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"AT LAST TO NEWNESS": D. H. LAWRENCE'S *THE RAINBOW* AND THE DREAM OF A BETTER WORLD

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D. H. Lawrence was not initially an empty space later filled with highly personal, indeed idiosyncratic, writing. The first major British writer from the industrial working class was in large part formed within its complex culture. Work on what Lawrence gained from his Eastwood years still lags, perhaps because of a long history of dismissing the culture of his home town and region, which was branded deficient by both T. S. Eliot and John Maynard Keynes. For the latter, Lawrence's negative reaction to Cambridge in 1915 was the result of an envious first encounter with something new and "obviously a civilisation".[1] F. R. Leavis's withering rejoinder – that Lawrence was "judging out of his experience of something incomparably more worthy to be called a 'civilisation'" – did not change all minds.[2] For example, Keynes's latest biographer, Richard Davenport-Hines, recirculates his subject's position in a cruder form, saying that Lawrence was "cankered by class resentment".[3] Leavis seems to have been confident in the 1950s that his readers would know what characterised the culture of Lawrence's upbringing, without offering much in the way of explanation. However, the complex texture of late-Victorian Midlands and Northern life is surely no longer widely known today. The culture that surrounded Lawrence in his first decades, and his response to it, needs to be more fully described if the old prejudices that denigrate it are finally to be surpassed. This article seeks to contribute to such an account by looking at his response in *The Rainbow* (1915) to late-nineteenth-century radical political culture.

In this article I see *The Rainbow* as a strong, modernist recasting of late-nineteenth-century radicalism.[4] My emphasis here differs from the way the novel has often been read in recent decades. Reflecting the importance of identity, gender and sexuality to late-twentieth and early-twenty-first century society, the focus has been the main relationships in each of the three generations.[5] However, the novel is very clear that separating oneself from the world and living *only* through marriage and the family is a problem. At the end of the 'Anna Victrix' chapter, Will begins to acknowledge that his sole concentration on his wife and young family is a limitation:

> And yet, for his own part, for his private being, Brangwen felt that the whole of the man's world was exterior and extraneous to his own real life with Anna. Sweep away the whole monstrous superstructure of the world of today, cities and industries and civilisation, leave only the bare earth with plants growing and waters running, and he would not mind, so long as he were whole, had Anna and the child and the new, strange certainty in his soul …
>
> And what more? What more would be necessary? The great mass of activity in which mankind was engaged meant nothing to him. By nature, he had no part in it. What did he live for, then? For Anna only, and for the sake of living? What did he want on this earth? Anna only, and his children, and his life with his children and her? Was there no more? (*R* 179)

Will starts to glimpse that there is more than relationships and the family, though he is shown to be capable only of a circumscribed engagement with wider society through his developing interest in handicraft teaching.

The encounter with the wider world is often explored in *The Rainbow* through the stories and language of Christianity. Lawrence reworked for the new century a popular late-Victorian deployment of religion that addressed political themes, specifically moving self and society beyond the nation state and

industrialisation. The title draws on the story of Noah and the flood, and there are many references to (among many other Bible stories) the Garden of Eden, the Israelites' entry into the Promised Land and Jesus's death and resurrection. Biblical language, symbolism and stories in the novel have long been discussed. T. R. Wright sees Lawrence as recombining biblical material in *The Rainbow*, but there is more to say about how those religious plots and ideas were re-used.[6] My focus on the popular political deployment of religion differs from Virginia Hyde's important study *The Risen Adam: D. H. Lawrence's Revisionist Typology*. Though Hyde often addresses the move into a different world that I address here, the corpus she examines is different, with a focus on Lawrence's reading of the Bible and Victorian religious texts.[7]

In *The Rainbow* Lawrence recast the late-nineteenth-century radicalism he knew in his early decades. However, he is more questioning and sceptical than the late-Victorian radicals; he took their use of Christian tropes and reworked them in turn. Lawrence's novel can be said to occupy a position between optimistic 1880s radicalism and the mid-twentieth-century pessimism of Critical Theory. Before *The Rainbow* came radical movements that both critiqued modern industrial life and perceived the immanence of a shift into a new and better world. After Lawrence's death, from the 1930s on, Frankfurt School thinking saw accelerating forms of capitalism as "totalising".[8] In this model people were increasingly unable even to imagine a different life, let alone bring about change; they were locked into certain ways of working, consuming and engaging with popular culture. Lawrence came to realise how hard it would be to embark on a new path, though at times he was more confident that this might happen. The general tendency through the first fourteen months of the First World War – when the final manuscript version of *The Rainbow* was written, the typescript prepared and the novel published – was towards a darkening of Lawrence's vision. My reading utilises the range of surviving versions of the text, and not only the 1915 first British edition that forms the basis of the Cambridge Edition of the novel.

We can begin with the ideas of these late-nineteenth-century radicals. Why did they turn to religious terms and language? The intellectual issue in philosophy and political theory is that it is hard to imagine a different future, how one might get there, and indeed whether change is possible at all. People repeat what they know, even if they are aware it does not make them happy. Coming up with an alternative needs time, energy and a sense of distance – hard to find if long hours are spent at work or in caring for others. Also important are access to education and books that explore other possibilities. To make this point at least one late-Victorian radical turned to the following sentences from Thomas Carlyle's *Past and Present* (1843) on the conditions faced by the new industrial workers:[9]

> Thus these poor Manchester manual workers mean only, by day's-wages for day's-work, certain coins of money adequate to keep them living;—in return for their work, such modicum of food, clothes and fuel as will enable them to continue their work itself! They as yet clamour for no more; the rest, still inarticulate, cannot yet shape itself into a demand at all, and only lies in them as a dumb wish; perhaps only, still more inarticulate, as a dumb, altogether unconscious want.[10]

At most a demand is made for enough to keep going, but anything beyond that cannot be expressed in words, or even registered consciously. How do you think something you cannot see around you? And if you believe that you have such a model of a different, better future, how do you communicate it to others?

