cosmic catastrophes. As Mellors expounds it, the universal compulsion to expiate the death-drive compels the world onward to its apocalyptic denouement. In a sacrificial *auto da fé* humans “offer one another up” in an orgy of self-destruction, where the sacrificial cut is now a global act of castration – the “mechanical thing [that] cut[s] off the world’s cock” (LCL 217). As the last survivors before another species arises, the lovers are progenitors of a new natural order, as their retrogressive sixth intercourse indicates.

Predating all formalised ritual, the sexual act evokes a primordial animality, recapitulating at the ontogenetic level the phylogenetic origins of the new species. At the same time, it preserves the primal protocols of sacrifice intact. As Connie strips off her clothes, the “keen

animal breasts" which she "hold[s] up" to the rain (*LCL* 221) already point to an animalised "femaleness" as the prime object of expiation. Keeping gender priorities strictly in place, an autochthonous male expiatory drive takes on elemental configurations: the "flame" (inner heat) of Mellors's body warms up "the heap of [Connie's] soft chilled female flesh", until their locked bodies, like purificatory incense, "smoke" (*LCL* 221). Now stripped of its ritual glamour, the intercourse resonates with a blade-like, sacrificial incisiveness, typical of animal immolation: "he took her, short and sharp and finished like an animal" (*LCL* 222).⁵⁸

After the preverbal immediacy of the act, sacrificial logic dictates a more highly sophisticated symbolic communion that confirms status commonality and social hierarchy in a manner that sacrifice also does.⁵⁹ An elaborate flower-ceremony consecrates specific body-parts to cultural signification (forget-me-nots threaded in the mount of Venus, for example, connote Connie's imminent departure for Venice [*LCL* 223]). The equally symbolic knighting ceremony that immediately follows revives the sacrificial fire-and-water iconography of the love-acts that preceded it. While the "Knight of the burning Pestle" harks back to those phallic "flames" that dissolved Connie's female "self-will", the "Lady of the Red-hot Mortar" (*LCL* 227) evokes that "cup-shaped cavity" where the fiery phallus induced her turbulent liquefactions.⁶⁰ As Sir John and Lady Jane, the lovers are natural aristocrats, at the top of the species hierarchy, designed to divorce them from their animal origins. As the climax of their communion, the marriage inaugurates an originary community-for-two at odds with a mechanised universe, and where flowers, and not money, are the currency of the erotic exchange.

Unlike the two previous encounters, the seventh is anomalous in two remarkable ways, each of which touches on sacrifice. First, it radically reverses the Judeo-Christian order of precedence, which dictates that communal togetherness should follow the expiatory sacrifice that has regulated the sequence up to this point in the novel. Second, its expiatory

violence transgresses the practice of tenderness all the previous encounters took as their norm. The far from festive meal in the cottage with Mellors as host is a parodic version of the shared sacrificial sociality, which unites the participants in alimentary celebration of their release from “sin” or defilement. The special guest for the occasion, Connie’s sister, Hilda, is, in Mellors’s perception, a “stubborn woman an’ ’er own self-will” (*LCL* 245) who engages him in an orgy of class put-downs and personal insults, which he reciprocates. Fantasising the harsh expiatory disciplines needed to purge Hilda’s female defects (“Thank Heaven it isn’t me as ’as got th’ andlin’ of yer!” [*LCL* 245]), Mellors, in the love-act that follows, projects his re-aroused expiatory drive on to Connie, who now manifests a fresh female fault – shame – from which up to this point she has been notably free.

In the encounter itself, Linda Ruth Williams suggests that Connie’s “femininity here is more like an *effect* of passivity, of the fact of being ‘done to’, than an intrinsic or essential quality which [she] brings to the scene”.⁶¹ But, of course, Connie’s being “done to” has already been meticulously worked through in the first four encounters, which insist on female passivity, not only because of traditional gender determinations, but more especially because of the expiatory gestalt that organises the sex-act. Becoming “a different woman” (*LCL* 246) is a consequence both of her assuming a “slave”-like position (*LCL* 247), and of a sacrificial “piercing ... sharp and searing as fire” (*LCL* 246) that phallic entry into this new arena entails. In this fresh purging the “phallic hunt” is the agent, the “jungle” is the recessive site of the action, and the destruction of “shame” its stark expiatory intent (*LCL* 247). As a regenerative reversion to a primitive wilderness from which human cultural and sexual identity evolved, the hunt takes on a mythical “psychic power” to redeem and transform it might not otherwise have.⁶² Not only is the hunt the genetic origin of sacrificial ritual, as Walter Burkert claims it to be, it is also the primordial source of sexual difference – the essential “man’s work” that relegates women to the confines of the home and the hearth (*LCL* 221).⁶³ As such, it endows the

