

Endnotes

1. I will refer throughout to D.H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, London: Penguin, 1981.
2. Mark Kinkead-Weekes, *Triumph To Exile*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 179.
3. Bernard Chell, *Nottingham's Lost Canal*, Walk & Wright Ltd, 1999.

Suave Loins, Venison Pasties, and Other Tasty Nonsense: The Unacceptable Face of Lawrence¹

George Hyde

When I write about literature these days I tend to imitate the sundial and count the bright hours only: that is, I do not spend too much time turning the pages of critics with whom I disagree, or fielding hostile commentaries on my author or myself. However, a recent article by Professor John Worthen² has raised, in a new form, some interesting objections to certain kinds of writing in the 'definitive' version of Lawrence's *Women in Love* (the one we grew up with, first published in the U.S.A. in 1920, and in the U.K. in 1921), and it merits a reply. In his piece, Worthen compares this 'authorized' version of the novel unfavourably with the earlier, 1916 version, which remained unpublished in Lawrence's lifetime, finally appearing only in 1998 in the Cambridge University Press volume edited by Professor Worthen and Lindeth Vasey.³ Worthen's main objection is to certain sorts of language.

Professor Worthen has done his homework and identified some sources of the offending material, but what he is objecting to has actually been objected to often enough before. It consists more or less in a sort of mystical body-language, prominently displayed in Chapter 23, called 'Excuse', where it involves repeated references to 'the dark flood of electric passion' that flows from the 'rounded body of his [Birkin's] loins', and the 'marvelous fullness of immediate gratification' from the 'source of the deepest life-force at the back and base of the loins'. The effect of this is to endow Birkin with the charisma of 'the sons of God who were in the beginning'. The fountains that flow from the 'smitten rock of the man's body, from the strange and marvelous flanks and thighs', go deeper than 'the phallic source', bringing with them 'floods of ineffable darkness and ineffable riches'.⁴

Worthen identifies by name the two main culprits from whose writings Lawrence has taken this elaborate figurative-mystical language: to wit, James Pryse, author of *The Apocalypse Unsealed*, and Madame Blavatsky, whose *The Secret Doctrine* had quite a following among Modernist writers. Both of these Lawrence read in 1917, when his novel acquires what Worthen refers to rather disdainfully as 'an idea of the Hindu chakras, which it is using for its own rather obscure purposes'. I would not dispute the presence of the sources Worthen names, and certainly there is an element of 'obscurity' here, as there is in (for instance) T.S. Eliot's assimilation of Hinduism and Buddhism to Christian teaching in *The Waste Land*. But that, it seems to me, is not the end of the story. To understand better not only where this writing is coming from, but where it is going, that is, to grasp *why* Pryse's and Blavatsky's research should have made its appearance just at this moment, we need to read a little further, both in this chapter and in the larger context of the novel and its 'sources', or intertexts. And when we do so, Lawrence's 'obscurity' here, which is surely real enough, may turn out to be more purposeful than it appears to be from Worthen's rather cursory account of it.

The kinds of objections made by Worthen were actually voiced as early as the review which John Middleton Murry gave the novel in *The Nation and Atheneum*, when it first appeared in England.⁵ After the years of misery experienced by Lawrence, who had been condemned by the great and the good on moral and political grounds, and could not find a publisher for his new novel, Murry, an old friend, served up this disconcertingly sneering review. It opens with a note on the second section of the 'Excuse' chapter, in which Birkin, at the end of a peculiarly stressful day, drives Ursula to an inn (not a tearoom, as Murry says). They have high tea (in place of the dinner party at Gerald's house which Birkin had told her he had promised he would attend, to mark Hermione's

departure). Murry is tickled by the fact that the fare includes a venison pasty – 'of all things' (as some narrative voice interjects in Lawrence's text). Murry finds this phrase ('of all things') especially amusing. Why, he asks, should a venison pasty invite special comment, more than (say) 'a large ham'? Why indeed! But in fact there *is* a reason, which leads us straight into the dark intensities of the narrative.