The radical movements that emerged in the early 1880s differed from Chartism, which had reached its peak in mid-century. Many radicals identified as socialist, though this form of socialism rejected top-down structures and a strong state, often finding common cause with some forms of anarchism. (Most important here was the London-based Russian exile Peter Kropotkin who espoused a "no-government system of socialism".)[11] The name of a

short-lived but foundational group that formed in 1883 gives a sense of their aims: The Fellowship of the New Life. The minutes of their first meeting record a wish to establish a "communistic Society" while seeking a fuller existence, a "higher life".[12] Popular radical discourse appropriated the language of Christianity and the Bible in order to advocate wholesale social change, the "religion of socialism", as it was called.[13] Though the Christian Socialist movement that had emerged in the 1850s was an initial influence, many who drew on this religious language were not themselves believing Christians.

Edward Carpenter (1844–1929), a member of The Fellowship of the New Life, and William Morris (1834–1896) are the two figures most closely associated with what historians have called "ethical socialism". The former is more important here. Carpenter spent much of his life in Derbyshire and near Sheffield, though he was born in the South, in Hove.[14] In his twenties he was a Clerical Fellow of a Cambridge college. When he was about to be ordained as an Anglican priest by the Bishop of Ely in June 1870, Carpenter had doubts about the Church's teaching on atonement. He appears to have found it hard to agree that a wrathful God sought vengeance for mankind's sins through the suffering of his Son. Article 2 of the Thirty-Nine Articles, for example, says that Jesus "truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men".[15] The 'Homily on the Salvation of Mankind' from the First Book of *The Books of Homilies* takes this understanding of atonement further; Jesus's crucifixion saw "sacrifice and satisfaction, or (as it may be called) amends to his Father for our sins, to assuage his wrath and indignation conceived against us".[16] Despite his concerns over the orthodoxy of Carpenter's views, the Bishop ordained him anyway.[17]

For a while Carpenter served as curate to F. D. Maurice, one of the major figures in Christian Socialism. Unsatisfied by this life and work, Carpenter left his Fellowship and the Church in 1874 to work for the University Extension movement in Sheffield. Even then he

felt keenly that a hierarchical relationship pertained between himself and ordinary people. Moving into the countryside outside Sheffield, to Millthorpe, he focused on market gardening; it was not far away, on Totley train station in the spring of 1891, that Carpenter met his partner, George Merrill. A pioneering "simple lifer", Carpenter did not focus on state ownership or redistribution but on living without many goods and possessions. He differed from those like John Ruskin and Morris, who were interested in reacquiring old skills and living with objects at once beautiful and useful. Making things that were simply functional was enough for Carpenter.

The Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm saw Carpenter's espousal of a range of causes, something he shared with many of these late-Victorian campaigners, as diverse forms of protest against society's norms. As he put it, "Heterodoxies overlapped".[18] However, a commitment to a different kind of life connected the causes Carpenter supported. Seeing industrialisation as damaging to nature and human health he long campaigned about the "smoke fiend" in Sheffield and other industrial cities. Rather than exploiting or controlling nature, the stress was on living with it; he espoused vegetarianism and took regular naked sunbaths. Victorian clothes were constraining, and Carpenter supported simplified dress. He had a horror of "leathern coffins", as he called shoes, and it is with Carpenter that the association of radicals and sandals originates.[19] He supported women campaigning for the vote and equality, and he was opposed to constraints placed on sexual life. Carpenter is mainly remembered now as an early advocate of homosexual rights. His *Homogenic Love and its Place in a Free Society* (1894) was perhaps the first published text of its kind in the English-speaking world.[20] As with all the causes he supported Carpenter made his case by appealing to the history and literature of Europe, especially to the civilisations of its past (Greece and Rome in particular). He also compared the West with cultures in other parts of the world.

For Carpenter, industrial society stood in the way of fuller, more intense forms of life. He was extraordinarily energetic in his

activism from the 1880s into the 1910s. As well as a flow of books and participation in causes and campaigns, he kept up a wide network of friends and associates, especially across the North and the Midlands, and became well-known nationally and beyond the British Isles. Willie Hopkin, Eastwood's leading freethinker and socialist, admired Carpenter and the two corresponded. The young Lawrence was part of a group of young people who met to discuss ideas, culture and politics at Hopkin's house on Devonshire Drive in Eastwood. It was to this group, on 19 March 1908, that Lawrence gave his paper 'Art and the Individual'. At the opening of what is believed to be his reading text for that talk, he says that they gathered to discuss social problems "with a view to advancing a more perfect social state and to our fitting ourselves to be perfect citizens – communists – what not. Is that it?" (*STH* 223).[21] Though he maintained his friendship with Hopkin into the second half of the 1920s, Lawrence was often critical of what he saw as the limitations and naiveties of his thought and politics, as can be seen from the characters based on Hopkin in both *Mr Noon* (1934, 1984) and *Touch and Go* (1920).