phallus with an aggressive cathartic potential, whose natural quarry is not beastly desire itself, but its libidinal adjunct – shame – paradoxically induced by the same sacrificial culture that seeks to alleviate it: phallic purgings, as the novel puts it, “burn out false shames and smelt out the heaviest ore of the body into purity” (*LCL* 247). Such deeply entrenched shame requires special flair and “courage”, as Connie now realises, to root out the shame-beast from its lair, and to wield the phallic sword that destroys it. In a spectacular inversion of consequences, instead of Connie’s dying of shame, as she anticipated, shame “died” in her (*LCL* 247). At precisely the moment Connie perceives her naked exposure through Mellors’s eyes, his “fluid, male knowledge” of her transformation becomes her female knowledge of her own subjectivity that accepts expiatory sex as its norm (*LCL* 248). Before her departure for Venice, she lets Mellors know that she too realises the difference between the strong sacrificial sex of the night before and its “tender” counterpart, which she prefers: “I loved last night. But you’ll keep the tenderness for me” (*LCL* 251).

4. Tender Ideologies

On Connie’s return, the final encounter in London insists on “tenderness”, now redefined, however, as the female shoring up of an always-precarious male ego, under threat from within and without. The former rich, figurative expansiveness of sexualised sacrifice is replaced by a literal reinforcement of conventional masculine norms. With Mellors’s last entry into the sacrificial arena, the narrative focus shifts from the extirpation of female faults to the preservation of the three manly qualities – “pride”, “dignity”, “integrity” (*LCL* 279) – that constitute his idealised self-image. While Connie needs deep psychic purgings to become a real “woman” (*LCL* 174), Mellors by contrast, needs the constant buttressing of a culturally conditioned identity.⁶⁴ Thus the male psyche needs no expiating, since what may seem like a fault to the female – the stubborn dedication to a masculine essence – is

an unquestioned necessity for him. No longer linked to the absence of male sacrificial violence, “tenderness” now connotes a transformed female awareness, embodied in a “tender, aware woman” who, like Connie, sacrifices her own subjectivity in order to fortify his: “Thank God I have got a woman who is with me, and tender and aware of me” (*LCL* 279). Their final orgasm is thus a final communion, a consolidation of the new receptivity ethos that constitutes the backdrop to Mellors’s one and only letter to Connie that paradoxically details the trials of their separation.

As a prologue to the Lawrentian third era, the contents of the letter transcend the conflict between renunciation and consummation that marked the second era of sacrificial love. Now “chastity” – the supreme type of sexual renunciation – takes on a new and more expansive signification. No longer a block or a barrier, it signals the “cool between-whiles”, the apocalyptic “pause” before the advent of the third era (*LCL* 301). Not only is Mellors an initiate into the secrets of the Lawrentian trinitarian “metaphysics”, he also possesses an intuitive knowledge of the dynamics of sacrificial love, as his sexual performance with Connie reveals. Thus his insistence on the efficacy of his “pentacostal flame” and “cool water” revives the sacrificial gestalt that structured the novel’s erotics. If, however, for Mellors, the “old Pentacost isn’t quite right” (*LCL* 301), the cause lies in its association with strong ritual sacrifice, the holocaustic sin offerings of *Leviticus* (23:16–20),⁶⁵ rather than with the new tender sacrifice he desires to practise with Connie. In contrast to *Leviticus*, his “little pentacost” evokes the “forked flame” (*LCL* 301) that brought peace to Jesus’s disciples (*Acts* 2:1–4), and that now brings peace to the lovers. Though their enforced chastity may seem like an expiation it is also a communion that unites the lovers while it temporarily keeps them apart. This ultimate sexualising of sacrifice, in effect, concatenates a continuing evangelical uplift with a postponed erotic fulfilment.

¹ Dennis King Keenan, *The Question of Sacrifice* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2005), 10. The locus classicus is Matthew's gospel, which three times promises a heavenly payback for earthly renunciation: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in Heaven" (*Matthew* 6:1). See also 6:5–6, and 6:16–18. All biblical references are from *The Holy Bible*, Authorised King James Version (Oxford: Oxford UP, no date given).

² Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996), 95–6.

³ Kathryn McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2008), 13.

⁴ Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function*, trans. W. D. Halls (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1964), 19–20. Though there is no direct evidence that Lawrence read *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Functions*, his lifelong interest in ritual sacrifice ensured his knowledge of its contents.

⁵ Walter Burkert, 'Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth', in *Understanding Religious Sacrifice: A Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Carter (New York: Continuum, 2003), 212–38, 218. First published 1983.

