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**“AUSDRUCKSTANZ” AND “ARS AMATORIA”:
D. H. LAWRENCE AND THE INTERRELATED ARTS OF
DANCE AND LOVE**

EARL G. INGERSOLL

As Marina Ragachewskaya has recently indicated in this journal, Lawrence's interest in the art of dance has received renewed attention in the 2010s.¹ The subject has been thought to have opened with two notable investigations:² 'D. H. Lawrence and the Dance' (1992) by Mark Kinkead-Weekes and then 'Music and Dance in D. H. Lawrence' (1997) by Elgin W. Mellow, who apparently was unaware that Kinkead-Weekes had blazed the trail before him, since his article contains no mention of this earlier work.³ Another writer who missed Kinkead-Weekes's article, with its endnote citations from Martin Green's *Mountain of Truth: The Counterculture Begins, Ascona, 1900–1920*, was Terri Ann Mester, whose interpretations of dance scenes in Lawrence's fiction could have benefited from even a cursory reading of Green's 1986 study.⁴ Mester cites Deborah Jowitt's *Time and the Dancing Image*, but she does not explore Jowitt's very brief commentary upon Rudolf Laban and Mary Wigman, which might have provided her with yet another avenue of access to Green's *Mountain of Truth*.⁵ To close this circle, Kinkead-Weekes then responded to Mester's monograph in his keynote address at the 2003 International D. H. Lawrence Conference in Kyoto, where he amplified his endnotes from 'D. H. Lawrence and the Dance', but also tasked himself with examining the relationships of three other major modernists with dance.⁶ But to return to Ragachewskaya, our point of departure, her 2013 article 'No Dancing Matter: The Language of Dance and Sublimation in D. H. Lawrence' is a strong example of recent interest in exploring Lawrence's work in the context of the other arts.⁷ Like Kinkead-Weekes and Mellow, however, Ragachewskaya adopts a survey

approach that strives to examine diverse expressions of dance throughout Lawrence’s career.

My project begins with an effort to resist the impulse to survey all the possible expressions of “dance”. My focus is a specific aspect of dance in Lawrence’s fiction, namely “Ausdruckstanz”, or expressionist dance, because of its impact upon key dance scenes in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. I will also draw parallels with the “art” of love, as in Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* – his poems on the subject of how to find someone to love and to keep her – to argue that this is an important element in Lawrence’s two masterpieces just noted as well as his posthumous novel, *Mr Noon*, where the emphasis will shift to the art of love.⁸ Examining the interrelated arts of dance and love is grounded in a long tradition in the English language of connecting lovemaking and dance, a tradition at least as old as Chaucer’s *The Wife of Bath’s Tale* (c. 1400) and his trope of lovemaking as the “olde daunce”.⁹

The arts of expressionist dance and love are especially important to our understanding of the cultural context Frieda brought to her relationship with Lawrence and its resulting impact upon his thinking and writing. I have chosen to return to this context after discovering how Green’s provocative study *Mountain of Truth* has become less frequently referenced by those writing about the transformative period of Lawrence’s life after he met Frieda. In his article on ‘D. H. Lawrence and the Dance’, for example, Kinkead-Weekes consigned Green to an endnote and repeated such marginalisation in his volume of the three-part Lawrence biography published by Cambridge University Press. In *Mountain of Truth*, Green has little to say about Lawrence because there is no evidence that he actually visited Ascona,¹⁰ but the question of whether Frieda ever visited Ascona persisted well into the 1990s and undermined the understanding of Frieda’s impact upon Lawrence. From the outset Kinkead-Weekes contrasts “Frieda’s spontaneity, her carelessness of convention, her abandon to the moment and its emotions” with Lawrence’s “‘English’ hatred of showing his feelings, and his physical guardedness” in a way that is implicitly

unsympathetic to Frieda's investment in the counter-culture of Schwabing/Ascona.¹¹ Amidst the endnotes here, however, Kinkead-Weekes moves from his position of doubt (in 'D. H. Lawrence and the Dance') about whether Frieda ever visited Ascona to acknowledgement of her presence there, based finally upon the "hard evidence" of a letter from Frieda Schlosser Gross to Else Jaffe.¹²

On the other hand, one wonders if we have not been obsessive about this "evidence", as though Frieda, or even Lawrence himself, needed to *be* there to feel the impact of "Ascona". Even without the Schlosser Gross letter, Frieda certainly was in Schwabing before Ascona eclipsed it as the mecca of the counter-culture whose members moved back and forth between the two sites, depending upon the season and the exigencies of individuals' lives. And Lawrence himself "knew" Ascona through Frieda's letters from Otto Gross, that she shared with Lawrence,¹³ and from which, as we shall see, he drew an association with his forerunner "priest of love". Certainly, Lawrence did not go on record to assess the extent to which Frieda's acculturation in the Schwabing/Ascona counter-culture contributed to the world view he adopted in the early months of their relationship or to detail its influence upon *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. At the same time, it may not be mere coincidence that Kinkead-Weekes and other male Lawrence specialists have been reluctant to credit Frieda's "genius for living" or to acknowledge her impact upon Lawrence as a "muse", made explicit by Jacqueline Gouirand-Rousselon in the title of her biography *Frieda von Richthofen, Muse de D. H. Lawrence* (1998).¹⁴

"What, then, was Ascona?"

Martin Green's question can also serve our purposes.¹⁵ At its simplest, Ascona was the Swiss village near the Italian border that in the first two decades of the twentieth century became a refuge for Central Europeans who rejected the dominant culture. Eventually

resistance to and distaste for the masculinist essence of North German culture took root in Munich’s bohemian district Schwabing, then blossomed in Ascona. The Ascona movement is arguably fundamental to a clearer understanding of what Lawrence learned through Frieda’s experience in the interrelated arts of love and dance most relevant to *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. Without a fuller awareness of Ascona, the vital role of dance is diluted in a conglomeration of social dancing, contemporary Russian dance and even eurhythmics, when, in fact, Schwabing/Ascona was the birthplace of “Ausdruckstanz”, or expressionist dance, a neglected area of “modern dance”. The term “Ausdruckstanz” was probably too new for Lawrence to employ and led him to mis-reference expressionist dance in *Women in Love* as “Dalcroze” (WL 165, 166) and “eurhythmics” (WL 168). Like the art of loving, dance was part of the counter-culture Lawrence discovered through Frieda and embraced along with her presence in his life.