Of course, long before Pryse and Blavatsky, there was 'Genesis' – that is, this chapter, like the whole novel, is full of Biblical allusions. The reference in the passages just quoted to the 'sons of God' (and implicitly therefore to the 'daughters of men') had already been made critically notorious from the extensive commentary on its Scriptural source woven earlier into the text of *The Rainbow*.⁶ Lawrence is here repeating the same powerful phrase from 'Genesis' that he had already used (actually against the grain of its scriptural meaning, as Professor Wright tells us)⁷ in the earlier novel (or in the earlier part of the same novel, as *The Rainbow* may be called) because something has happened in the narrative – maybe in some unspoken part of it – to justify this repetition. The curious chapter-title links up with this. Just what kind of 'excuse' are we dealing with? What does the word mean? It is surely truncated from the word 'excursion', and we wonder about the implied connection between an 'excuse' and an 'excursion'. Is an excuse just a sort of excuse for an excursion, i.e. one that has been cut short by urgent events, like this one? Or is someone using the excursion as an excuse for something else? Does the word even suggest 'exodus' perhaps? Some more final kind of exit? It prefigures Birkin and Ursula's departure from the mundane world of work after all, and after 'Genesis', in the Old Testament, comes 'Exodus'.⁸

Or is the (apparent) 'excuse' in the title Birkin's fumbled apology, at first, for not planning to stay late with Ursula, but to go to dinner with Hermione? An excuse which arouses all Ursula's punitive wrath? Or is this perhaps the

excuse subsequently due to Hermione, for missing a crucial appointment, and without notice, too? Is some latent desire being repressed, and so cut off perhaps, as this noun is? Or is 'excuse' in fact a verb in the imperative or the infinitive? An instruction or suggestion to someone? Blurry Murry (as Leavis liked to call him) chose to open his hostile review of *Women in Love* with a note on the absurdity of the second ('dark loins') section of the chapter, but does this mean that the earlier part of the chapter is plain sailing, critically speaking? I do not think so, though the events in the narrative sequence are relatively unproblematic. Birkin takes Ursula for a day in the country in his car, a trip which begins with him giving her some rings he has bought in a second-hand shop and is carrying in a twist of paper. The gift surprises her, and she feels that the rings are 'really' a present for Hermione. Maybe she would have preferred to be given just one ring? Birkin's ex-lover, to whom he still remains attached by bonds of loyalty as well as (Ursula realises) some more mysterious bonds of dependence, preys on Ursula's mind.

The previous chapter of the novel, 'Woman to Woman', had contained a confrontation between Hermione and Ursula, in which the older woman had found a string of spurious reasons why Ursula should not marry Birkin: 'He is so uncertain, so unstable',⁹ she says, which nobody can deny, and Ursula needs (she says) a young, 'soldierly, strong-willed' man.¹⁰ This echoes what Gerald thought in Chapter 16 ('Man to Man'), where he admired Birkin as 'a wonderful spirit' but thought that he could not be counted on as 'a man among men'.¹¹ Evidently Hermione knows nothing of Ursula's soldier-lover Anton, who ended by boring her silly, then did the soldierly thing, and married the daughter of his commanding officer, just like a real man.

Evidently the rings are significant, especially when Ursula rejects them, 'replacing' them with a simple spray of heather ('See what a flower I found you').¹² Sigmund Freud makes

the point (in the case-history called *Dora*¹³) that Dora's mother's 'jewel-case', which had been the topic of some disputes between Mother and Father, and featured in Dora's dreams, has a powerful sexual connotation. Dora's father's friend had given Dora an expensive jewel-case, too, with a clear suggestion (according to Freud) that he expected a gift in return, the priceless jewel that Dora must not part with. Access to Dora's 'jewel-case' has the same sexual suggestiveness as the trying-on of the rings in 'Excuse'. But even without this very precise symbolism we see clearly enough how the precious stones of Birkin's rings might have enhanced Hermione's status as a *Kulturtrager*. She clings to her 'final and barren conclusions of knowledge', wearing this exotic garb with a 'bitter assurance like jewels which conferred on her an unquestionable distinction'.¹⁴ The rings, says Birkin, can be altered to fit Ursula, but she has no wish to match Hermione in her role as 'a sacred and inviolate priestess of desecrated mysteries'.¹⁵