⁶ For a detailed working through of the logic of sacrifice, based on its dimensions of expiation and communion, see Nancy Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992), 17–29.

⁷ In Romantic literature and later, as Derek Hughes observes, fire and water are no longer the external sacrificial instruments of a culture, but "images of mental transformation, of evolution beyond the restrictions of current culture": see Derek Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice: Ritual Death in Literature and Opera* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 186.

⁸ Traditional sacrificial communion involves love-feasts and banquets which are inappropriate to the rustic food-regimen the lovers adopt.

⁹ Frank Kermode, 'Spenser and the Allegorists', in *Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne: Renaissance Essays* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 28–9.

¹⁰ Mark Spilka for example, shows that Kermode's talk about the "dreadful mysteries beyond the phallic cult" fails to chart the sequential progress each of the seven encounters enacts; though Spilka repeatedly refers to Connie's ritual "purging[s]" remarkably he does not connect them to sacrifice. See Mark Spilka, *Renewing the Normative D. H. Lawrence. A Personal Progress*

(Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1992), 105.

¹¹ Charles Burack, *D. H. Lawrence's Language of Sacred Experience: The Transfiguration of the Reader* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 13–50. For an essay that employs a yogic chakra typology to track the seven encounters, see Gerald Doherty, 'Connie and the Chakras: Yogic Patterns in Lady Chatterley's Lover', in *D. H. Lawrence Review*, 13 (1980), 79–93.

¹² Margaret Masson, 'D. H. Lawrence's Congregational Inheritance', in *D. H. Lawrence Review*, 22 (1990), 53–68.

¹³ Jane Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (London: Merlin Press, 1962).

¹⁴ E. B. Tylor, 'Primitive Culture: Researches in the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Arts and Custom', in Carter, 14–38, 25; James G. Frazer, 'The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion', in Carter, 79–87, 79.

¹⁵ Hubert and Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function*, 93.

¹⁶ Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity*, 128.

¹⁷ As Jay notes, this ban on participation included all the laity, male and female "throughout the sacrificial tradition, precisely as the one line of priestly descent became more differentiated from the laity, so did the eucharistic sacrifice become more expiatory". Ibid., 112.

¹⁸ McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice*, 11.

¹⁹ Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity*, 28.

²⁰ In expiatory sacrifice, as William Beers suggests, the split-off parts of the (male) sacrificial self embodied in a "surrogate or substitute victim", almost invariably "include those experiences having to do with women, sex, and childbirth". See William Beers, 'Women and Sacrifice: Male Narcissism and the Psychology of Religion', in Carter, 137–47, 391. Luce Irigaray claims that the primordial sacrifice is of women's fertility: "What has been sacrificed to the patriarchal economy is women's relationships with their mothers and daughters and with each other". See Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (London: Routledge, 1991), 182.

²¹ For an analysis of the gendered constitution of the idea of materiality, see Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 49–53.

²² McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice*, 119, 120.

²³ D. H. Lawrence, *The First Lady Chatterley* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 156.

²⁴ Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity*, 107.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 156.

²⁶ T. S. Eliot, *Selected Prose*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber, 1975), 175–76.

²⁷ T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *Collected Poems 1909–1935* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, III 308.

²⁹ T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1944). Subsequent line references are given parenthetically in the body of this article.

³⁰ W. B. Yeats, *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1958).

³¹ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. Seamus Deane (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 236. While Christine Froula's "male initiation" paradigm bears certain resemblances to the sacrificial paradigm I employ, it differs in its exclusion of the complementary expiation/communion components of sacrifice, essential to the Judeo-Christian typology, and central to Stephen's writing of the villanelle. See Christine Froula, *Modernism's Body: Sex, Culture and Joyce* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996), 38. For discussions of the similarities and differences between the two paradigms, see J. Z. Smith, 'The Domestication of Sacrifice', in Carter, 328–41, and Maurice Bloch, 'Prey into Hunter: The Politics of Religious Experience', in Carter, 397–420.

³² Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity*, xxiv.

³³ Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 240.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 238–9.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 239, 240.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 242. By an intriguing coincidence which needs no explanation the defects that Stephen expiates in Emma (her "wilful heart" and her "dark shame") are identical to those Mellors expiates in Connie (her "self-will" and her "deep organic shame" [*LCL* 247]). The sacrifice of femaleness is their common denominator.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 242.

³⁸ Ibid., 243.

³⁹ D. H. Lawrence, *Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (London: Heinemann, 1961), 120.

⁴⁰ Froula, *Modernism's Body: Sex, Culture and Joyce*, 66–7.

⁴¹ In a 1916 letter, Lawrence restates the conflict in theological terms: Christianity says “renounce all worldly desires, and live for heaven” whereas “I think people ought to fulfil sacredly their desires” (2L 633).

⁴² In his essay ‘Morality and the Novel’ (1925), Lawrence puts it as follows: “When, of two parties, one yields utterly to the other, this is called sacrifice, and it also means death” (STH 174).

⁴³ This passage was omitted from the final version of the novel. It is included in the ‘Explanatory notes’ (LCL 370).

⁴⁴ McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice*, 60.

⁴⁵ As Leo Bersani notes, the (Judeo-Christian) “redemptive aesthetic is inherently sacrificial. A catastrophic error or defect is somehow made up for by the hero’s (the victim’s, the sinner’s) consciousness of his defect. Life is redeemed by an act of cognition”. Thus Connie’s “act of cognition” recognises her self-will as a defect before the expiatory process commences. See Leo Bersani, *The Culture of Redemption* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990), 97.

⁴⁶ Burkert, ‘Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth’, 214.

⁴⁷ Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity*, 28.

⁴⁸ As the text puts it, Mellors had “no sense of wrong or sin: he was troubled by no conscience in that respect” (LCL 120).

⁴⁹ In the context of sacrificial expiation to which it properly belongs, the concatenation of figurative names, whirlpools and bells is far from the “risible” that Tony Pinkney, in his otherwise stimulating book, takes it to be. See Tony Pinkney, *D. H. Lawrence* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 145. In traditional sacrificial ritual such as the Tridentine mass, bells signal the approach of the climactic immolation.

⁵⁰ In the past, critics commonly assumed that Connie’s first orgasm was vaginal as opposed to Coutts’s clitoral orgasms (an established distinction that Masters and Johnson’s researches undermined). The significant Lawrentian distinction is between Coutts’s self-induced orgasms which involve a single organ, and Connie’s phallic-induced orgasm that spreads through all “her tissue and consciousness” (LCL 134) and possesses a strong penetrative and

expiatory potential.

⁵¹ Tylor, 'Primitive Culture: Researches in the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Arts and Custom', 15.

⁵² The *OED* defines plunger as a "device ... for clearing blocked pipes by a plunging or sucking action".

⁵³ In contradistinction to what Lacan terms "phallic jouissance", a woman's "Other jouissance" permits her "to step beyond the boundaries set by language and beyond the pittance of pleasure language allows". See Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995), 107.

⁵⁴ Lawrence, *Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, 9.

⁵⁵ Linda Ruth Williams's *Sex in the Head: Visions of Femininity and Film in D. H. Lawrence* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993) mounts a spirited and persuasive critique of this basic Lawrentian motif.

⁵⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner, 1951), 79.

⁵⁷ Lawrence, *The First Lady Chatterley*, 156. In Lacanian terms, male jouissance is limited to the phallic function. Confined to the signifier, it is essentially masturbatory (see Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*, 106–7). Extending the range of phallic signification, the dawn-sun, as supplement, endows the phallus with solar intensities beyond the limits of language and the constraints of the autoerotic. For a clarification of the similarities and differences between Lacanian and Lawrentian conceptions of phallic symbolism, see Ed Jewinski, 'The Phallus in D. H. Lawrence and Jacques Lacan', in *D. H. Lawrence Review*, 21 (1989), 7–24.

⁵⁸ Mellors's sexual prowess reflects that of traditional animal sacrificers who, as McClymond graphically puts it, "like any [adult male] Isrealite worth his salt knew how to cut an animal's throat correctly". See McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence: A Comparative Study of Sacrifice*, 60.

⁵⁹ Cleo McNeill Dreams, *The Virgin Mary, Monotheism and Sacrifice* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 27–31.

⁶⁰ The *OED* defines mortar as "a vessel with a cup-shaped cavity in which ingredients ... are pounded with a pestle".

⁶¹ Williams, *Sex in the Head: Visions of Femininity and Film in D. H. Lawrence*, 110.

⁶² Hughes, *Culture and Sacrifice: Ritual Death in Literature and Opera*, 184.

⁶³ Jay critiques Burkert's theory of sacrifice for its assumption of a universal human nature, and for its gender relations "determined by biologically given male violence". His arguments, she claims, are not scientific theories, but ideologies. See Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity*, 133.

⁶⁴ For Mellors, the term "tenderness" carries its own threat of feminisation, reinforced by other people's sense that he had "too much of the woman in [him]" (*LCL* 276).

⁶⁵ The Pentacostal "meat offering unto the Lord" (*Leviticus* 23:16) includes lambs, rams and a bullock.