In *Mountain of Truth*, Green begins his explanation of the Ascona movement by focusing upon its most significant representatives. The first is Otto Gross, a brilliant psychoanalyst and rebellious disciple of Sigmund Freud, who found Freud too conservative. Freud may have been the “Father of Modern Psychoanalysis” but he was also a father unwilling to champion the pleasure principle as fully as Gross did. Gross was a champion of erotic liberation, a predecessor of what “The Sixties” would embrace in the ideology’s diminished form as “free love”. Like women in the 1970s, who began to assert that “love” had always been “free” for men, Gross argued for the rights of women to enjoy the sexual freedom that had been a male prerogative for millennia. Else von Richthofen Jaffe was one of Gross’s lovers and even bore him a son (Peter, born 1907); Else’s younger sister Frieda had also become Otto’s lover by April 1907.¹⁶

In one of the letters Frieda and Otto exchanged after she returned to England, she tells Gross, “Du bist Erotik [You are the erotic principle itself]”.¹⁷ Gross wrote to Frieda that it was their

relationship that had generated his ideas and that he saw her as “The Woman of the Future”: “Now I *know*, the woman I dream of for future generations, that woman I have seen and loved, the woman of my dreams of the future is a *real possibility* ... miraculously she has come to me as a *greeting from the future*”.¹⁸ After Gross became her “Priest of Love”, Frieda proclaimed that he had set her free by encouraging her to believe that as a woman she had just as much right as a man to control her body and choice of sexual partners. Gross preached against the sins of jealousy and possessiveness, and for the abolition of “shame”, that high-powered word in the love of Mellors and Connie, obviously enough, but also, as we shall see, for Birkin and Ursula in the Alps. In one letter, Frieda implored Otto to come to England to love a friend whom she had been preparing to experience his “Erotik”, indicating that she had freed herself from the sin of jealousy in Otto’s, and Ascona’s, erotic theory.¹⁹ As Green generalises, “Gross’s conceptualization of Frieda was to be the ideological dowry she brought to D. H. Lawrence”.²⁰

Additionally, Green explains the centrality to Ascona of Rudolf von Laban, whom some would call the “Father of Modern Dance”.²¹ In 1907, Laban moved from Paris to Munich where he organised the “Fasching” [German Mardi Gras] dances and festivals, and later a Witches’ Sabbath, involving over 800 people costumed as witches or demons. In Schwabing he heard of Ascona, and in 1913 he began spending summers there, completing the displacement of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze as the major force in modern dance. Green asserts: “It was Laban and not Dalcroze who was to develop what we call Modern Dance, and he was able to do so in Ascona, with the help of [Suzanne] Perrottet and Mary Wigman, also an ex-Dalcroze student whom Perrottet advised to transfer to Laban”.²² Handsome, charismatic, even “magical” according to Wigman, Laban succeeded in “gathering around him a remarkable group, who asserted the rights and powers of women though in nonpolitical terms”.²³ Laban’s dance became important for “the chance it gave women to manifest themselves as figures of

power rather than of grace, and to break through the confines, for example, of the ballet dancer’s daintiness and the belly dancer’s voluptuousness”.²⁴ Even though Green’s description of Laban’s dancers does not mention Lawrence, readers can sense a kinship between dancers in Ascona and the Brangwen women, beginning with Anna Brangwen’s grotesque and unsettling solo dance performance, nude, self-assertive and hugely pregnant with Ursula (R 169–71).

The prominent women in Laban’s “corps de ballet” were his lover Perrottet and the more famous Wigman, who herself became a choreographer, most notably in her 1913 *Hexetanz* [*Witch’s Dance*].²⁵ It is especially important that both women were “drop-outs” from the Jaques-Dalcroze Institute, after becoming dissatisfied with the constraints of Dalcroze’s eurhythmics. Perrottet indicated her disappointment with what Dalcroze had to offer, saying that she “was looking for dissonance, in order to express [her] character, and that was not possible with his altogether harmonious structure”.²⁶

Lawrence’s Invitation to the Dance

Too seldom have we sufficiently acknowledged that Lawrence’s two masterpieces – *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* – are the legacy in part of his muse Frieda. Although her responsibilities as a wife and mother back in England meant that Frieda could be only on the peripheries of the Ascona movement, she was well versed in the ideology of the erotic through the tutelage of Otto Gross, the ideologue of Ascona’s culture of feminism and resistance to patriarchy. It is no surprise, then, that the aim of the new novel Lawrence started after Frieda came into his life – *The Rainbow* – was to liberate Ursula from the dead legacy of patriarchy represented by Anton Skrebensky – Lawrence’s specimen of the militarism threatening to destroy Europe. *The Rainbow* begins the attempt to find an “Ars Amatoria” for the modern era that is brought to fulfilment in *Women in Love*.

Like the dance scenes in *The Rainbow* – such as Ursula dancing with Skrebensky at her Uncle Fred’s wedding – Gudrun Brangwen’s intriguing and powerful performance to an audience of Gerald Crich’s cattle offers a crucial expression of Lawrence’s awareness of Ascona’s al fresco expressionist dance. Easily misapprehended by readers as yet another bead on a string, this scene is the logical consequence of at least two earlier scenes that provide a context within which Gudrun’s dance can be read. The first is the often-noted scene of Gerald spurring his terrified mare into submission while the train rumbles past. Unlike her sickened sister Ursula, who sympathises with the brutalised mare, Gudrun celebrates Gerald’s performance of the “will to power” for an audience of two, and as it finishes she “cried, in a strange, high voice ... like a witch screaming from the side of the road” (WL 112). Similarly, when the sisters walk past Willey Water as Gerald runs naked from the boat-house to dive into the water, then waves to them in recognition of the audience for his skinny-dipping, the narrative spells out Gerald’s expansive embrace of his male privilege for Gudrun’s envying gaze: “Gudrun envied him almost painfully. Even this momentary possession of pure isolation and fluidity seemed to her terribly desirable ... ‘God, what it is to be a man! ... The freedom, the liberty, the mobility!’” (WL 47).