This Cambridge-anthropological reading of the domain of the 'magna mater', whom Birkin curses in Chapter 19, 'Moony', takes its places among a web of rich metaphorical displacements of the 'family romance' in this novel, in which the key text is (as usual) the Bible, the source-book which makes sense of Pryse, Blavatsky and Worthen in its own way. In 'Moony' we have the full extent of Birkin's derangement as he throws first 'the dead husks of flowers' (cf. Fraser's 'gardens of Adonis'¹⁶) and then stones at the image of the moon, which he calls (anthropologically speaking) 'the cursed Syria Dea', Cybele the castrator,¹⁷ watching her explode in a welter of violent, explicitly military, images, then slowly reform.¹⁸ He is observed by the unobserved Ursula. The moon is Hermione and so many more of her sisters. Ursula watches this performance bemused, and then stops him: 'You won't throw any more stones, will you?'¹⁹ before demanding his kisses, although 'he too had his idea and his will' and he is

not in a giving mood. The symbolic rejection of the mother in the mind makes Birkin feel, understandably, that 'pure single being' is what matters most, after all this, and to hell with marriage and the 'obligation' of it all (cf. *Aaron's Rod*). Yet at the very same instant he feels how 'gentle' and 'sensitive' Ursula is, and when she has gone he must hurry to be with her.

But as usual they are out of synch. When he comes to her house to declare his love and to ask her father Will for her hand in marriage, she is not at home, and Will is distinctly hostile. Will openly criticises Birkin for his 'new-fangled' ways, 'in and out like a frog in a gallipot'²⁰ (meaning in and out of marriage, we may suppose, or in and out of various beds, or of seductive ideologies like those of Blavatsky or Pryse). Will's colourful idiom masks real aggression; but after all he is only protecting his daughter against post-coital regrets: 'It's no good looking round afterwards, when it's too late'²¹ (Birkin replies that it's never too late, since in his view if one no longer wishes to be married, the marriage is at an end). Will, who could not be expected to see that this opinion reflects a more profound view of the seriousness of marriage – as a personal commitment – than his own, is very explicit about where his ideas come from. They have the authority of scripture, and he speaks as if Ursula shares them more or less, despite the apparent scepticism we have witnessed in *The Rainbow*:

My children have been brought up to think and do according to the religion I was brought up in myself, and I don't want to see them go away from *that*.²²

Mostly, we can't help thinking, the characters in *Women in Love* have indeed gone a long way away from 'that'. Reading the novel as a sequel to *The Rainbow*, we are struck by the way the repeated Biblical allusions in the earlier novel have faded. The rainbow of God's covenant is apparently nowhere

to be seen;²³ the strenuous adolescent debates about the nature of Christ's suffering and love that so disconcerted Anton are left far behind; even the more robust and resonant echoes of 'Genesis' that seem to ring in Ursula's ears, in order to be deconstructed by her feminine, if not feminist, scepticism, persist in quite an intermittent and attenuated form.²⁴ Birkin is crushed: 'Ursula does exactly as she pleases', he says, but Will won't easily give up his punitive lucubrations, the natural offshoots of tough parental love:

I'd rather see my daughters dead tomorrow than that they should be at the beck and call of the first man...(23)

– leaving Birkin wondering at this unrecognisable image of a subjugated Ursula, and perhaps at Will's latent violence as well (an echo of war?). Twice Will says (with Old Testament ferocity) that he would rather bury his children 'than see them getting into a lot of loose ways'.²⁵ Ursula, far from leaping to Birkin's side when she comes home, attacks both Birkin and her father as bullies trying to force her to do something she doesn't want to do. The chapter ends on a note of tense hostility between Birkin, Ursula and Will, just as 'Woman to Woman' ended with hostility between Birkin, Hermione and Ursula.

In the opening of 'Excuse', then, in a perfectly natural, beautifully paced dialogue that masks deeper feelings, Birkin seems at first quite cool (though she blames him for driving dangerously, which may be because of his suppressed anger and desire). Later he has the hard power, at the wheel, of a Pharaoh, a nicely apt invocation in the context of the rich Biblical allusions which turn essentially upon metaphoric transpositions of the narrative of the deliverance of the chosen people.²⁶ Although she is puzzled by the rings, and even suspicious of them, she admires them judiciously, and their talk shifts to a discussion of the symbolic properties of the

stones and their elemental colours. The red opal is 'fiery', the blue sapphire has the shape of a rose (symbol of integrity in the chapter called 'Moony'), the yellow topaz has a steel frame 'finely wrought', etc. The significance of the fact that there are many rings, not one, is brought out more in the 1916 text. This is not going to be a conventional proposal of marriage: very far from it, after the recent defeats from which Birkin is still smarting.