The French scholar Emile Delavenay argued, some forty-five years ago, that Carpenter exercised a deep but unacknowledged influence on Lawrence, in part through Hopkin.[22] It is not hard to point to the broad similarities: *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure* (1889), perhaps Carpenter's most widely-read prose text, addresses reversing the artifices of modern society in favour of living in accord with nature.[23] In his writing, personal relationships were seen as damaged but also as a source of hope for renewal. However, Delavenay really pushed his claim that Lawrence was a Carpenter disciple, saying that Lawrence followed him closely, particularly in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* (1920). The view that Lawrence simply reproduced Carpenter's view is crude. It allows too limited a role for Lawrence's own thinking and his creative practice as a novelist. Thinking in terms of transmission between individuals also brackets off the roles of wider cultural formations and of social change. When sent a copy of *The Rainbow* by Hopkin, Carpenter,

rather than recognising all his own ideas in the novel, was left somewhat baffled.[24] The Cambridge Edition of the *Letters* and *Works* of D. H. Lawrence has not produced much in the way of further evidence for Delavenay's claim. However, Carpenter's biographer Sheila Rowbotham is surely right when she observes that it is also possible that "the similarities in Lawrence's and Carpenter's writing could be accounted for by the cultural influences they shared rather than direct transmission".[25] There is a common set of concerns in play, though Lawrence's analysis of what stands in the way of change is bleaker and more thoroughgoing in the face of the new century's worsening conditions.

Carpenter used the language of religion in his writing. Shortly after moving to Millthorpe, he began his long Whitman-influenced poem *Towards Democracy* (1883–1905). In a section of the poem, from near the start of Part Two, titled 'York Minster', the former priest suggests that Christianity and its legacies make possible present-day complacency about poverty. The transcendent music of the medieval period can no longer lift people above harsh present-day realities:

> The quaint barbaric tentative uncertain-toned Gregoric
> refrain, soaring,
> Soaring, soaring, through the great desolate nave wandering,
> in the ears of the one drowsy verger dying.
>
> And all around over the world spreads winter,
> Heavy and silent;
> There is no music heard in the streets, nor sound of hope or of
> pleasuring — but pinched faces are there,
> And in wretched homes reign cold and starvation.
>
> The Church is dead. Snow covers the ground.[26]

Though critical of the husk of organised religion, Carpenter still works from the contrast between what Christianity offered and the harsh everyday reality for the poor. In a 'Note on *Towards Democracy*', he says he preferred to engage with the "sky" in his poem, with what lay outside the man-made, in order to give expression to the world's "illuminant splendour".[27] Like Carpenter, *The Rainbow* is suspicious of human versions of the heavens, as seen in the roofs and Gothic arches of cathedrals. In the final version of 'The Cathedral' chapter of the novel, Lawrence rejects both the retreat into religious ecstasy of Will and the dismissive questioning of Anna on their trip to Lincoln Cathedral. Ursula is to unite her mother's stress on present-day realities and her father's responsiveness to what lies beyond the everyday, in time moving past both. This is explored at the start of the 'First Love' chapter in terms of a "duality" within Ursula, between the "week-day world of people and trains and duties and reports" and a "Sunday world of absolute truth and living mystery" (*R* 263). The former is becoming dominant, though a religious sense remains as a "residue" (*R* 264), and is to return in a different, less orthodox form subsequently.

Which writers inspired those espousing the "religion of socialism"? We can turn for an answer to Robert Blatchford, who edited *The Clarion*, one of the most popular late-nineteenth-century radical publications. Blatchford believed that you had to offer ordinary working people a sense of what a better life might involve, so politics was only a part of what the weekly newspaper covered. *The Clarion* was also linked to charitable enterprises, like the Cinderella clubs, which sought to bring food and entertainment to children in the industrial cities, and with Clarion cycling and walking clubs.[28] Blatchford's *God and My Neighbour* (1903) was opposed to Christianity. (In a letter to Rev. Robert Reid of the Eastwood Congregationalists, Lawrence said he could not read it "with patience", as with the work of other "violent, blatant writers against Christianity" [*1L* 39].) However, Blatchford did argue that socialism should be seen in religious terms because it too sought a more intense conception of life that connected the self to larger

forces. He declared in his pamphlet 'The New Religion' that "To love each other as brothers and sisters, and to love the earth as the mother of us all, that is part of our new religion".[29] He maintained that the movement had a heartland and sets out its intellectual underpinnings:

> Now for the new religion. Whence came it? What is it? If you asked a London Socialist for the origin of the new movement he would refer you to Karl Marx and other German Socialists. But so far as our northern people are concerned I am convinced that beyond the mere outline of State Socialism Karl Marx and his countrymen have had but little influence. No; the new movement here; the new religion, which is Socialism, and something more than Socialism, is more largely the result of the labours of Darwin, Carlyle, Ruskin, Dickens, Thoreau, and Walt Whitman.[30]

The delineation of different Englands here is striking; "state socialism" is seen as a London phenomenon. Blatchford himself was long based in Manchester, and *The Clarion*'s readership was mainly in the industrial North, where non-conformity was strong.[31]

Blatchford's list of writers includes those who critiqued Victorian industrialisation, like Carlyle, Dickens and Ruskin. Their presence is to be expected, with Ruskin offering alternatives as well as powerful critique.[32] What Thoreau suggested – and Blatchford might have added Emerson – was "immanentism". English radicals gained from these American writers a sense of the divine showing itself as a generalised life force emanating from nature; modern ways of living have obscured such contact. History would move into a full recognition by humankind of what nature offered. There was no need of some special form of intervention, such as God sending his only Son to suffer on the cross for man's sins (the doctrine that Carpenter had problems with when he was examined prior to his ordination) and a Day of Judgement. American literature had a powerful effect on English radicalism in the second

half of the nineteenth century.[33] Carpenter said his reading of Whitman while at Cambridge changed his life;[34] he went on to spend two extended periods with Whitman, and also met Emerson. He was among those who first brought Whitman to a wide public in Britain, where an example of Whitman's popular reception is the group known as the Bolton Whitmanites.[35] For Blatchford he brought "the great message of true Democracy and the brave and sweet comradeship of natural life".[36] Though Lawrence was to turn against Whitman, from the final version of *Studies in Classic American Literature* onwards, Lawrence's thought often took this "immanentist" form; however, he did not view nature as always benign and positive.