Gerald’s swimming nude, then, is yet another scene in which the body’s motion, although not “dance” per se, becomes an expressionist representation of what Gudrun’s gaze reads as the male privilege, power and patriarchal positioning that she both envies and resents as beyond her star: “‘You’re a man, you want to do a thing, you do it ... Supposing I want to swim up that water. It is impossible ... for me to take off my clothes now and jump in. But isn’t it *ridiculous*, doesn’t it simply prevent our living!’” (WL 48, Lawrence’s emphasis). Like *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* is in part a feminist text, lost upon those who see only a male author infamous for his later-life misogyny or incapable of supporting women’s self-liberation.²⁷

These earlier scenes expertly prepare for the ‘Water-Party’

chapter. Gudrun wants only to be far away down Willey Water, where perhaps the sisters “might even bathe” au naturel as Gerald demonstrated earlier. But Gerald riles the sisters by asking: “Can you manage a boat pretty well?”, with the obvious implication that as women they cannot (WL 162). He offers his canoe, reluctantly: “Don’t for *my* sake, have an accident—because I’m responsible for the water” (WL 163, Lawrence’s emphasis). Once again, Gerald asks: “You’re quite sure you’ll be safe in it?” (WL 163), adding one last patronising indication that these are women, who therefore cannot be counted upon to keep from drowning and leaving him the onus of responsibility for their demise, ironically foreshadowing his sister Diana’s drowning. And yet Gudrun also enjoys performing the “child-like, clinging woman” (WL 164), for Gerald’s gazing eyes. Once they have swum nude, had their tea and savoured their freedom, Ursula’s singing impels Gudrun to ask, “Do you mind if I do Dalcroze to that tune?” and Gudrun has to repeat “Dalcroze” twice before Ursula grasps her meaning (WL 165, 166).

Here, Martin Green is extremely helpful in distinguishing Dalcroze’s eurhythmics from Laban’s, and Ascona’s, “Ausdruckstanz”. Dalcroze’s objectives, Green explains, were to idealise or spiritualise dance, and he adds that the Dalcroze Institute always had the atmosphere of a convent school, with its spiritual young female dancers. When Isadora Duncan visited Ascona in 1913, she brought with her Dalcroze’s impulse toward spirituality, encouraging Green to identify Duncan as a “Seelentänzer” [soul dancer].²⁸ Green emphasises that after Duncan witnessed Laban and Wigman’s expressionist dance she admitted that what she saw in Ascona had changed her notions of modern dance.

The abrupt intrusion upon the sisters’ Arcadia-for-two of a herd of males clearly transforms Gudrun’s Dalcroze eurhythmics into a demonstration of female self-assertion or “Ausdruckstanz”.²⁹ The cattle’s maleness here is crucial. A herd of cows would be unlikely to pose a physical threat, much less the psychological menace these bovine males possess. Like their human counterparts, these males threaten to deny the sisters a space of their own, recalling Gudrun’s

comments, while viewing Gerald's swimming nude, "'Doesn't it simply prevent our living!'" (WL 48). Gudrun's movement toward expressionist dance is cued by her hypnotised, and hypnotising, state conveyed in a shift to a cattle's eye view of "an uncanny white figure carried away in its own rapt trance, ebbing in strange fluctuations upon the cattle ... watching all the time as if hypnotised ... as the white figure of the woman ebbed upon them, in the slow, hypnotising convulsion of the dance" (WL 167–8) – Lawrence's language here working its own hypnotic spell upon the reader. At the acme of her accession to power, "Gudrun could hear the cattle breathing heavily with helpless fear and fascination" (WL 168), but just as she is about to force the cattle's retreat, Gerald's crying out steals her victory.

The ensuing dialogue is telling. To Gerald's "'What do you think you're doing?'" Gudrun's "'Why have you come—?'" is a "strident cry of anger", while Ursula answers his repeated question with the rather sappy "'We were doing eurhythmics'", and Birkin picks up her silliness by "dancing a grotesque step-dance in front of her" (WL 168). Ursula may speak of "eurhythmics", but Gudrun's performance – both with the cattle and then in her insolence towards Gerald, who is, after all, her host – transcends Dalcroze's spiritualised concept of movement to music. Her "Ausdruckstanz" strongly expresses her resistance to the power of the cattle to which she is also attracted, a doubleness she earlier revealed toward Gerald in the scene with the mare he dominates and in the scene of his nude swimming. As Martin Green emphasises again and again, Ascona was a feminist culture, rebelling against the male dominance inherent in northern (that is Prussian) Germany. Gudrun clearly is not performing spiritual elevation but something closer to the demonic state, troped by the witch figure whose power frightens those who prefer to keep women in their place. It is as though Lawrence were constructing Gudrun's movements as a performance of the evolution of Dalcroze's spiritual exercises in response to music into Laban/Wigman's "Ausdruckstanz". Indeed, the language of "trance" and hypnosis is highly suggestive of the

witchcraft and sorcery associated with Ascona, making Gudrun’s dance reminiscent of Wigman’s *Hexetanz*.