After 'Moony', with its ceremonial smashing of the image of the great mother, the moon reflected significantly in the water, and the miserably failed proposal, no kind of conventional declaration could be possible. Ursula there was cold to Birkin, and spoke to him 'vaguely, absently', echoing the hostility her father showed him. But the father, Will, downright rude, had pulled no punches. The fact that 'there was no connexion between the two men'²⁷ perhaps registers Birkin's regret at the failure of this bid to establish a dialogue with the father and his values. Birkin noted casually that it was full moon two days before (he does not say that he had attacked it in a frenzy, and watched balefully as it formed again anew). Both men are wrong-footed in the exchange, but Will, saying that he does not want Ursula to marry too soon and regret it, speaks with an undeniable authority. When Will, shocked by Birkin, brings us to the real point, the religious significance of marriage, Birkin's anger springs from his own thwarted religious sense, since, if he marries, he knows it will be a real commitment, a shared spiritual journey, and what else but religious, in its own way?

The gift of the rings, in 'Excuse', leads to a quarrel, because to Ursula, they seem to symbolise Hermione's 'jeweled' culture, which she could not compete with, even if she wanted to, lacking the wherewithal. So when she falls out with Birkin over the evening arrangement, she rejects the rings, throws them to the ground, and he has to pick them up, and put them in his pocket. She reproaches him forcefully

for his pursuit of his 'metaphysical brides'. He comes back to her, she claims, only for his commonplace everyday needs. But she also asserts that Hermione is not the brilliant intellectual she claims to be. In fact she is quite commonplace, she says, 'a fishwife', even. All seems lost when amazingly Ursula, who has apparently walked away from Birkin to go home, returns with the spray of heather, which she places in his hand. The couple (as they now are) proceed to the inn, and the curiously symbolic 'nuptial' meal, and thence to Sherwood Forest, where they spend the night consummating their relationship. Ursula's father's resentment has been a salutary reminder, however, of the fact that Ursula is growing up (like Lawrence) in a world in which the Bible was read and pondered and taken, perhaps by most people, for a guide to everyday living, to what Matthew Arnold called 'conduct', especially in matters of sexual morality and family values. It did not take Blavatsky or Pryse (*pace* Professor Worthen)²⁸ to extrapolate allegorical meanings from scriptural texts, even quite mystical ones, and give them a personal application. We have the example of Bunyan and Blake to bear witness to the extent and intensity of the personal readings of scripture possible within English Puritanism.

If *The Rainbow* showed Ursula pondering such large questions as the significance of Christ's wounds ('got for your sake'),²⁹ and the meaning of the Bible story of the Flood, her rejection of Anton was linked obscurely with the Bible narrative of Lot's Wife, who looked longingly back towards the Cities of the Plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, connoting 'forbidden' sexual practices (including, perhaps, Ursula's 'shameful' love affair with Winifred). This strangely personal appropriation of Bible imagery is clearly linked to Ursula's rejection of Anton, who will give her no freedom. In fact, we perhaps should remind ourselves that Lawrence's earlier novel is a 'Genesis' and an 'Exodus' to start with, and a 'Revelations' to end with, and that Lawrence himself never

lost touch with his scriptural paradigms: indeed, his life and works were a continuous rewriting of them: 'I seem to have the Bible in my bones', he once ruefully remarked. His writing life ended with his own 'Revelations' or *Apocalypse*. But you did not have to be a writer, and a great one, like Lawrence, to go on testing symbolic paradigms against your own experiences. Ursula is simply an extreme case of what was common practice. The huge extended family saga that so much of the Old Testament is, and the crucial tribal significances contained within its lists of who begat whom, leading to deliverance and redemption, were inscribed in the society that Lawrence evokes in *The Rainbow*. Will did not really have to worry about his daughter not taking a prospective husband seriously enough.