But what of Charles Darwin? Late-nineteenth-century radicals used a language of evolution to suggest that society was inevitably moving towards a different, better world. They were remarkably untroubled by the incompatibility of this position with Darwin's theory of natural selection. Rather their belief that a generation could pass on its improved personal and communal life to the next is closer to the earlier theories of the French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck.[37] In a long, Whitman-inspired passage in the manuscript of *The Rainbow*, omitted from the published version where the scene is much briefer, Ursula looks through a microscope at a slide, noting that while science describes processes it does not capture their wider implications and place them in a richer narrative. Rising up through different interconnected forms of life to human kind, Ursula sees herself as a culmination of an evolutionary process that, at its tip at least, enters Paradise:

> For I am I, pushing on into the unknown. And all that is behind me, is of me. But nothing that is behind me, shall retain me. And nothing that I am, shall detain me. And nothing that I want to be shall make me deny that which in truth and in the proper hour, I am. For I would be a God; yea, and if I become God, I am still at the same moment the ape and the tiger. The stream that flows into Paradise is flowing unbroken through the jungle and the

> plain, through filth and bloodiness and the greasy wharves of Commerce: it only arrives at Paradise, whilst flowing in one continuous stream through all that is behind, existing at the same moment in all, but with its tip advancing into Paradise … Not if commerce builds me round as if I were a dock, will I submit. The dock shall be washed away, I will go on, for I must go. (*R* 656)

As a typescript revision has it, "She saw the light of Paradise in the nucleus under her slide" (*R* 656). Ursula resolves not to be impeded by capitalism; Paradise is located beyond money and the market.[38]

In *The Rainbow* the "religion of socialism" developed in the late-Victorian period is recast for new times; Lawrence's use of religion is not solely driven by his personal beliefs.[39] He recognised that it was getting ever more difficult to effect change as modernity intensified. My position differs from that of the historian Thomas Linehan. For him modernism is the culture of modernisation, and these radical movements, even though they react against modernisation, are still produced by it and are therefore modernist. Linehan is indebted to Marshall Berman in taking this "maximalist" view of modernism, which becomes a movement not limited to the arts but rather a way of describing the culture in broad terms.[40] However, in Linehan's account the 1880s through to the early decades of the twentieth century, and early and high modernism, all become too undifferentiated. More specificity is required when describing these movements and their relationship to the new forms and styles of modernist writing.

The positive, optimistic period in this resurgent radicalism was in fact short-lived. What arose in the early 1880s came under pressure as early as the end of that same decade. Reasons include an economic upturn, the state's violent suppression of protests (in particular Bloody Sunday, 13 November 1887), and the birth of a consumer capitalism that colonised leisure time for the market. There was also a reaction against so-called "ethical socialism" from within the Left. A group that soon split away from The Fellowship

of the New Life supplanted it in importance: the Fabians. Their view was that you should scientifically analyse problems and propose specific policy changes. To carry out these changes you needed a strong state. (In a passage Lawrence excised from the typescript, Ursula dismisses the Fabians as part of what is wrong with the world, since they were not really trying to bring about change but were held by the commandment of a "pathetic religion": "Thou shalt strive for the greatest degree of material prosperity for all men" [*R* 632].)[41] George Bernard Shaw made his views on the split clear when he said that there was a division between those who wanted to "organise the docks" and those who wanted to "sit among the dandelions".[42] By 1906 an alliance of movements formed into the Labour Party. Ethical socialism retained its presence there and in the broad Labour movement, especially in the Independent Labour Party that was particularly strong in Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire (Edward Carpenter had played a role in its formation). The literature associated with the movement shows the continued influence of this late-nineteenth-century radicalism. Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (1914), which supplanted Carpenter's *Towards Democracy* as the main literary text of British socialism, reworked the Bible and was deeply indebted to Robert Blatchford.[43] However, the dominant note was an increasing stress on organising for power at Westminster, where what was promised to the electorate was carefully calibrated.[44] What receded was the wider sense of what a transformed and changed society would look like, of what power might be used to achieve.

A striking feature of *The Rainbow* is that it shares many themes of the "religion of socialism".[45] These include what had been lost since childhood, how the modern experience of time and space could be changed, and utopian and apocalyptic thinking. In the case of childhood, many late-Victorian radicals saw the society they wanted to bring about in terms of the plenitude of experience found in an idyllic childhood; they described what they wanted in terms of a re-entry into a lost Eden. Wordsworth's "Heaven lies about us in

our infancy", from the 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood' (1807), was much quoted.[46] In William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890), Old Hammond is talking to his visitor from the nineteenth century:

> He sighed, and then smiled and said: "At least let us rejoice that we have got back our childhood again. I drink to the days that are!"
>
> "Second childhood," said I in a low voice, and then blushed at my double rudeness, and hoped that he hadn't heard. But he had, and turned to me smiling, and said: "Yes, why not? And for my part, I hope it may last long; and that the world's next period of wise and unhappy manhood, if that should happen, will speedily lead us to a third childhood: if indeed this age be not our third. Meantime, my friend, you must know that we are too happy, both individually and collectively, to trouble ourselves about what is to come hereafter."[47]

Carpenter believed that the future would see "the liberation of a thousand and one instincts, desires and capacities which since our childhood's days have lain buried within us, concealed and ignored because we have thought them wrong or unworthy, when really all they have wanted has been recognition".[48] Lawrence's psychoanalysis books were also to be informed by a Romantic conception of childhood, but the children in *The Rainbow* suggest that in modern times it is hard to experience an untroubled state, even in the early years of life. Intense relationships accelerate development and lay down the structures of adult sexuality. Anna reacts against the Polishness of her mother; however, years later, this attracts her to Will's form of otherness, initially at least. Elements of Ursula's intense early relationship with Will, his "dark" centre and violence, are what she engages with and finally rejects in Anton Skrebensky.[49]