And Gerald’s sudden appearance with the clownish Birkin in tow does nothing to diminish what Gudrun’s dance represents, only accentuating her expression of powerful impulses to repel male domination, lest it end by destroying her, by intimidating her into *not* expressing herself. In marked contrast to Tom Brangwen, who needs only to be reminded by his matriarchal wife Lydia that she is also a sexual being and not one of his “cattle” (so close to “chattel”) to be “taken”, before he acknowledges her personhood (*R* 89), Gerald is the modern man as a collector of possessions – “his” coal, “his” workers, “his” cattle, “his” Gudrun by dint of “protecting” her from his cattle when she is bent upon demonstrating that she is not afraid of them or of him. Gerald will eventually move their relationship into a variety of conquest by making her his employee (as his young sister’s tutor) and later committing “home invasion” to “take” her (as Lydia had accused Tom of taking her like his cattle). Gerald’s proclamations that everything here is “his” only makes Shortlands a microcosm of the world in which Gudrun searches for some space that is hers, rejecting Gerald’s conquistador impulse to “colonise” her. Like Ursula’s challenge of her toy soldier Anton, Gudrun’s response – ““You think I’m afraid of you and your cattle, don’t you?”” (*WL* 170) – is so “modern” a century ago that we are unlikely to recognise how revolutionary it was for Lawrence to allow Gudrun to challenge her social “superior”.³⁰ And, watching Gerald’s “domineering smile” with “her dark, dilated, inchoate eyes”, Gudrun responds to his ““Why should I think that?”” with the back of her hand and a recognition of “an unconquerable desire for deep violence against him” (*WL* 170).

What follows offers ample evidence that Gudrun is no more a “Seelentänzer” than her sister Ursula when she danced with Gerald’s forerunner, Skrebensky, whose attempted domination generated similarly murderous impulses. When Gerald begins the well-known interchange – ““You have struck the first blow”” – to which Gudrun gives him a figurative back of her hand – ““And I

shall strike the last” – she reaches out to touch him with her “Don’t be angry with me” (WL 171), just as Ursula responded warmly to Anton after she had annihilated him through her dance performance. Gerald’s response, “I’m not angry with you. I’m in love with you. It’s all right, then, is it?”, followed by Gudrun’s “Yes, it’s all right” (WL 171), appears at first to promise a rainbow of potential, even if temporary, resolution of opposites, were it not for Lawrence’s “stage direction” that Gudrun speaks “softly, as if drugged, her voice crooning and *witch-like*” (WL 172, emphasis added). The witch trope may seem puzzling here. Traditionally, however, women who did not fit the mould of their culture’s expectations were often identified as witches and occasionally hung, like the “witches” of Salem, or burned at the stake, like Joan of Arc. Martin Green cites Wigman in her book *The Language of Dance*, where she describes the origin of her *Hexetanz* as looking in a mirror: “There she was—the witch—the earth-bound creature with her unrestrained, naked instincts, with her insatiable lust for life, beast and woman at one and the same time” and claiming that “every 100% female” is part witch.³¹

Lawrence may never have actually visited Ascona,³² much less actually witnessed Mary Wigman’s *Hexetanz*, but he surely understood a fundamental tenet of Ascona’s rendition of Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria*: men in love must be aware that if they attempt to “dominate” women they will open themselves up to a rage that in the end will consume them. Anna, for example, dances Will out of her consciousness to preserve some space she can call her own in the house that is “hers”, not Will’s, her step-father having given it to her. First Ursula and then Gudrun demonstrate that they are both their mother’s daughters by defending the space within their psyches against the men – first Skrebensky and then Gerald – who would fill their innermost being with traditional notions of what women ought to be, making oppression of the sisters a variety of attempted “colonisation”. In the dance scene at her Uncle Fred’s wedding, Ursula obliterates Skrebensky’s psychic life as a consequence of his attempt to destroy hers, while Gudrun in the

Alps makes good on her promise to strike the last blow and thereby condemns Gerald to embrace the cold comfort of an Alpine snow-drift as his last resting place. As the last step in the progression of these strong women, beginning with Anna, Gudrun demonstrates a lesson Lawrence learned from Frieda: men must acknowledge and respect the desire of women to enjoy the rights from which men have benefited for millennia and, if men fail to learn how to love women, it is they who bear the responsibility for the consequences. Additionally, in a letter to his former professor, the young Lawrence schools Frieda's first husband in the need to respect women's rights: "Mrs. Weekley is afraid of being stunted and not allowed to grow, and so she must live her own life. All women in their natures are giantesses. They will break through everything and go on with their own lives" (*IL* 392). Clearly, the young Lawrence quickly learned how to hold onto the woman he loved by accepting her need for the same independence he enjoyed as a man.

Frieda's Invitation to the Dance

Moving toward the end of this brief exploration of the arts of dance and love, I want to focus upon *Mr Noon*, that lost, recovered and subsequently endangered orphan among Lawrence's novels. That lost-ness persists in the Kinkead-Weekes biography where Part II is dismissed as "rearranged experience", as a rough draft whose comedic lack of seriousness and "incomplete" status disqualify *Mr Noon* as a novel.³³ Obviously, *Mr Noon* lacks the stature of *Women in Love*, but to denigrate it, or worse to ignore it, is to lose insights into both the arts of love and dance in Lawrence's work. As John Worthen asserts, "*Mr Noon* is a remarkable guide to much that happened to DHL and Frieda in 1912: its second part ... contains a great deal of direct recreation of the events of the months May–September 1912".³⁴ More specifically, *Mr Noon* offers insights into how Lawrence learned to keep Frieda as his lover, à la Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*.

Because Lawrence was readying *Women in Love* for publication

while he was writing *Mr Noon*, it is no surprise that the two novels foreground the art of love and that, on at least one occasion, the arts of dance and love are connected. As we shall see, dance is still present in these two novels, but the art of love threatens to eclipse its significance. By the time Lawrence began to write *Women in Love* in 1916, the characters who eventually became Ursula and Birkin had aged, as had Lawrence and Frieda. In Part II of *Mr Noon*, Lawrence appears to be drawn back to his experiences in 1912, as he creates Gilbert Noon's romance with Johanna. One senses a recollection of things past, especially in Gilbert's recognition that he has no right to control Johanna's desire to have sexual relations with another man.