Particular attention focuses (returning to Birkin's rings) on the fact that opals are unlucky, and Birkin says he prefers unlucky things. Ursula says 'Surely you should give them to Hermione! You belong to her',³⁰ an echo of the end-of-the-world cultural pessimism that plays such a significant part in the novel. But the jewels can (ominously) be made bigger to fit Ursula's fingers. Birkin feels that she is still so young that she cannot really accept him 'at the quick of death'.³¹ This phrase, which the marriage service contains in a slightly less scary form, and love songs soften ('Time is but a blooming / Youth in his beauty entombing') to a lyrical acceptance, is apt in the context of war, and real doubts about personal survival. Marriage portends progeny, and progeny signify death. Some might say that wartime is no time to have children. The Old Testament seems to tell us otherwise. This is not 'what luck brings', but a sacrificial pledge. The terrifying implications of it are resonating in Ursula's unconscious as the couple take tea at the inn. The fare includes medlars, the fruit that is (as Shakespeare says) 'rotten e'er it's ripe.' This is where the gamey venison pasty 'of all things' comes into its own. On the surface quite innocent (it reminds me of north

Norfolk, where venison culled from the Queen Mother's estate at Sandringham turns up frequently in butchers' shops), it is actually tied in with the dark, patriarchal symbolism of procreation and generation which has attracted adverse comment from Murry and Worthen. In what way? The answer leads us where 'blurry' Murry follows at his peril.

In *The Rainbow*, when she thinks about her marriage prospects, Ursula says she wishes she was 'fair' like those daughters of men in 'Genesis' who are visited by the sons of God.³² The *ad hoc* meal in the inn derives its strangely resonant quality from the fact that Birkin is missing his dinner-party. Hermione will have her nose put out of joint, time is passing, night approaches, and we feel the deepening, scary bond with Ursula after the fiasco of the proposal. Birkin is strangely excited (and judging by the sense of strain in the language, Ursula too) at the knowledge that they will spend their first night together, which used to be quite an event in the old days. Ursula feels she has been chosen. Birkin perhaps feels like a Son of God, or like Jacob, the chosen one, as we will see (chosen, incidentally by a mother who defied the patriarchal law of precedence). Of course she is not a virgin. But precisely the fact of her miscarriage and breakdown, following the failure of her engagement to Anton, with the parental anger that accompanied it, amid the ominous representations of marriage elsewhere in this novel, especially among the Criches, will have increased her sense that this is a significant moment. Birkin really *does* intend to go all the way with her. As so often with Lawrence, what looks like authorially 'authorized' writing is actually what John Wain once called 'stream of semi-consciousness'. The narrator is half inside the mind of his character, and half suspended in a neutral space which opens towards a hypothetical future.

Again, we have to turn to the Bible for help, and to do so is to understand why Pryse and Blavatsky are relevant. In 'Genesis' the covenant that God made with Noah led to

many things, all directed ultimately towards the survival of the seed of Noah (a notion which Ursula laughs at in *The Rainbow* as being fatuously patriarchal, as her mother had mocked the story of Eve's creation).³³ The story is the crucial who-begat-whom tale of the son of the son of Abraham, still very close to the roots of the tribal history of the Israelites, therefore, and bound up inextricably with their future as the spiritually elect of God, or 'chosen people'. Isaac, son of Abraham, from whom all things came (including, as a matter of fact, Christianity) had two sons, Jacob and Esau, and there is no story in the Bible more important for the future than what happened when the time came for the sons to take wives, how the hunter Esau was the older and should have taken precedence, but his mother Rebecca pushed forward her favourite, the younger son Jacob, and with extraordinary consequences. Her justification of this choice is not all that clear, actually, except that Jacob was 'a smooth man' and Esau was 'an hairy man'. This may mean no more than that Jacob was a beardless youth by comparison with his older brother Esau. But anthropologists³⁴ link the story to the crucial differentiation in the period between the nomadic hunter-gatherers, and the settled farmers upon whom the future of Israel and her cities depended. In other words, the story is a kind of parable of inheritance.

Birkin is a smooth man, not the heroic strong-loined hairy man or warrior that Hermione, for her own reasons, wanted for Ursula's husband. He has been called 'a changer'³⁵ which is precisely what Will has against him ('frog in a galley-pot'): his mercurial, unstable qualities. It is the smooth Jacob who presents the ceremonial meal of venison to his father Isaac (he covers himself in furs so the blind old man will think he is the 'hairy' hunter, Esau). Moreover, this venison is in itself something of a Biblical crux. It is not real venison that Rebecca serves, she has substituted goat, thereby downgrading (once again) the hunter in favour of the pastoralist. But it is