Industrialisation's impact on the experience of space and time is also reworked in *The Rainbow*. Workers were clocked in and out at

set hours, with their work organised to maximise profit. The design of factories produced new spaces in which people could be monitored.[50] *The Rainbow* has been said to respond to these changes by advocating a retreat into the past, and as engaging in nostalgia. Graham Holderness sees the novel as seeking a return to the Marsh Farm and what it represents.[51] In fact the novel is quite clear that there is no way back.[52] And though the published version has two chapters titled 'The Widening Circle' there is no straightforward progression in terms of space either. The novel suggests that older spatial relations have ended with the coming of the modern world; a Polish woman lives at the Marsh Farm and Anton Skrebensky, a descendant of another Polish exile, fights in Britain's colonial wars. Lawrence represents the effects of changed experiences of time and space, seeing this as damaging; there are no easy answers. Overall, then, his was not the view of Philip Snowden, who, imbued with late-nineteenth-century radicalism, said that "socialism comes as the angel of light, bearing to mankind this message of truth", namely "to follow the beckoning angel who is waiting to lead us back through the gates of paradise into an Eden of intellectual joy".[53]

Lawrence's modernist reworking of Bible stories in *The Rainbow* sees them broken down into their various narrative elements before they are recombined. Mark Kinkead-Weekes's powerful example here is the scene in which Tom Brangwen's body is laid out at Anna's house after his death in the flood: "The Biblical story is turned inside out; the antediluvian world is not wicked … Noah the Just perishes in the Flood; but when he is seen naked he is not disgraced but magnificent" (*R* 515). It is important to register the way something new is formed, despite the difficult conditions. Lawrence's is not a modernism that watches with detachment, or even revels in fragmentation and chaos. Rather, as T. J. Clark has recently noted, Lawrence exemplifies how modern "destruction … called forth a tremendous, reparative countermovement from within modernism itself".[54]

The strategy of comparing the present with a different, imagined future is a particularly rich area in late-nineteenth-century literature: for example, an extraordinary number of utopias were written,[55] utopian communities were established to show that different ways of living were possible, and (non-Christian) socialist churches were founded whose services sought to offer a glimpse of a life beyond the daily grind.[56] In the final part of this article I will concentrate on how the shift from a present-day order into a different, transformed world was explored, using a language not of revolution but of the coming of the Kingdom on Earth. Sin, atonement and judgement were eschewed in favour of different eschatological traditions.

Particularly important here is Joachim of Fiore, a monk and divine, active around the year 1200, who stressed the coming of the third age – an idea echoed, as seen earlier, by Old Hammond in *News from Nowhere*. Joachim was much discussed by nineteenth-century thinkers and though Lawrence's knowledge of this tradition has been considered, his relationship to its popular, political transmission has not.[57] The first age had been that of the Father and the Old Testament, then came the second, that of Christ of grace, wisdom and the Church. In the last, third period, the Kingdom on Earth would not precede final judgement but be an on-going, full life on earth. Joachim himself was not condemned for his teaching and after his death his ideas had a considerable influence on the Franciscan movement. However Bonaventure, as Minister General of the Franciscan order (from 1274–79), attacked Joachim's writing for undermining the role of the Church – a critique recently drawn upon by Cardinal Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI, from 2005–13). According to John L. Allen, Ratzinger had "Joachim of Fiore in the back of his mind in the course of his decade-long crusade against liberation theology".[58] Joachim has been used by those claiming that Christians should fight for a better world in this life, from Spiritual Franciscans to liberation theologians, with his early critics cited by those who say the good Christian should focus on how the Church can help them with the next life. As Linehan has argued, "The Christian social utopia of the Kingdom has therefore,

particularly in its Joachite conception, shown an enduring capacity to instil radiant hopes of a better dispensation in the hearts of the dispossessed".[59] Claiming that this third age was coming placed the present in relationship with a soon-to-come complete change; Eric Voegelin called this the "immanentization of the eschaton".[60]

Religious and political language comes together in the account of Ursula's maturation in *The Rainbow*. In a long discussion of her spiritual development in the first chapter titled 'The Widening Circle', Ursula comes to the antinomian position that "there was no *actual* Sin" (*R* 255, original emphasis), and rejects the Jesus of a brief return to earth in favour of a vision of a transformed world. And later, in the 'First Love' chapter, while Skrebensky is limited by attempts to know the world empirically, Ursula "wished she had been a nymph", living out the earth's boundless, immeasurable energies (*R* 302). At this point a cut passage in the manuscript expressed at length an immanentist, indeed pagan, sense of natural forces winning out over orthodox Christianity:

> Remove the trivial notices of God and Man. There is no private property. The fauns shall run in your parks and the dryads shall play among the pews of your churches, and Jesus, whole and glad after Resurrection, shall laugh when evening falls and the nightingale sings, and he shall give himself to the breasts of desire and shall twine his limbs with the nymphs and the oreads, putting off his raiment of wounds and sorrows, appearing naked and shining with life, the risen Christ, gladder, a more satisfying lover than Bacchus, a God more serene and ample than Apollo. (*R* 629–30)

What is depicted here is another world beyond a Christianity trapped in negative views of the body and sex, and notions of ownership.

Late in his work on the novel Lawrence began to introduce the imagery of corruption and decay he was to develop further in *The Crown* (1915, 1925) and *Women in Love*. Dissolution is a necessary

breaking down prior to rebirth. Colin Clarke saw this in terms of a longer-term history going back to English Romanticism.[61] However, it is striking that this imagery allows Lawrence to rework death and resurrection without recourse to notions of sin and judgement. It also marks a shift away from seeing history as on an upward curve, and from progressivism and its legacies.

Lawrence saw that responding to the interest in eschatology of late-nineteenth-century radicals had implications for the form of the novel; *The Rainbow* is, as John Worthen argues, a "visionary" novel.[62] Utopian writing can express what lies outside and beyond current modes of thought and expression. As well as questioning whether the "no place" of utopia can ever be a fully worked-out alternative, I would also want to hold up the novel's uses of negation; the way that it creates a strong sense that there must be something other and better for Ursula.[63] Ending with a symbol of transformation, rather than an account of what the alternative looks like, is simply the best that can be done in the context of 1915. Some critics have regretted that *The Rainbow* does not offer a fully realised alternative. Behind this – as Graham Holderness's Lukács-informed reading exemplifies – is a lament for Lawrence's eschewal of the social realism of *Sons and Lovers* (1913). For Anne Fernihough we should return to the "craft" of the novel in compensation because "*The Rainbow* cannot point outside itself to the utopian reality it so passionately strives for".[64] The close of the novel, I believe, is appropriate formally and intellectually. I simply cannot agree with Leavis that Lawrence needed to find a quick way of wrapping things up so he could move on to *Women in Love*, and that he had really left the "radical mood" of the novel's close behind.[65]

The novel's close draws on the rainbow of the story of Noah in Genesis and that in Revelations 10; the closing pages of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667, 1674) are perhaps also echoed. As Ursula recuperates after her illness, "she sat to watch a new creation" (*R* 457):

> In the still, silenced forms of the colliers she saw a sort of suspense, a waiting in pain for the new liberation …
>
> In everything she saw she grasped and groped to find the creation of the living God, instead of the old, hard barren form of bygone living. Sometimes great terror possessed her. Sometimes she lost touch, she lost her feeling, she could only know the old horror of the husk which bound in her and all mankind. They were all in prison, they were all going mad. (*R* 458)

The wait for change goes on in the constricting, harsh conditions of modern life. However, the rainbow of the novel's final paragraphs promises a new birth for humanity, with a transformed time and spatial "architecture":

> And the rainbow stood on the earth. She knew that the sordid people who crept hard-scaled and separate on the face of the world's corruption were living still, that the rainbow was arched in their blood and would quiver to life in their spirit, that they would cast off their horny covering of disintegration, that new, clean, naked bodies would issue to a new germination, to a new growth, rising to the light and the wind and the clean rain of heaven. She saw in the rainbow the earth's new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven. (*R* 458–9)

The Rainbow's close affirms that there will be a change, though what comes after change, or how it comes about precisely, is not described.

The window has not closed on a better world, though it seems ever harder to get there. That sense of modernist difficulty in reworking the optimism of the late-Victorian radicals, who developed "the religion of socialism", is caught in my title quotation, "at last to newness". The copy of the novel that

Lawrence gave to his sister Ada, signed and dated 27 September 1915, includes some remarkable handwritten deletions and insertions. The markedly altered final paragraph stresses not corruption being swept away, but instead pithily articulates a confidence in future transformation: "And the rainbow stood on the earth. She knew that the fight was to the good. It was not to annihilation, but at last to newness. She knew in the rainbow that the fight was to the good" (*R* 534–5).[66] This ending appears more optimistic than the one in the published novel – or, at least, is prepared to be more direct: "at last" suggests that there has been struggle, but "newness", that is "to the good", is coming, nevertheless.

Somewhat revised and with the addition of endnotes, the above is the text of the 2015 D. H. Lawrence Society Birthday Lecture, given on 11 September 2015 at Hall Park Academy in Eastwood. The event also marked the centenary of the first publication of *The Rainbow* on 30 September 1915. I would like to thank all those who participated in the discussion after the lecture, and also, for their comments on the revised version, Gemma Moss, Susan Reid and Michael Sanders.

[1] John Maynard Keynes, *Two Memoirs* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1949), 79–80. On Eliot see F. R. Leavis, 'Mr Eliot and Lawrence', *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (London: Peregrine Books, 1985), 367–77, and Brian Crick and Michael DiSanto, 'D. H. Lawrence, "An opportunity and a test": the Leavis-Eliot Controversy Revisited', *The Cambridge Quarterly*, vol. 38.2 (2009), 130–46.

[2] F. R. Leavis, *The Common Pursuit* (New York: New York UP, 1964), 256.

[3] Richard Davenport-Hines, *Universal Man: the Seven Lives of John Maynard Keynes* (London: William Collins, 2015), 256.

[4] A note on terminology: I mainly use the term "radicalism" here rather than "socialism". The latter may confuse because for many it is synonymous with a directing state and because some of those in the movement I consider here would have identified as anarchists, or indeed would have held that there was no need to engage with the political sphere

at all because humankind was inevitably moving towards a new order. From the mid-twentieth century historians called this movement "ethical socialism", which compounds the problems, with its suggestion of some heightened level of moral scrupulousness grafted onto socialism. As Kevin Manton says of those linked to The Fellowship of the New Life, "This connected and coherent vision of the unity of the moral and the material in their thought and actions must render the prevalent habit of typecasting them as 'ethical' socialists redundant": Kevin Manton, 'The Fellowship of the New Life: English Ethical Socialism Reconsidered', *History of Political Thought*, vol. 24.2 (2003), 282–304, 304. A better term, because one used at the time, would be the "larger socialism"; I prefer the greater openness to non-socialists of the word "radical", but there are issues here too. As Raymond Williams points out in *Keywords*, in the late-nineteenth century many would have understood it in terms of the Radical wing of the Liberal Party, and in the late-nineteenth century it was starting to attach itself to new right wing movements across Europe. I think it retains its utility because its sense from earlier in the nineteenth century was still current at and beyond the century's close. Further, it is widely understood in such terms today because, as Williams notes, the 1960s returned the earlier sense to wide currency: Raymond Williams, *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fourth Estate, 2014), 246–8.

[5] There is though an important discussion of women and radical thought in the decades around the turn of the century: Anne Fernihough, 'Introduction' to D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, ed. Mark Kinkead-Weekes (London: Penguin, 1995), xiii–xxxi.

[6] T. R. Wright, *D. H. Lawrence and the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980), 84–109. Wright notes (84) that he is developing points made by John Worthen in the introduction to his edition of D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow* (London: Penguin, 1981), 11–32, 21, and by Mark Kinkead-Weekes, 'Introduction', *R* xxxiv.

[7] Virginia Hyde, *The Risen Adam: D. H. Lawrence's Revisionist Typology* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1992). For a foundational article on Lawrence and the apocalypse see Frank Kermode, 'Lawrence and Apocalyptic Types', *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 10.1–2 (1968), 14–38.

[8] The classic overview of the Frankfurt School is by Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: its History, Theories and Political Significance*, trans. Michael Robertson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995). On the

word "totality" and the Frankfurt School see Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: the Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984), 174–275.

[9] Robert Blatchford, *The New Religion* (London: The Clarion Press, n.d.), 2.

[10] Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1843), 18.

[11] See Peter Kropotkin, 'Anarchist Communism: its Basis and Principles', in *Peter Kropotkin: Anarchism, a Collection of Revolutionary Writings*, ed. Roger N. Baldwin (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2002), 46–78, 46.

[12] Cited in Sheila Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter: a Life of Liberty and Love* (London: Verso, 2008), 89. See also Manton, 'The Fellowship of the New Life'.

[13] See Stephen Yeo, 'A New Life: the Religion of Socialism in Britain, 1883–1896', *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 4 (1977), 5–56.

[14] Unless otherwise stated, the biographical material on Carpenter that follows draws on Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter: a Life of Liberty and Love*.

[15] *The Book of Common Prayer* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1968), 685.

[16] *Homilies, Appointed to be Read in Churches, in the Time of Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory* (Liverpool: H. Forshaw, 1749), 21.

[17] Edward Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams: Being Autobiographical Notes* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1916), 53–5.

[18] Eric Hobsbawm, *How to Change the World: Marx and Marxism, 1840–2011* (London: Little, Brown, 2011), 246. Hobsbawm alternatively saw Morris as offering the Second International a "genuine theory of the arts in society" (ibid., 258).

[19] Edward Carpenter, 'The Simplification of Life', in *England's Ideal and Other Papers on Social Subjects* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1887), 79–99, 94. A pair of sandals Carpenter was sent from Kashmir became the model for his own sandal making. See Fiona MacCarthy, *Anarchy and Beauty: William Morris and his Legacy, 1860–1960* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2014), 40.

[20] Edward Carpenter, *Homogenic Love and its Place in a Free Society* (Manchester: The Labour Press, 1894). On late-nineteenth-century socialism and sexuality see Ruth Livesey, *Socialism, Sex, and the Culture of Aestheticism in Britain, 1880–1914* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007).

[21] John Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: the Early Years, 1885–1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 178.
[22] Emile Delavenay, *D .H. Lawrence and Edward Carpenter: a Study in Edwardian Transition* (London: Heinemann, 1970).
[23] Edward Carpenter, *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1921).
[24] Carpenter's letter to Willie Hopkin, of 4 April 1916, returning the copy of *The Rainbow* Hopkin had lent him, is reproduced in Delavenay, *D .H. Lawrence and Edward Carpenter*, 31–2.
[25] Sheila Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, 275.
[26] Edward Carpenter, *Towards Democracy* (London: GMP, 1985), 99–100.
[27] Edward Carpenter, 'Note on *Towards Democracy*', in ibid., 411, 412.
[28] See Tony Judge, *Tory Socialist: Robert Blatchford and Merrie England* ([n.p.]: Mentor, 2015). The Bradford Cinderella Club is still in existence: see <http://cinderellaclub.org>. What appears to have been the last of the walking groups, the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers, disbanded in the autumn of 2015: see <http://www.thestar.co.uk/what-s-on/out-about/sheffield-ramblers-reach-end-of-the-road-1-7440270#axzz3qosrO1Nz>. The National Clarion Cycle Club, founded in Birmingham and with its motto "Fellowship is Life", is still going strong with many affiliated clubs: see <http://www.clarioncc.org>, accessed 8 January 2016.
[29] Blatchford, *The New Religion*, 4.
[30] Ibid., 3.
[31] The connection between radicalism and Protestant non-conformity goes back at least as far as the English Revolution of the 1640s and 1650s. See Glenn Burgess, 'Radicalism and the English Revolution' and his 'Introduction' to Glenn Burgess and Matthew Festenstein, eds., *English Radicalism: 1550–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 62–86, 1–15.
[32] For explorations of Ruskin and Lawrence see George P. Landow, 'Lawrence and Ruskin: the Sage as Word-Painter', in Jeffrey Meyers, ed., *D. H. Lawrence and Tradition* (London: Athlone, 1985), 35–50, and Tony Pinkney, *D. H. Lawrence* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), 54–99.
[33] See Mark Bevir, 'American Romanticism and British Socialism', *The Making of British Socialism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2011), 235–55.
[34] Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams*, 64.

[35] Michael Robertson, *Worshipping Walt: the Whitman Disciples* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2008), 198–231, 288–92.

[36] Blatchford, *The New Religion*, 4.