One such episode in *Mr Noon* may be found in a dance scene that appears to be Lawrence's re-discovery of the "Schuhplatteln" dance scene from *Women in Love*, re-drafted in a rendition closer to what actually may have taken place in the Mayrhofen inn where Frieda and Lawrence stayed in 1912. As we might expect from a finished novel, the *Women in Love* scene is much more sophisticated and complex. It includes Gudrun and Gerald, as well as the gnomish Loerke and his boy toy, Leitner, who dances with Gudrun, while Gerald and Birkin dance with the Professor's daughters and Ursula dances with a student. Next, Gudrun dances with the Professor, "who was strong as a mature, well-seasoned bull, and as full of coarse energy", to which Gudrun characteristically reacts negatively: "She hated him for the seasoned, semi-paternal animalism, with which he regarded her, but she admired his weight of strength" (WL 411). Gerald dances with the younger of the Professor's daughters, with whom Birkin had been dancing, and Birkin now dances with Ursula, in a scene which as a whole offers an extravaganza of dance and diverse expressions of love, or at least erotic desire.

In contrast, the similar scene in *Mr Noon* is located in Eckershofen (Mayrhofen) and involves the simpler dancing of only Johanna with a "peasant". The "Schuhplattler" generates the man's lust for Johanna and at first Noon perceives that the man deserves

to have her, but subsequently decides that this “peasant” cannot have Johanna because she demands respect from her lovers (MN 249–50). Like her model Frieda, Johanna is, after all, the “Queen Bee”.

Returning to the parallel scene in *Women in Love*, the greater complexity in the development of what probably was an episode in the Lawrences’ honeymoon demands our attention because that development connects *Women in Love* with elements in *Mr Noon*. Perhaps because Loerke and Leitner are clearly lovers, the circuit of erotic energy brings Ursula and Birkin together in something much closer to “Ausdruckstanz”, as their dancing is increasingly driven by suggestions of what might be read, along with the same-sex relations of Loerke and Leitner, as “perverse”, by those more culturally conservative a century ago. Accordingly, the narrative provides extended access to Ursula’s consciousness as it rationalises her acceptance of Birkin’s attraction to activity associated with “shame” (WL 413). Although the narrative remains at the level of implication, the activity most likely involves anal intercourse. Additionally, the sexual practice later made so memorable in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* is graphically underscored by Ken Russell’s image, in his 1969 film version of *Women in Love*, of Birkin in a spoon posture behind Ursula after their lovemaking. It might be noted that the inclusion of anality in the “Schuhplatteln” scene combining dance and erotic desire establishes a precedent in Lawrence’s work.

Mr Noon has an additional connection with both *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. In *Women in Love*, readers have encountered yet another puzzling scene in which Ursula and Birkin are intimate. In the tearoom scene in ‘Excuse’, Ursula is kneeling in front of Birkin, “her arms around his loins, and ... her face against his thighs ... with her sensitive finger-tips ... tracing the back of his thighs, following some mysterious life-flow there” (WL 313). The activity may not be clear, but the narrative certainly elevates its importance: “It was here she discovered him one of the Sons of God such as were in the beginning of the world, not a man,

something other, something more” (WL 313). Clearly, Birkin is experiencing an ecstatic moment of intense gratification, shared by Ursula in this “new current of passional electric energy, between the two of them, released from the darkest poles of the body ... a dark fire of electricity” (WL 314). It would appear that Ursula is massaging Birkin’s prostate gland, although the text does not identify the event as such, perhaps because Lawrence learned his lesson with the banning of *The Rainbow* under the Obscene Publications Act. Even so, the narrative impulse to celebrate an unexpected source of mutual gratification in the context of unconventional forms of sexual experience has produced derision in some readers.³⁵

Because Lawrence is so intent upon representing a crucial moment in his characters’ transformation as lovers, the language in this passage becomes frustratingly dense. As readers struggle to discern what is going on, they are very likely to lose sight of the opening Lawrence provides here by using another trope the editors call to our attention in a crucial note marker at the end of this passage: “And now, behold, from the smitten rock* of the man’s body” (WL 314). This endnote (which would have functioned more effectively as a more accessible footnote) refers to a passage in Exodus in which Moses smites a rock with his staff and provides his followers with a spring of fresh water. The trope of the smitten rock generating life-giving waters may have seemed puzzling until the publication two decades ago of the few surviving letters exchanged by Gross and Frieda, as noted earlier.³⁶

One letter in particular suggests the provenance of Lawrence’s attraction to the Exodus passage. This is Otto’s first letter to Frieda among the surviving letters they exchanged. He thanks her for being the fulfilment of his “prophetic dream of the *woman of the future*” (the italics here and elsewhere are John Turner’s equivalent for Gross’s obsessive underscoring of words and phrases in his letters), and then goes on to open a door to the origins of Lawrence’s fascination with the Exodus story as well, perhaps, as Lawrence’s sense of his relationship with Gross as his forerunner in

Frieda’s life.³⁷ After iterating his earlier gratitude to Frieda for providing him with “the knowledge that *in you, Beloved, my dream of the future* is already *realized*, my ethical ideal already *confirmed as reality*”, Gross turns to the Exodus story as a means of amplifying Frieda’s agency in assisting his implementation of his erotic theorizing.³⁸ He asks:

Do you remember how it is in the Bible: *no-one* was allowed into the Promised Land who had been in Egypt *as a slave*; ... and a *new generation* had been born during the wandering in the wilderness, in misery but in *freedom*—only this *new generation* came into the Promised Land ... not even Moses, not even the liberator himself.³⁹

Gross associates his mission of freeing desire from repression, from the impulse to possess others and from the “sins” of jealousy and shame, with the efforts of Moses to bring “a new generation” to the Promised Land. Gross’s attraction to this powerful trope of Moses struggling to lead the “new generation” to the Promised Land he knew he might never enter must have struck a responding chord in Lawrence, who was also drawn to the struggle to free the new generation from enslavement to the past. It is tempting to speculate that in his extended drafting and revising of what would become *The Rainbow*, Lawrence saw, at least in part, that his own mission as a writer was to carry on the work of Gross by telling the story of Ursula, often seen as the Frieda figure, as the New Woman dying to her entire past to “procreate” herself anew as a woman who insists that she alone will control her body, mind and soul.