the outcome that matters. Jacob will make the rich marriage, the future is his, and with it the fate of the Jewish people. It will be Jacob who sees the ladder to heaven, with God at its top, not Esau. From Jacob's 'loins' (a word often used in Scripture) the seed of Israel will spring (his name, even, was changed from Jacob to Israel); and as the Bible puts it ('Genesis' Bk. 35 v. 11) 'kings shall come out of thy loins'. A student of mine in Japan, writing about *Women in Love*, did a survey in asking various people she knew what they expected from marriage. Most of her young friends gave a variety of answers based on different kinds of self-interest, or just their hopes and fears. Her grandmother startled her by saying unequivocally that marriage existed 'to maintain the family line'. This is reaching forward into the darkness of, and beyond, death with a vengeance, as the Bible does constantly. Lawrence returned a few times to the Jacob's Ladder story, not without irony. Professor Wright notes how, in the essay called 'On Being Religious', which Lawrence published in *The Adelphi*, he suggested, in Nietzschean mood, that God has stepped down the ladder 'and is standing behind you, grinning'. As he says himself, his intention here is not to deride Scripture, but to relate it more immediately to our world.

When Ursula feels, traces intimately with her fingers, Birkin's 'loins of darkness', she is harking back (under stress) to that religious upbringing that her father made so much of when he angrily rejected Birkin as a son-in-law. This man will breed, she thinks. He is after all a Son of God, like Jacob, who has thought her fair, and chosen her to be the mother of his children, just as she has chosen him, even though he does not have the look of an inheritor, and is no kind of conventional hero. But she is also harking forward into the darkness of the future. Birkin, apparently, scarcely qualifies in the matter of loins, as Hermione has already said (no-one, least of all the reader, ever actually knows who he is: i.e. who

his folks were). But the power of his desire is strong enough. And it is a desire for more than a quick sexual connection. His dark loins, though still undisclosed, are to Ursula already a compelling centre of energy. This may indeed derive, as Professor Worthen says, from Pryse's appropriation of the Hindu chakras, but in our time many 'alternative' practitioners attach great significance to the body's complex centres of energy, largely ignored by Western medicine. They tell her that soon they will feel a sense of their own freely determined commitment and thrust in the age-old cosmic rhythm, and when they do his seed will spring, and her own bright loins will thrust in answer to them. The whole process is in a sense 'dark' as so much of the Bible is dark, marriage being such a risky business, and the children, the fruits thereof, such an unknown quantity. Lawrence had none of his own, of course. And Birkin *is*, or seems, pretty cool, 'suave' even, as he has his way with her. Total outsider as he is, with no family of his own, he cuts out more suitable and respectable lovers who might have presented themselves, those strong-thighed hairy Esaus who should have taken precedence, and can gird their loins like real heroes, instead of throwing stones at the moon.

Naturally, we end up in Sherwood Forest, the natural place of romantic transgression, home of the outsider, Robin Hood, with Maid Marion and the merry men. Domination? By no means. Ursula (unlike her free-thinking sister) doesn't enjoy that kind of thing, and she always gets her own back if she feels threatened (as in 'Excuse'). Russell's energetic, intelligent film of the novel interestingly turns the camera away from the loins question at this point, perhaps not knowing what to do with it, and being constrained by censorship. Instead, in a rather embarrassing piece of 'top half only' nudity (the one sequence in the film where Jenny Linden, as Ursula, is, apparently, naked), he fails altogether to communicate visually the dark prophecy that shapes Lawrence's purpose. But there you have it: either the phallus rises to the occasion

or it doesn't, and either we have a rainbow bridge to the future or we do not.