[37] On evolutionary socialism see Thomas Linehan, *Modernism and British Socialism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 124–6. The use of evolutionary theory has been seen as an example of how elements of Postitivism and Saint-Simonianism influenced Marxism and socialism. See Hobsbawm, *How to Change the World*, 27–36. The important figure advocating evolutionary positivism and socialism in Britain was Ernest Belfort Bax. See Bevir, *The Making of British Socialism*, 56–8.

[38] Excising this material meant that the visionary and affirmative elements cluster towards the close of the published text.

[39] Paul Poplawski has very usefully charted Lawrence's changing response to dissenting Christianity, delineating the strands of thinking in play and the tensions between them, in his *Promptings of Desire: Creativity and the Religious Impulse in the Works of D. H. Lawrence* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1993), 41–53.

[40] See Linehan, *Modernism and British Socialism*, 1–23 and Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: the Experience of Modernity* (London: Verso, 2010).

[41] The young Fred Brangwen in *The Rainbow* is said to read "Ruskin and then the Agnostic writings" (*R* 224), but in the manuscript the word "Agnostic" instead reads "Fabian" (*R* 608). The change was probably made because Lawrence feared anachronism. See *R* 514–15 n. to 224:15.

[42] Quoted in W. H. G. Armytage, *Heavens Below: Utopian Experiments in England, 1560–1960* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), 332.

[43] The influence of Blatchford is established in both the introduction and explanatory notes of Peter Miles's edition of Tressell's novel. See Miles's 'Introduction' to Robert Tressell, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, ed. Peter Miles (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005), xvii–xx and xxv–xxviii.

[44] Bevir, *The Making of British Socialism*, 298–316.

[45] See Linehan, *Modernism and British Socialism*, 24–115.

[46] William Wordsworth, *Selected Poems*, ed. John O. Hayden (London: Penguin, 1994), 139–45, 141.

[47] William Morris, *News from Nowhere*, ed. David Leopold (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003), 88. Lawrence said he had always been sceptical of *News from Nowhere*, writing in 1927 that he had never felt that it created a "valid" world (*IR* 402). However, it does seem to have been in Lawrence's

mind when he wrote his own utopian text that same year, 'A Dream of Life' (in the Cambridge Edition as '[Autobiographical Fragment]', *LEA* 50–68). See Howard J. Booth, 'Dreaming Better Dreams: D. H. Lawrence, the Wilkinsons, and William Morris', *D. H. Lawrence Review*, vol. 36.2 (2011), 27–42.

[48] Edward Carpenter, *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure*, 263.

[49] There is even a suggestion of a sexual element in Will's interest in childhood; the girl sitting next to him at the Empire variety theatre in Nottingham would, he surmises, "be small, almost like a child, and pretty. Her childishness whetted him keenly" (*R* 211).

[50] See Linehan, *Modernism and British Socialism*, 79–97.

[51] Graham Holderness, *D. H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1982), 174–89.

[52] See Howard J. Booth, '*The Rainbow*, British Marxist Criticism of the 1930s and Colonialism', in Howard J. Booth, ed., *New D. H. Lawrence* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2009), 34–58.

[53] Cited in R. J. Campbell, J. Keir Hardie and John Bruce Glasier, *The New Theology and the Social Movement* (London: ILP, 1907), 9. Snowden is drawing on an iconography of late-Victorian socialism now particularly associated with the work of the artist and illustrator Walter Crane (and found, for example, in his engraving *The Capitalist Vampire*, 1885). Snowden had left these opinions behind by the time he became Chancellor of the Exchequer (1924, 1929–31).

[54] T. J. Clark, *Picasso and Truth: from Cubism to Guernica* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2013), 4.

[55] Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* (1888) and William Morris's *News from Nowhere* are, then, two among many. See Matthew Beaumont, *Utopia, Ltd.: Ideologies of Social Dreaming in England, 1870–1900* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

[56] See respectively, 'Experiments in Social Modernism: the Communities of Hope', in Linehan, *Modernism and British Socialism*, 65–78 and 'The Labour Church Movement', in Bevir, *The Making of British Socialism*, 278–97.

[57] See Hyde, *The Risen Adam: D. H. Lawrence's Revisionist Typology*, 10–11, and the chapter on Lawrence in the major study of modern responses to Joachim by Warwick Gould and Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth and*

Twentieth Centuries (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001), 299–315. For Lawrence on Joachim see *MEH* 147.

[58] John L. Allen, Jr., *Benedict XVI: A Biography of Joseph Ratzinger* (London: Continuum, 2005), 37–8, 38. Indeed Ratzinger's *habilitation* thesis saw Joachim inaugurating a concern with eschatological, this-worldly fulfilment that prepared the way for Hegel and Marx. See Maximilian Heinrich Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger: Life in the Church and Living Theology; Fundamentals of Ecclesiology with Reference to Lumen Gentium*, trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007), 162.

[59] Linehan, *Modernism and British Socialism*, 51.

[60] Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: an Introduction* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1952), 188.

[61] Colin Clarke, *River of Dissolution: D. H. Lawrence and English Romanticism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971).

[62] John Worthen, 'Introduction' to *The Rainbow*, 32.

[63] See Booth, '*The Rainbow*, British Marxist Criticism of the 1930s and Colonialism', 52–3.

[64] See Fernihough, 'Introduction' to *The Rainbow*, xxxi. Fernihough is more open to the utopian aspects of *The Rainbow* in her *Freewomen and Supermen: Edwardian Radicals and Literary Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013), 121–4.

[65] Leavis, *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*, 170.

[66] Mark Kinkead-Weekes and John Worthen, 'More about *The Rainbow*', *D. H. Lawrence Review*, vol. 29.3 (2000), 7–17, 15.