Lawrence’s sense of taking up the burden of Otto Gross as a New Moses finds support in that puzzling passage in *Twilight in Italy* where Lawrence writes that, while he was walking alone in the Swiss Alps, he identified himself as the son of “a doctor in Graz” (*TI* 208). Without mentioning Gross by name, Lawrence claimed kinship with Gross – not as a brother-in-law, or cousin, or even brother, but as a *son*, an heir to Gross’s mission to liberate a “new

generation” of sons, should they need liberation, but surely also the daughters who desperately needed to free themselves from the shackles of patriarchy, as Lawrence felt he was encouraging women to do in his construction of *The Rainbow*’s Ursula.

The closer equivalent to the aftermath of the *Women in Love*’s “Schuhplatteln” scene occurs as the ending of *Mr Noon*. When Gilbert and Johanna are joined in the upper regions of the Zillertal and the Zemmatal by Terry (David Garnett) and his friend Stanley (Harold Hobson), Gilbert spends much of his time “botanising” (MN 262), as the narrator calls it, that is, helping to gather specimens for Terry’s collection. Like Frieda, Johanna becomes bored and cannot resist Stanley’s suggestive assertion that he needs to be loved. Once over the Gemserjoch (Pfitscherjoch) pass, after Johanna and Noon have parted company with Terry and Stanley and they are staying in Riva, Johanna tells Gilbert, “Stanley had me the night before last” (MN 276). Noon has difficulty dealing with her “infidelity” but eventually accepts her action as an expression akin to the Schwabing/Ascona ethic of women’s rights to choose those with whom they have sexual relations. Then he unfortunately makes matters worse by “forgiving” her, deeply offending her with an assertion of his superior male status in passing out forgiveness, thereby failing Ovid’s test of being responsive to a lover’s sensibilities and thereby risking the possible loss of his lover.

What appears at first a cul-de-sac in the Johanna/Gilbert relationship gives way to Gilbert’s elation, triggering a transformation in him, reminiscent of Ursula’s in the last pages of *The Rainbow*. Yoking together Gilbert and Ursula raises the tantalising possibility that these two transformations – one of them in a thinly disguised autobiographical character and the other in a fictional character strikingly like Frieda – demonstrate Lawrence’s drawing upon his own transformation in 1912. Indeed, the key tropes in *The Rainbow* recur in the final pages of *Mr Noon*, especially in the images of the mighty opposition of fire and water, which offer a powerful expression of Noon’s (and perhaps

Lawrence’s) sense of self-transformation in an erotic context quite different from what we might expect.

In Riva too something seemed to come loose in Gilbert’s soul ... Quite suddenly, in the night ... he touched Johanna as she lay asleep with her back to him, touching him, and something broke alive in his soul that had been dead before. A sudden shock of new experience. Ach sweetness, the intolerable sensual sweetness, the silken, fruitlike sweetness of her loins that touched him, as she lay with her back to him—his soul broke like a dry rock that breaks and gushes into life. (*MN* 290)

In his review of *Mr Noon*, David Lodge suggests that Johanna has introduced Gilbert to anal intercourse.⁴⁰ Although Lodge stops there, it is not difficult to see this element in the “psychic geography” of Lawrence’s experience with Frieda in the small territory from Mayrhofen in the Zillertal to Riva in Italy, across the symbolic Pfitscherjoch pass.⁴¹

It seems very difficult not to believe that Noon feels such an immense sense of being “a new creature in a new world” (*MN* 292) because he is experiencing something much more gratifying than the creature comfort of snuggling up to Johanna’s back, as he undoubtedly had done many times in the cold nights they slept together in the mountains. Additionally, given the Dominikus Hütte scene in *Women in Love*, with its mention of the “shameful” and the “bestial” (*WL* 413) moving Ursula and Birkin toward bed in a scene not dramatised in the novel, this bedroom scene of Johanna and Noon becomes a further step toward the anal intercourse scene in *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (*LCL* 246–8). If we dare risk the biographical fallacy of imputing the experiences of these fictional characters to their historical models in this unquestionable roman à clef, *Mr Noon*, it becomes irresistible to ponder whether it was Frieda who introduced Lawrence to anality – especially intercourse in “the Italian way”, as it was euphemistically termed in his time – in Riva, Italy, or perhaps in the Zemmatal. Certainly, Lawrence was

already intellectually aware of the practice from his reading of Benito Cellini's autobiography.⁴²

The word "introduced" is sufficiently open to contain a range of possibilities. It seems possible that if Frieda shared her letters from Gross then she also shared memories of making love with her first "priest of love" and described how he liberated her desires from the old burden of jealousy, guilt and especially shame, perhaps through the "rite" of anal intercourse. Lawrence's return in memory to 1912, while proofreading *Women in Love*, inevitably raises a host of questions. Was Lawrence attracted to Otto Gross as a model of the man without bodily shame or more specifically without erotic, sexual shame? And why *did* Lawrence in *Twilight in Italy* identify himself as the son of a doctor from Graz, Otto's hometown?

Positing a greater presence in Lawrence's psyche of Otto Gross than has been apparent in the writing about this period of his fiction, it is fascinating to speculate how much Lawrence was imaginatively living into the experience of being Otto Gross through not only Gilbert Noon but also Rupert Birkin and Oliver Mellors. Or, is Gilbert Noon different from Birkin and Mellors, who are clearly the initiators of anal intercourse, if, of course, that is what Ursula is anticipating with Birkin in the Dominikus Hütte scene of *Women in Love*? Is Gilbert Noon closer to Lawrence in this regard than are Birkin and Mellors, who seem already to be initiates, while Ursula and especially Connie are the ones who are to become initiated?

And Johanna has clearly been Gilbert's instructor and coach in the Tyrol before the puzzling scene that serves as the climax of *Mr Noon*. In Bavaria when Terry (David Garnett) joins the couple, the three have great fun, imitating aspects of Russian dance, which readers of *Women in Love* will also note in Hermione's choreography of a dance depicting the Ruth and Naomi story (*WL* 91). Indeed, the threesome has such fun that Gilbert and Johanna are disappointed when Terry rejoins them in Eckershofen with a fourth, Stanley (Harold Hobson). Before the foursome moves into Austria, however, when Johanna has persuaded Gilbert that clothes

are necessary only to keep warm – and the couple, together with Terry, swims in the nude – Johanna encourages Gilbert to shed his clothes and what’s more, *dance*:

She would dance in her glowing, full bodied nudity round and round the flat, and she made him dance also, in his more intense, white and ruddy-haired nudity. He was stiff and constrained ...

“Dance,” she said to him. “Dance!”

And with her arms spread on the air, she floated round in triumph. And he, ashamed to be ashamed, danced in correspondence, with a jerky, male stiffness that seemed to her odd and strange. (MN 213)

If, indeed, the Johanna-Gilbert scene had its roots in Frieda and Lawrence’s honeymoon, what she taught him bore no resemblance to his own father’s social dancing but a rendition of the expressionist dance founded by Rudolf Laban and the love ethic of Otto Gross she became aware of through the Ascona movement.

Chaucer’s trope for the Wife of Bath’s knowledge of *Ars Amatoria* – the “olde daunce” – is particularly apt. Much as Alison may be humorously diminished by her text that a happy wife is a strong woman, she has chosen dominance to preserve her rights in a patriarchal culture that denies women even the most fundamental rights of personhood. In a letter from Gargnano, a half-year after his elopement with Frieda, Lawrence offered his conventionally feminist friend Sallie Hopkin the news of the imminent publication of his *Love Poems* and *Sons and Lovers*, and then provided a prospectus of his future writing: “I shall do a novel about Love Triumphant one day. I shall do my work for women, better than the suffrage” (IL 490). That novel, *The Rainbow*, generated such a hysterical response to its “obscenity” that only a man with Lawrence’s strong faith in the power of art could have survived the prospect of becoming either a lion with a thorn in his paw or a unicorn with a broken horn. What he learned from Frieda of the art

of love and its complement, the art of expressionist dance, made possible the wonder of his writing *Women in Love*, which saved him from despair and allowed him to continue writing.

¹ Marina Ragachewskaya, 'D. H. Lawrence and Dance', *JDHLS*, vol. 3.3 (2014), 179–85.

² In fact, the interest in Lawrence and dance began a generation earlier with Langdon Elsbree's 1963 doctoral dissertation *The Breaking Chain: A Study of the Dance in the Novels of Jane Austen, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, and D. H. Lawrence*, and then 'D. H. Lawrence, Homo Ludens, and the Dance' in the *D. H. Lawrence Review*, vol. 1 (1968), 1–30. Elsbree returned to the topic in 'Pillars of Flame by Night: The Dance Motif in D. H. Lawrence's Poetry' in *D. H. Lawrence Studies*, a publication of the D. H. Lawrence Society of Korea, vol. 15.3 (2007), 195–212.

³ Mark Kinkead-Weekes, 'D. H. Lawrence and the Dance', *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, vol. 10.1 (1992), 59–77 (a shorter version was reprinted in *JDHLS* [1992–3], 45–62); Elgin W. Mellow, 'Music and Dance in D. H. Lawrence', *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 21.1 (1997), 49–60.

⁴ Terri Ann Mester, *Movement and Modernism: Yeats, Eliot, Lawrence, Williams, and Early Twentieth-Century Dance* (Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 1997). (Her dissertation *The Modernist, the Dancer and the Dance* [Case Western Reserve University] was filed in 1993.) Martin Green, *Mountain of Truth: The Counterculture Begins, Ascona, 1900–1920* (Hanover and London: UP of New England, 1986).

⁵ Deborah Jowitt, *Time and the Dancing Image* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988).

⁶ Mark Kinkead-Weekes rearranged Mester's line-up of modernists, pairing Yeats and Lawrence as writers in whose work dance played a role throughout, in contrast to Eliot and Williams in whose poetry dance lacked such an ongoing presence: 'The Company He Keeps: Dance in Yeats, Lawrence, Eliot, and Williams', in *D. H. Lawrence: Literature, History, Culture*, eds Michael Bell, Keith Cushman, Takeo Iida and Hiro Tateishi (Tokyo: Kokusho-Kankoukai Press, 2005), 236–58.

⁷ Marina Ragachewskaya, 'No Dancing Matter: The Language of Dance and Sublimation in D. H. Lawrence', *Etudes Lawrenciennes*, vol. 44

(2013), 187–204. See also the recent special issue of the *D. H. Lawrence Review*, ‘Lawrence and the Arts’, vol. 40.1 (2015).

⁸ There is no evidence that Lawrence read *Ars Amatoria*, but certainly he had Ovid on his mind when he was writing *The Lost Girl*, in which he writes: “There is no mistake about it, Alvina was a lost girl ... Ovid in Thrace might well lament” (*LG* 314) – a reference he also makes in a letter to Barbara Eder in May 1918 (*3L* 242) – and perhaps in naming his poetry collection *Amores*, which was the title of Ovid’s first collection.

⁹ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The General Prologue, The Canterbury Tales*, ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), ll. 475–6.

¹⁰ Armin Arnold discussed Lawrence’s possible presence in Ascona, in ‘D. H. Lawrence in Ascona?’, in *D. H. Lawrence: The Man Who Lived*, eds Robert B. Partlow and Harry T. Moore (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1980), 195–8. After 1900 a direct railway link between Munich and Bellinzona (near Ascona) was established, which continued at least until the time of Arnold’s writing in 1979. Arnold indicates that Frieda Weekley visited Frieda Gross in 1911, and in 1912 wrote of her plans to bring Lawrence to Ascona later that year to visit Ernst Frick, formerly her lover and at that time the lover of Frieda Gross. Frick indicated that Lawrence and Frieda visited him and Frieda Gross, but there is no corroborating “paper trail”. Arnold argues that Lawrence could have easily visited Ascona in 1913 after Frieda dropped out of a plan for the two to walk together across Switzerland. In an earlier article, Arnold lends credence to Lawrence’s visiting Ascona, after stopping only briefly in Lucerne where the Weekleys had spent their wedding night: ‘In the Footsteps of D. H. Lawrence’, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 3 (1961), 184–8.

¹¹ Mark Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 21–2. Also implicit in Kinkead-Weekes’s biography is a judgement on the relative morality of the couple since he represents Lawrence as the honourable member of the adulterous couple because he refused to accept Frieda’s encouragement to make love in Weekley’s house (as he had also refused Alice Dax in the house of her husband) and furthermore he refused to make love with Frieda elsewhere until her husband was made aware that his wife had taken a lover (just as we might say no honourable man would drive another man’s automobile without his knowledge). Admittedly, this point requires fuller discussion; Kinkead-Weekes, however, leaves the impression that he would be among

the last to accept the view that the experience of Frieda with the counter-culture of Schwabing/Ascona had a major impact upon Lawrence's work, a bias that might be ignored were it not for the authority accruing to the middle section of the Lawrence biography, covering arguably the most significant segment of his life and art.

¹² Ibid., 763, n. 8. Janet Byrne writes of Frieda being in Ascona, even though she offers no dates or evidence from letters or journal entries, of Frieda or anyone else: *A Genius for Living: The Life of Frieda Lawrence* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

¹³ Byrne, *A Genius for Living*, 112.

¹⁴ Byrne notes that when Lawrence praised Frieda for her "genius for living" he "did not seem to know whom he was paraphrasing": *ibid.*, 112. Perhaps he was influenced by Gross's letters to Frieda. The phrase "genius for living" derives from Frieda Weekley, "*Not I, but the Wind...*" (Santa Fe: Rydal Press, 1934), 36. Jacqueline Gouirand-Rousselon, *Frieda von Richthofen, Muse de D. H. Lawrence* (Paris: Editions Autrement, 1998).

¹⁵ Green, *Mountain of Truth*, 117.

¹⁶ For a fuller account of Gross's affairs with Else and Frieda, see Martin Green, *The von Richthofen Sisters: The Triumphant and the Tragic Modes of Love* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 47–62.

¹⁷ John Turner with Cornelia Rumpf-Worthen and Ruth Jenkins, 'The Otto Gross-Frieda Weekley Correspondence: Transcribed, Translated and Annotated', *D. H. Lawrence Review*, vol. 22.2 (1990), 137–227, 178. In letter "I", Gross reminds Frieda she used this phrase to label him as the erotic principle.

¹⁸ Letter "A" in *ibid.*, 165. The italic font is Turner's equivalent for Gross's frequently underscored words in his letters to Frieda.

¹⁹ Ibid., 196. In letter "T", Frieda also tells Otto that when he comes to England she wants him to initiate "Madge and her fiancé": *ibid.*, 197.

²⁰ Green, *Mountain of Truth*, 32.

²¹ For Laban's contributions to modern dance, see John Hodgson, *Mastering Movement: The Life and Work of Rudolf Laban* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

²² Green, *Mountain of Truth*, 95.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 173–4.

²⁵ German lends English the word “hex” from “Hexe” [witch] and “Hexer” [sorcerer], as well as “verhexen” [to hex] even though the noun for “hex” in German is “Fluch”.

²⁶ Quoted in Green, *Mountain of Truth*, 96.

²⁷ See for example Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (London: Virago, 1979), 237–93.

²⁸ Green, *Mountain of Truth*, 96.

²⁹ As it has often been noted, these bovines are not bulls, but “cattle”, as they are so identified until the narrative calls them “bullocks” (WL 168), that is steers, or castrated bulls, raised to produce meat.

³⁰ After the Breadalby dance scene, Gerald asks Birkin: “‘Who are those two Brangwens? ... ‘What’s the father?’” to which Birkin responds, “‘Handicraft instructor in the schools’”, eliciting Gerald’s “‘Really!’ and Birkin’s twitting him with “‘Class-barriers are breaking down!’” (WL 93–4), suggesting Gerald’s class-consciousness, not shared by Gudrun.

³¹ Green, *Mountain of Truth*, 100–1.

³² In his ‘Who Was There When’ section for 1913, Green asserts: “In September, Ascona was also visited, silently, by D. H. Lawrence”, based upon Green’s reading of the passage in *Twilight in Italy* in which Lawrence claims to have a father from Graz, *ibid.* 139–140. See also *TI* 208.

³³ Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile*, 18–19.

³⁴ John Worthen, *D. H. Lawrence: The Early Years 1885–1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 382.

³⁵ For example, Hugh Stevens clearly has difficulty dealing with Lawrence’s admittedly unsuccessful effort to trope Birkin’s ecstatic response to Ursula’s touch. Stevens, somewhat disrespectfully, likens the metaphoric effect upon Ursula to “a sloppy bowel movement”: ‘Sex and the nation: “The Prussian Officer” and *Women in Love*’, in *The Cambridge Companion to D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Anne Fernihough (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 49–65, 62.

³⁶ Turner, ‘The Otto Gross-Frieda Weekley Correspondence’.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 165.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 166.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 165–6.

⁴⁰ In his review, David Lodge notes the “seventh sexual act” of Mellors and Connie as “notoriously, anal, a form of intercourse to which ... Lawrence attached a special significance; and there is an interesting hint at

the same idea in the closing pages of *Mr Noon*”: *The New Republic* 191 (Dec. 10, 1984), 96.

⁴¹ See also my article ‘Lawrence in the Tyrol: Psychic Geography in *Women in Love* and *Mr Noon*’, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, vol. 26.1 (1990), 1–11.

⁴² In the Cambridge edition of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, Michael Squires notes Lawrence’s reading of *The Memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini* “by 1907” (LCL 362–3), i.e., possibly before he was 22, somewhat surprising for a man young for his age, especially in a residually Victorian period. The “night of sensual passion” (LCL 246–8) represents the effort of eradicating Connie’s “shame” through anal intercourse.