Endnotes

1. This article first appeared in Issue 47 of *Essays and Studies: The Journal of the English Literary Society of Kyoto Women's Literary Society*, Kyoto, Japan (March 2002).
2. John Worthen, 'The First "Women in Love"', in *The D.H. Lawrence Review*, 28 (1-2), 1999.
3. *The First 'Women in Love'*, eds. John Worthen and Lindeth Vasey, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
4. All quoted from what I call the 'authorized' text of *Women in Love*, in the Penguin Popular Classic edition of 1996.
5. J.M. Murry, 'The nostalgia of Mr. D.H. Lawrence' (1921), reprinted from 'A Review of "Women in Love"', *Nation and Athenaeum*, Aug. 13, 1931 in C.C. Clarke (ed.), *'The Rainbow' and 'Women in Love'*, Macmillan Casebooks: London, 1969.
6. The crucial chapter is Ch. 10, 'The Widening Circle'.
7. Professor T.R. Wright, *D.H. Lawrence and the Bible*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, especially Ch. 6, 'Re-marking Genesis: "The Rainbow" as counter-Bible'.
8. Cf. Wright, *op.cit.*, Ch. 9, 'Books of Exodus'.
9. D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1996, p. 338.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 354.
13. Sigmund Freud, *Case Histories 1*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990, p. 105.
14. D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 335.
15. *Ibid.*
16. The 'sons and lovers' problem, one might say, is at last being distanced by a great effort of will.
17. *Women in Love*, Ch. 19, 'Moony', p. 287.
18. D.H. Lawrence, *ibid.*, p. 297. A 'gallipot' was glazed earthenware, generally used for medicine (perhaps derived from 'galley', since they were transported in galleys). The word has a Biblical ring to it.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 296.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 297.
21. Will's anger is the other face of fear, reflecting his own marital disappointment.
22. Will echoes the divine covenant of Genesis.

23. I refer to the long commentary on the Biblical story of the Flood which plays such a crucial role in *The Rainbow* (Ch. xi, 'First Love'). Ursula's adolescent sexual experience is intimately related to her religious experience.
24. D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 297.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 298.
26. E.M. Forster was already writing about the motor car in 1908 as if it were an alien mechanical monster that would destroy civilisation; but the Italian Futurist, Marinetti, a few years later, gave an ecstatic account of the violent erotic power of the internal combustion engine. Before motoring became commonplace, a man at the wheel (as in Shaw's *Man and Superman*) was often represented as a god-like creature. Cf. my essay on *The Wind in the Willows*, 'Uptails All', in *Leisure in Art and Literature*, eds. Barrett and Winifrith, London: Macmillan, 1990).
27. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 295.
28. A full-length study of Lawrence's debt to esoteric thought is long overdue.
29. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, p. 259.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 347.
31. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 348. 'Quick' has (of course) the Biblical sense of 'living' ('the quick and the dead'), and the whole phrase means dying to the old life, and being reborn (in the sacrament of marriage), as well as the enhanced sense of life given by the fact of death, of which the War gives everyone a heightened awareness. The talk of 'Egyptians' and their 'darkness' connects with Birkin as Pharaoh, as well as with the curious fact (discussed at length by Freud in *Moses and Monotheism*) that the Israelites learned of monotheism, and of a belief (which they did not accept) in the afterlife, from some Egyptian cults.
32. The quotation links the two novels unequivocally.
33. D.H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, p. 163.
34. Naoko Shoda, *A View of Marriage: The Existence of Feminism in Lawrence's 'Women in Love'*, Graduation Thesis submitted to the English Department of Kyoto Women's University.
35. Cf. T.R. Wright, *D.H. Lawrence and the Bible*, pp. 168-9.

Drowning Ishmael: D.H. Lawrence and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*¹

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D.H. Lawrence, Kurt Daniels wrote in a 1923 review of *Studies in Classic American Literature*, too often 'falls victim to his own metaphors'.² Certainly the allegorical ambitions of the *Studies* require that Lawrence approach his texts selectively and incautiously; the originality of his readings derives largely from this absence of caution. When Lawrence turned in a sour temper to Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* in the winter of 1923, he chose to read it as an allegory of materialism; a curse on the head of an America to which he had become deeply antagonistic. In the thin air of Taos, New Mexico, Lawrence saw in the *Pequod's* pursuit of the white whale a metaphor for the civilised white consciousness' attempt to subordinate and destroy the deeper impulses of its sensual being. The undoing to which this fatal obsession must lead is manifested for Lawrence in the destruction of the *Pequod* and the drowning of her crew. If Lawrence eludes the inconvenient survival of Ishmael, alone among the *Pequod's* isolatoes, perhaps we are inclined to put it down (in Daniels' words) to Lawrence's willingness to make 'the argument fit the phrase'.³ Yet Lawrence's earlier writing on *Moby Dick* contains the same seemingly incautious presumption, despite his significantly different allegorical ambitions. The first draft of the essay, written in 1918 when America was still a hopeful metaphor of regeneration for Lawrence, also strangely ignores Ishmael's resurrection. In the light of Lawrence's broader interpretation of American literature at this time, this is no small omission. Making just this point in his contribution to the Cambridge life of D.H. Lawrence, Mark Kinkead Weekes writes: