MYTHIC ALLUSION IN WOMEN IN LOVE

MYTHIC ALLUSION
IN
D. H. LAWRENCE'S
WOMEN IN LOVE

By

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INTRODUCTION

> It is perhaps not an adequate criticism of Mr. Lawrence's new novel [Women in Love] to object against it that the characters are unnatural, that one would have to sweep the world before getting together such a collection of abnormalities, and that they would not be found in Nature at all in one group as they are here. . . . Mr. Lawrence's queer unreal characters are permissible and sometimes powerful inventions. But in this book he tells their story with a really extraordinary slovenliness and lack of grip on his style. . . . What has happened to Mr. Lawrence? He was never a writer of great precision or purity: the violence of what he had to say, combined with its vagueness, made that impossible. But in his first three books his style was at least equal to driving home what he had to say; and this, it would seem, it can no longer do. 1

This excerpt from a contemporary review of Women in Love (1921) reflects the attitude of many of the early critics of the novel. They feel for the most part that Lawrence is a mad and undisciplined artist bent on insanely portraying the world as it is not. These reviewers seem to have escaped from the horrors of the Great War in a totally complacent manner and cannot understand the shock to the psyche that its physical and emotional destruction brought. Theirs appears to be a problem of willful misunderstanding. Even Middleton Murry, a close friend of Lawrence, writes:

> Mr. Lawrence's consummation is a degradation, his passing beyond a passing beneath, his triumph a catastrophe. It may be superhuman, we do not know; by the knowledge that we have we can only pronounce it sub-human and bestial, a thing that our forefathers had rejected when they began to rise from the slime. 2

Fooled by the title, the early reviewers (Murry included) tend to see Women in Love as a sensational exploration of good and bad sexual relationships. To a certain extent they are correct, but what they fail to see is that behind the sex there is dramatised a meaningful relationship based on something more than lust and depravity. Because the early critics can only see the surface of the novel, they accuse not only his characters but Lawrence himself of being sex-crazed and insane.

However, in Women in Love, Lawrence is searching for a means by which to express to the world both the destructive aspects of the world itself in the early twentieth century and the way in which we can function freely and vitally in spite of that world. The novel does not fall "into the category of confessions"[3]. It is, rather, an accusing finger pointed at each reader; and once the reader is presented with the problem and the means of overcoming it, he can choose to follow Hermione, Gudrun, Gerald and Loerke on the road to destruction, or learn from Birkin and Ursula that he does not have to be destroyed.

On the surface, the destructive nature of the world and its effect on the characters of Women in Love is self-evident; the novel contains an almost overwhelming amount of death, emotional annihilation and cruelty. Lawrence gives further significance to this destruction by relating it to several mythologies. T. S. Eliot saw in the use of myth-

ology by writers of the early twentieth century a new purpose and importance.

> It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history. . . . Psychology . . ., ethnology, and The Golden Bough have concurred to make possible what was impossible even a few years ago. Instead of narrative method, we may now use the mythical method. It is . . . a step toward making the modern world possible for art. 4

It is likewise a step toward making the modern world possible for sanity. Lawrence was certainly not the first author to draw parallels between the mythic actions of the past and those of contemporary society; however, he presents no Herculean heroes in Women in Love, no heroines of the stature of Penelope. Because of the anarchy and futility of the modern world, Lawrence turns to mythologies which are primarily concerned with violence and destruction; and by alluding to these catastrophic qualities, he suggests by inverse analogy that the way to stability and order can be found. While these mythologies may not always have been deliberately or consciously followed by Lawrence, an awareness of them expands our appreciation of the range and relevance of the novel.

In general, however, modern criticism of Women in Love tends away from any thorough or cohesive discussion of Lawrence's mythic allusions. Unlike the earliest critics of the novel, modern critics recognise that the conflict between

the Northern and the Southern outlooks on life presented in such characters as Gudrun, Gerald, Hermione and Loerke and in the African and Pacific statues is central to the theme, but fail to consistently connect these outlooks with mythology. F. R. Leavis, in D. H. Lawrence: Novelist (London, 1957), mentions Norse mythology briefly in his remarks concerning Loerke. He states that the reader ought to see in the German artist "a suggestion of Loki" and as well that he should draw a connection between Gudrun Brangwen's role in the novel and "the destructive part played by Gudrun in the saga of the Niblungs"[5]. However, Leavis makes no attempt to develop these suggestions into a forceful argument although he displays no hesitation in stating that "Lawrence was consciously, as well as profoundly, affected by his knowledge of northern mythology (in which we know him to have been intensely interested). . . ."[6] In The Forked Flame (Evanston, 1965), H. M. Daleski treads on mythological ground only to refute the argument that Eliseo Vivas puts forth in D. H. Lawrence concerning Birkin's attempt to stone the moon in the "Moony" chapter. Vivas contends that Birkin curses the Syria Dea because he fears the vulva dentata and wishes to become like the sodomitic eunuch priests of Cybele, an action which he proposes to Gerald in "Gladiatorial", the following chapter.[7] Acknowledging Lawrence's reading of The Golden Bough, Daleski accuses Vivas of overreading and sanely states that "the castration rites [as cited by Frazer] associated with the god-

dess make her an appropriate symbol of all that Birkin fears is destructive to the male."[8] While it is true that the analysis of mythic allusions can lead to overreading, one wishes that Daleski had pursued his discussion further, for Lawrence alludes not only to Cybele but also to her cousins Artemis, Aphrodite and Diana.

T. A. Smailes' study of "The Mythical Bases of Women in Love" (D. H. Lawrence Review I, 1968, 129-136) suggests allusions to the ancient Greek and Norse traditions. He feels that Lawrence closely modelled Gerald upon an archaic form of Hermes. In the "Death and Love" chapter, Gerald wears a cap like that associated with Hermes. Like Hermes, "the herald of Hades", "he has singled out Gudrun for death."[9] Smailes also suggests Gudrun and Gerald in the roles of Proserpine and Pluto in the "Threshold" chapter, where Gudrun is presented with flowers. While Smailes may be correct in postulating that Lawrence was alluding to these myths, they refer only to limited portions of the novel. His discussion of Gerald as a Germanic hero, although rather fragmentary, is, on the whole, more enlightening. Here, he sees parallels between Gudrun and Brynhild, between Loerke and Loki, and between Gerald, several Germanic heroes and Loki.[10] The major problem with Smailes' essay, however, is that it does not, to any great extent, attempt to discuss what Lawrence's motives were in employing these mythic allusions.

This thesis intends to do what the criticism generally

fails to do: to outline Lawrence's mythic allusions in Women in Love in as consistent a manner as possible and to discuss how these allusions deepen the significance of the theme of the novel. The theme of Women in Love is clearly defined. The modern world is on the verge of destruction because of technology and all of the horrors which it entails; and chief of these horrors is the incapacity of any one human being to develop a sensitive and tender relationship with any other. Lawrence presents this failure repeatedly; Birkin and Hermione, Gudrun and Gerald, Gerald and Minette, Gudrun and Loerke, Loerke and Leitner, we see them all form relationships based on perversity, lust, and even hatred; and we can see or can predict their ends. The novel ends with Birkin and Ursula, albeit in the midst of a quarrel, yet attempting to return to the tender relationship that they had achieved not long before. Lawrence feels, then, that if two people are willing to go beyond petty, selfish compulsion, a non-destructive, non-violent world can be attained. It little matters that there are only two inhabitants of this fictional world. As I suggested earlier, the onus is ultimately upon the reader to choose either the destruction offered him by the actual world, or to find his way to the new world suggested by Birkin and Ursula.

It is the unravelling of this theme that leads to the organisation of the thesis. The novel opens with a conversation between Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen, but it is Gudrun

who speaks first and to Gudrun that Lawrence pays more attention. She is presented immediately as one little concerned with tender relationships when she informs Ursula that she would not hesitate to marry an attractive, rich man. There is a sinister quality to her long, slow looks of knowledge. This sinisterness is intensified when Gerald and Hermione are introduced, both strongly associated with yellow and iciness; and when Gudrun feels a bond with Gerald. It is at this point that Lawrence first introduces allusions to Norse mythology, allusions to the mythology of the ancient Germanic peoples as recorded in the Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson and the Volsunga Saga, and also to a myth of Lawrence's own making which shows influence of the violence and destruction embodied in these Norse myths -- that there is a 'Norse sensibility' which causes a person to act with no tenderness or sensitivity, to act in a self-destructive manner and to further the cold attitudes of the world as a whole. The allusions to Norse mythology, which begin in the first chapter, are developed throughout Women in Love and end only in the final chapter with Gerald's death. Because this mythology is the most consistently used by Lawrence, I have begun my analysis of mythic allusion in Women in Love with a discussion of Norse myth.

By Primitive mythology, the title of the second chapter, I do not mean to imply a lack of sophistication, but, rather, to refer to myths and sensibilities which are concerned (whether through their own natures or through the fashion

in which Lawrence chooses to interpret them) with one of the primal urges of man -- sexuality. For this reason, I have included in this chapter a discussion of the primitive statues, the rejection of both Cybele and the lotus, and the three dancing scenes. The statues are of particular interest to Lawrence; he feels that they embody an extreme totally opposed to the Norse: where the Nordic view of the world does not allow for sensuality, the primitive statues present the tendency toward total immersion in sensuality that finally goes beyond sensuality. This kind of destruction is closely related to the other instances of Primitive mythology to which Lawrence alludes. Norse mythology, then, makes a necessary appearance in these discussions because of the conflict, integral to Lawrence's basic theme, between the northern sensibility and the Primitive.

The thesis ends with a discussion of Lawrence's use of Biblical mythology. In employing the concepts of clothing and knowledge, problems both created by the Fall of Man, Lawrence finds yet another mythic metaphor by which to analyse the destructive nature of modern society. It is also through his allusions to Biblical myth that he presents Ursula and Birkin with a vehicle for their attainment of the ideal relationship. Curiously, both the world of the novel and Lawrence's world are ones in which God does not exist. Nonetheless, salvation can be attained; the inspiration, however, does not come from above but from within. Man is not

offered redemption, nor can one man offer it to another; one must strive consciously with his (or her) helpmate to find salvation. By likening Birkin and Ursula to Adam and Eve throughout the novel and by presenting them alone together at its conclusion, it seems that Lawrence is likening them to a new man and a new woman who, if not immediately, will ultimately find a new world which will not be prey to the destruction of today's sterile society.

I

NORSE MYTHOLOGY

On 21(?) January, 1916, Lawrence wrote to his friend Lady Ottoline Morrell and asked her to bring him books "on interesting Norse literature, or early Celtic. . . ."[1] This request may have been prompted by Lawrence's reading of Sir James G. Frazer's The Golden Bough (third edition, 1911) during this period of his life.[2] The only section of this work that deals specifically with Norse mythology recounts the death of one of the Norse gods, Baldr[3], but in his notes Frazer refers the reader to his sources for the tale -- most notably the Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson. Lawrence also indicates in his letters that by 1909 he was familiar with Wagner's operas[4], many of which are concerned with the myths of Northern Europe; and that he had read at least the Fairy Tales of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm[5], the first of whom had also compiled and published the great Deutsche Mythologie (1835). Although it has not been proved conclusively that Lawrence did, in fact, read the Prose Edda, the Volsunga Saga, or any other of the mythologies of Northern Europe[6], Women in Love (1921) displays his wide knowledge of the Norse myths of creation, the gods, the apocalypse and of Norse heroic legend. These myths and legends, however, are not as generally known as those of the Hebrews or of the Greeks and Romans. It is

necessary, then, to retell them here in a much abbreviated form.

In the "Gylfaginning" ("The Beguiling of Gylfi") section of Snorri's Prose Edda (ca. 1220), the myth of the creation of the world, tales of the gods and the myth of the apocalypse are narrated by the triune Odin to Gylfi, a legendary Swedish king. In the beginning, according to the Prose Edda, the universe was composed of three parts: Niflheim, Ginnungagap, and Muspellsheim. The infinity of space was looked upon as the Yawning Void, Ginnungagap. Its northern frontiers were composed by Niflheim, the land of ice and snow, and its southern frontiers by Muspellsheim, the land of intense heat and light.

> Yet first was the world in the southern region, which was named Muspell; it is light and hot; that region is glowing and burning and impassable to such as are outlanders and have not their holdings there. . . . [In Niflheim] the streams called Ice-waves, those which were so long come from the fountain-head that the yeasty venom upon them had hardened like the slag that runs out of the fire, -- these then became ice; and when the ice halted and ceased to run, then it froze over above. But the drizzling rain that rose from the venom congealed to rime, and the rime increased, frost over frost, each over the other, even into Ginungagap, the Yawning Void. 7

As the heat from Muspellsheim wore down the snow and frost of Niflheim, the melted ice dripped into Ginnungagap and "life was quickened from the yeast-drops, by the power of that which sent the heat, and became a man's form."[8] Thus the Rime Giant, Ymir, was created. The gods, too, were created soon

after by the cow, Audumla, herself brought to life by the same forces as Ymir. In time, the ruler of the evil race of the Rime Giants was destroyed by the gods who fashioned Midgard or Middle Earth, the home of mankind, from his corpse. Man and woman, Askr and Embla, were created from two trees by the gods. They inhabited and populated Midgard, which was protected from the wrath of the remaining Rime Giants, by the eyebrows of Ymir.[9]

The most debased of the Norse gods is Loki, who is described in the "Gylfaginning" in the following manner:

> Also numbered among the Aesir [the Norse pantheon] is he whom some call the mischief-monger of the Aesir, and the first father of falsehoods, and the blemish of all gods and men: he is named Loki or Loptr, son of Farbuti the giant; . . . Loki is beautiful and comely to look upon, evil in spirit, very fickle in habit. 10

According to legend, Loki was bound to three stones with the entrails of his three sons for his part in bringing about the death of Baldr. It is his fate to lie there in bondage until Ragnarök, "the day of the great battle between the gods and the powers of evil."[11] He thus carries the epithet, "the Bound God"[12]. These three sons were the product of Loki's marriage. Through an illicit relationship with a Giantess, however, he had three more children, two sons and one daughter named Fenrir, Jörmungandr and Hel.[13]

Fenrir or Fenris-Wolf took a wolf's form. The gods originally kept him in their home, Asgard, but eventually feared that he would bring about their destruction. After

many attempts to subdue Fenrir, they successfully bound him to a rock where, like his father, he is doomed to lie until the last day. Jörmungandr is the Midgard Serpent who is also known as Niðhöggr. When the gods created Asgard, they placed Yggdrasil, the tree of life, in its centre. The tree had three roots: "one is among the gods; another among the Rime Giants. . .; the third stands over Niflheim,. . . and Niðhöggr gnaws at the root from below."[14] Jörmungandr, then, is a force destructive to the entire universe, dining exclusively on the roots of the tree of life. Odin cast Loki's daughter, Hel, into Niflheim to rule there as goddess of the underworld where she receives the souls of men dead of sickness and old age. "She is half blue-black and flesh-colour (by which she is easily recognised), and very lowering and fierce."[15]

The final pages of the "Gylfaginning" are devoted to Ragnarök, the mythic Norse apocalypse during which not only the world is destroyed but in which the gods themselves perish during the final cosmic battle.

> . . . there shall come that winter which is called the Awful Winter: in that time snow shall drive from all quarters; frosts shall be great then and winds sharp; there shall be no virtue in the sun. Those winters shall proceed three in succession, and summer between; but first shall come three other winters, such that over all the world there shall be mighty battles. In that time brothers shall slay each other for greed, and none shall spare father or son in manslaughter and in incest. . . . 16

After the destruction of the sun and the moon, the Fenris-Wolf, blowing fire from his eyes and nostrils, breaks free of his

bonds and the Midgard Serpent, Jörmungandr, emerges from his underground dwelling-place spewing venom throughout the air and water. All the forces of malice and evil in the Norse cosmology then rally on the field of Vigridr. "Then shall Heimdallr rise up and blow mightily in the Gjallar-Horn, and awaken all the gods; and they shall hold council together."[17] Immediately following this session, the final cosmic battle ensues in which all the participants are destroyed. A holocaust follows, razing all that remains. From this seemingly total annihilation springs a new and better world: ". . . the earth shall emerge out of the sea, and shall then be green and fair. . . ."[18] The only representatives of mankind to escape the destruction of Ragnarök are Lif and Lifthrasir, man and woman, who repeople the new earth. It is at this point that the "Gylfaginning" ends.

It would seem that Lawrence's most apparent borrowing from the myths of Northern Europe is from the heroic legends. It must be remembered that it is uncertain whether Lawrence had read these myths; what is certain is that he was familiar with Richard Wagner's operatic tetralogy, Ring of the Nibelung[19], which recounts the heroic legends originally spun in both the Norse Volsunga Saga and in the Germanic Nibelungenlied[20]. The basis of these tales is the continuing conflict between two peoples, the Volsungs and the Nibelungs, with the former ultimately emerging triumphant. Women in Love is, in a primary sense, a novel concerned with conflict as well; in it,

Lawrence appears to draw upon these heroic legends in a more direct way (as remains to be seen) than he seems to have done upon the tales of the Prose Edda.

The Norse Gudrun is the beautiful but treacherous princess of the Nibelungs who has this prophecy pronounced upon her: "'Sigurd shall come to thee,. . . . Him thou shalt have, and him thou shalt quickly miss; and Atli the king thou shalt wed; and thy brethren thou shalt lose, and slay Atli in the end.'"[21] Sigurd, the Volsung renowned for his bravery and horsemanship, weds Gudrun. After the marriage has taken place, Brynhild, who wants Sigurd for herself, is courted by Gudrun's brother, Gunnar. In order to win her, he must ride his horse through a flaming ring; Sigurd, however, is the only man capable of this. He disguises himself as Gunnar and lies chastely with Brynhild for three nights. After this, the two men re-exchange identities and all goes well until the trickery is discovered. Brynhild and Gudrun, through their conversation at bathing one day, uncover the ruse, and Brynhild arranges for another of Gudrun's brothers, Guttorm, to slay Sigurd as he lies asleep. Brynhild then dies of grief over her action; Gudrun, embittered by the incident, marries Brynhild's brother Atli. In his greed to possess the wealth of Gudrun's family, Atli attacks them treacherously, leaving none alive. For revenge, Gudrun slays Atli and their children.[22]

The clearest connection between Women in Love and the

mythology of Northern Europe lies in this portion of the Volsunga Saga. In an apparently straightforward manner, Lawrence seems to have named Gudrun Brangwen after the vengeful princess of the Nibelungs. In both cases, the name Gudrun is itself ironic. Literally it means "good rune" or, on a more figurative level, "good omen"; neither of these women, however, fulfills the implication of her name. While this portion of the legend does not correspond perfectly with the events of Women in Love, there are parallel elements in the two. Apart from bearing the same name, Gudrun Brangwen seems to be similar in character to the Norse Gudrun as well. Just as the princess becomes more and more bloodthirsty and vengeful, Gudrun Brangwen becomes less and less sensitive to Gerald until she ends by abetting his death. But she also takes on some of the characteristics of Brynhild[23]; it is Brynhild who provokes the death of Sigurd and Gudrun does the same with Gerald.

Gerald, too, figures prominently in Lawrence's possible adaptation of this portion of the Volsunga Saga. Sigurd's hard riding through the flames to reach Brynhild can be paralleled to Gerald's maltreatment of his steed[24], a vicious action which brings him into a kind of demonic bond with Gudrun and which, in turn, ultimately leads him to his death. Of course, Gerald reflects the roles of both Sigurd and Atli, all three killed at the hand of a treacherous woman. It is interesting to note as well how Lawrence ties this saga to

his use of the Norse myth of the apocalypse. Gudrun of the Volsunga Saga is a Nibelung; Ursula says, while she and Gudrun watch Gerald swimming, that he looks "'like a Nibelung'"[25]. This suggests that both Gerald and Gudrun are of the same blood-line, and involves them in a sort of incestuous relationship not unlike the kind that precedes the Norse apocalypse.

By drawing parallels between Gerald Crich, Atli and Sigurd, and between Gudrun Brangwen, Brynhild and Gudrun the Nibelung, Lawrence further suggests that the relationship between Gerald and Gudrun is ill-fated from its beginnings. Gerald as Sigurd the Volsung cannot hope to be happily aligned with Gudrun in the role of the Nibelung princess and is fated to die at the hands of Gudrun as Brynhild. His death at the hands of Gudrun is certain as well if we see him in the role of Atli.

The world of Norse mythology, whether it is the 'religious' world of the "Gylfaginning" or the heroic world of the Volsunga Saga, is one of physical cold, violence and destruction. This is due, no doubt, to the nature of the peoples from which these myths sprang. The world presented by Lawrence in Women in Love is much the same. It is a world where not only physical violence and destruction and, particularly in the Alpine section, physical cold are present, but where emotional annihilation appears to be the natural order. Again this view of the world can be directly related to the situation of the majority of people who inhabit it; although the Great War is never mentioned explicitly in the novel, its

characters act with the disorientation, disillusionment and emotional sterility which came as direct results of that war. In order to deepen this sense of destruction and futility in Women in Love, Lawrence appears to have found one perfect metaphor in Norse mythology. According to the creation myth of the Prose Edda, Middle Earth, the home of mankind, exists in a precarious position -- it is prey to destruction by ice and snow represented by the evil forces of the Rime Giants and it must also fear devastation by the extreme heat lurking in Muspellsheim. In general, the world of Women in Love totters on the same brink. It must attempt to avoid the destruction that is active in the metaphorical forces of Muspellsheim embodied in the Bohemians of London and in the savage philosophy emanating from Africa and the West Pacific of which the Bohemians are representative. Because this philosophy is an integral part of Lawrence's presentation of Primitive mythology, it will be discussed fully in Chapter II. The potential for destruction by the metaphorical forces of ice and snow in Women in Love is suggested through the use of Norse mythology as it is applied in character development.

Lawrence presents four 'Norse' characters -- Gudrun Brangwen, Loerke, Hermione Roddice and Gerald Crich -- and they are suggested as such on the surface level in two different fashions: Gudrun and Loerke because of their obviously Northern European names; Hermione and Gerald because of their traditionally Norse, blonde features.

Hermione and Gerald are introduced in the first chapter of the novel, and are seen through the eyes of the Brangwen sisters. Ursula views Hermione,

> a tall, slow reluctant woman with a weight of fair hair and a pale, long face. . . . Now she came along, with her head held up, balancing an enormous flat hat of pale yellow velvet, ... She was rich. She wore a dress of silky, frail velvet, of a pale yellow colour, ... She was impressive, in her lovely pale-yellow and brownish-rose, yet macabre, something repulsive. (16)

Ursula's impressions of Hermione illustrate immediately the major destructive aspects of the Norse way of life. She is repulsively pale and yellow; the constant repetition of this description suggests that she has become pale emotionally and spiritually. This is proved shortly after when Ursula remembers that Hermione "had various intimacies of mind and soul with various men of capacity." (17) She is capable of coming to terms with men on a promiscuous yet spiritual and intellectual level only and for Ursula, as well as for Lawrence, this type of association is abhorrent. To a certain extent, Hermione is aware of this. "She always felt vulnerable, vulnerable, there was always a secret chink in her armour. She did not know herself what it was. It was a lack or robust self, she had no natural sufficiency, there was a terrible void, a lack, a deficiency of being within her." (18) Hermione is vulnerable because of her lack of sensuality, her fear of it, and her incapacity to face the realities of sex as a sensual experience. Her intimacies with men are pale because

they are incomplete. Thus, inwardly Hermione has become a void, an abyss where no robust life can quicken. Importantly, it is Ursula who characterises Hermione in such a fashion; the reader should realise that Ursula can see the merits of an intellectual relationship but that she also sees the futility of a life lacking sensuality. She can see that Hermione "seemed almost drugged, as if a strange mass of thoughts coiled in the darkness within her, and she was never allowed to escape." (17) Hermione is trapped in a cold, pale world of compulsive intellectuality.

Gerald, like Hermione a possessor of worldly power and influence, is consistently endowed with the characteristics of Niflheim. He is first described through Gudrun's initial reactions to him in "Sisters".

> [Mrs. Crich's] son was of a fair, sun-tanned type, rather above middle height, well-made, and almost exaggeratedly well-dressed. But about him also was the strange, guarded look, the unconscious glisten, as if he did not belong to the same creation as the people about him. Gudrun lighted on him at once. There was something northern about him that magnetised her. In his clear northern flesh and his fair hair was a glisten like sunshine refracted through crystals of ice. And he looked so new, unbroached, pure as an arctic thing. (15)

Gudrun sees Gerald as a snow man, pure and beautiful, icy and crystalline. This description in itself suggests a dazzling beauty, but in light of the Prose Edda it takes on a sinister quality. That which is associated with ice and snow is by its very nature destructive, capable of the annihilation

of life. To Gudrun, Gerald appears to be of a creation different from other men's; likewise the Rime Giants of the Prose Edda spring from a different source than does mankind and are constantly engaged in attempting to destroy humanity. That Lawrence had these evil creatures at least partially in mind as a 'background' for Gerald is suggested more strongly in the last chapter of the novel.

> Birkin reached and touched the dead face. . . . In the short blond moustache the life beneath was frozen into a block of ice beneath the silent nostrils. And this was Gerald!
>
> Again he touched the sharp, almost glittering fair hair of the frozen body. It was icy-cold, almost venomous. Birkin's heart began to freeze. (537)

On the surface, this description of Gerald in death appears to be little more than Lawrence's rather obvious presentation of poetic justice -- a man who in life seemed to be ice and snow meets his death in the frozen wastes of the Austrian Alps. But Gerald's body is "almost venomous"; this recalls the venom which froze to create the realm of Niflheim and which melted again to create the race of Rime Giants. It appears, then, that the way in which Gerald dies returns him (metaphorically, of course) to his mythological origins.

These allusions to Norse mythology are quite general; however, Lawrence appears to characterise Gerald with rather obscure but nonetheless specific reference to some of the less desirable characters of Norse myth. One extensive mythic allusion in this context is to Loki. Gerald is often said to have a kind of arctic beauty; like Loki, women find him

powerfully attractive and he is "naturally promiscuous" (464). The connections of Gerald to Loki ultimately have the effect of emphasisng Gerald's destructive nature. He reveals his destructive capacities not only through his industrial 'reforms', but also in his treatment of women and his treatment of animals. These, in turn, reinforce the suggestion that Gerald, like Loki, is "the blemish of all gods and men." Nowhere is this more evident than in the passage describing the reactions to his efficiency campaign in the mines; the miners look upon Gerald as "their high priest" (259) who, as "the God of the Machine, Deus ex Machina" (256-257), wields and abuses his power over them.

The Fenris-Wolf can also be directly related to Gerald. When Gudrun sees him at his sister's wedding, she realises almost immediately that

> His gleaming beauty, maleness, like a young good-humoured smiling wolf, did not blind her to the significant, sinister stillness in his bearing, the lurking danger of his unsubdued temper. 'His totem in the wolf,' she repeated to herself. (15-16)

Lawrence can be forgiven his lack of subtlety here because he is focusing the reader's attention upon an aspect of Gerald which must be clearly understood. The stillness of the wolf is significant to both the Prose Edda and to Women in Love. Just as in Snorri, the Fenris-Wolf subdues his violence until he breaks loose from his bonds at Ragnarök, so Gerald remains sinisterly still until his final violent outbreak in the Austrian Alps.[26] Again Gerald's potential for violent de-

struction is made stronger by this mythic allusion.

Both Loki and his son paid for their evil actions by being bound. Gerald, in imitation of both, has a terrible fear of sharing their fate.

> 'Yes, I'm afraid of some things -- of being shut up, locked up anywhere -- or being fastened. I'm afraid of being bound hand and foot.' (73)

Lawrence appears to give Gerald, whose name may have been suggested by Geri, one of Odin's pet wolves[27], a kind of déjà vu, a vague remembrance of his mythological past.

Lawrence's purposes in the characterisation of Gerald are two-fold. By introduing him as a man strongly associated with ice and snow and by describing him in this manner consistently, it is evident that Lawrence's intent, on one level, is to depict Gerald as an insensitive and hard man. By associating him with Norse mythology as well, Lawrence issues the warning that this man, as a representative of the destructive elements of the tales of Northern Europe, is capable of posing a threat to mankind. The irony and, to some extent, the salvation is that Gerald ends by destroying himself.

In the initial description of him, Lawrence also hints at the unhealthy bond that will be formed between Gerald and Gudrun.

> 'Am I *really* singled out for him in some way, is there really some pale gold, arctic light that envelopes only us two?' she asked herself. (16)

Gudrun sees herself and Gerald as surrounded by pale light;

this suggests that their situation may differ from Hermione's but that it is nonetheless related to it. Whereas Hermione is pale gold within and without and can only enter into unfulfilling and unfulfilled relationships, Gerald and Gudrun are capable of stepping into the world of physicality. But because they are associated with this destructive light, their future liaison, Lawrence suggests, will be as violent and life-destroying both as those presented in the Volsunga Saga and as those in which Hermione so futilely engages. The light does not come from within them; Gerald and Gudrun are products of their time and are thus trapped, although in a different manner than Hermione, by their fears of a loving commitment. They are capable only of entering into a purely physical relationship, something that Hermione cannot do; beyond this, they can achieve nothing. Like Hermione, they are incapable of true sensuality and must remain spiritually sterile, bound to one another by what can now be termed the Norse compulsion for non-sensuous interaction.

The destructive aspects of Gudrun's character are given even deeper significance if she is seen in light of Hel, the gaudily coloured goddess of the underworld and Loki's illegitimate daughter. Gudrun, although obviously not a literal goddess of the underworld, finds herself worshipped in a lecherous manner by the miners as she walks through the streets of Beldover. Her association with this underworld existence is made clear as she muses about the town to which

she has returned.

> There came over her a nostalgia for the place. She hated it, she knew how utterly cut off it was, how hideous and how sickeningly mindless . . . . And yet she was overcome by the nostalgia for it. She struggled to get more and more into accord with the atmosphere of the place, she craved to get her satisfaction of it. . . . There were always miners about. . . They belonged to another world, they had a strange glamour, their voices were full of an intolerable deep romance, like a machine's burring, a music more maddening than the sirens' long ago. (129)

The miners and the town as well seem to represent the underworld. Gudrun's nostalgia for the place suggests that she is oriented towards death. If she is seen as Hel's kin, Gudrun's strange relationship with Mr. Crich, Gerald's father, becomes less of an enigma. The goddess receives into her realm men dead only through old age and disease; Thomas Crich is dying of both. Gudrun, like Hel, is easily recognisable, not through the unusual appearance of her skin but through her unique and colourful stockings.

There appears to be a development within Lawrence's use of Norse mythology. He begins with Hermione, who turns the destruction inherent in a Norse world view upon herself. In their intense relationship, Gerald and Gudrun resemble 'human' beings all too closely with their destructive outlooks and turn this destruction upon one another. Loerke, the gnomish German artist, however, turns his destructive attitudes upon the world at large. Lawrence, I think, intends the reader to see Loerke in much the same terms as he does Hermione -- that is, as a potentially flesh-and-blood

entity and also as an extreme representation of what is terrifyingly wrong with both the fictional and the real world of the early twentieth century. Through allusions to Norse myth, Lawrence heightens the sense of depravity in Loerke's character.

Loerke, whose name itself bears striking similarity to that of Loki, displays many of the traits which characterise the god. Loki is comely, evil and fickle. Although Loerke is far from handsome, the magnetism of his perversity fascinates all who come within his influence. A fickle creature, he moves promiscuously from relationships with very young girls before his appearance in the novel, to a homosexual liaison with the handsome Leitner, and finally to Gudrun, who is well past what he had previously considered to be a woman's prime. That he is capable of mischief is made clear from the description of him mingling with the guests in the chalet:

> Loerke was everywhere at once, like a gnome, suggesting drinks for the women, making an obscure, slightly risky joke with the men, confusing and mystifying the waiter. (462)

This mischief, although innocuous when we first encounter it, gradually inclines towards evil. Although Lawrence does not specifically state it, Loerke seems to receive some kind of perverse thrill from Gerald's violent reactions to Gudrun's desire for him. It appears that he is attempting to push Gerald as far as possible with the most perverse of all motives -- a desire to destroy, to create chaos.

Loerke is strongly associated with Loki's son, Jörmungandr. Birkin, voicing Lawrence's own disgust, describes him in the following statements:

> 'He lives like a rat in the river of corruption; just where it falls over into the bottomless pit. He's farther on than we are. He hates the ideal more acutely. He hates the ideal utterly, yet it dominates him. . . . He is a gnawing little negation, gnawing at the roots of life.' (481)

This relates, perhaps even equates, Loerke with the Midgard Serpent[28]. Birkin metaphorically suggests that Loerke does not live in Middle Earth but in the rivers of venom on the fringes of Niflheim. While he may not be a part of mankind, he is far more dangerous than Hermione or even Gerald. In her extremes, Hermione becomes synonymous with the void and has no real influence on the world. Gerald's destructive activities are committed openly; because of this they are recognisable by the world and can, if only in theory, be stopped. Loerke, however, destroys in an insidious and hidden way: he is the subtle and guileful serpent, insinuating his way into thoughts and relationships, eating them away from within.

There is a kind of kinship between Gerald and Loerke. As discussed above, the potential for destruction that we see in Gerald is more fully developed in the character of the German artist. Lawrence hints at this when he describes Gerald "swimming, like a water rat" (202) and Loerke swimming like a "wizard rat" (481) in the sewers.[29] This relationship is further reinforced by the public roles that the two

men play: Gerald, the industrial magnate; Loerke, the industrial artist. Although it seems that there ought to be a great difference between the philosophy of the business man and the artist, the two are working independently towards the same destructive ends. In his obsession with efficiency, Gerald institutes his reforms of his father's coal mines and through this mechanisation destroys any dignity that remains in the lives of his miners. Loerke, who calls himself an artist, unknowingly takes Gerald's principles of 'reform' to their utmost point of expression by creating "'beautiful factories, beautiful machine-houses'" (477). While Loerke declares that the worker "'enjoys the mechanical motion of his own body'" (477), an extreme to which Gerald has not yet gone, both men ultimately view the sum of man's existence in terms of the "mechanical principle" rather than the "organic" (260).

Women in Love is, in one sense, Lawrence's own vision of an apocalypse. This is made clear by the titles which he considered for the novel during its composition -- The Latter Days and Day of Wrath or Dies Irae[30] -- conveying apocalyptic suggestions. Lawrence might well have named the novel Ragnarök after the ancient Norse myth of the Apocalypse.

Lawrence specifically draws the reader's attention to the pending violence and destruction of the novel at the wedding reception which occurs in the opening sequence. The

guests at Shortlands ignore the summons of the butler to move into the dining room.

> Gerald took up a large, curved conch shell, that lay on a shelf, and without reference to anybody, blew a shattering blast. It was a strange, rousing noise, that made the heart beat. The summons was almost magical. Every body came running, as if at a signal. And then the crowd in one impulse moved into the dining-room. (29)

The guests at the wedding are members of the intellectual and financial élite; they are god-like in their power and influence. Gerald acts in much the same manner as Heimdallr who summons the gods to their council before the final cosmic battle[31]. The situation here seems to imitate the myth; Gerald summons these quasi-gods to their council, intense dinner conversation involving nationality, foreign affairs and metaphysics. This seemingly minor incident is a further suggestion that the later action of the novel will be violent and destructive.

Although the Great War is not explicitly mentioned in Women in Love, all of its characters are people with shattered beliefs and who have no direction in life; they are truly "a lost generation". Lawrence did not view World War I as the apocalypse itself but rather as one of the greatest manifestations of the world's attempt at its own destruction. Because the novel was virtually complete by 1917, the Great War which began in 1914 can be seen perhaps as the "three other winters" of battle which precede the

final "Awful Winter". Gerald's murder of his own brother, having taken place before the action of Women in Love begins, in part foreshadows the apocalyptic vision which is suggested in the novel itself. The "Awful Winter" which follows, "three in succession", signals the true beginning of the mythological Norse apocalypse. It is not merely coincidental that the last three chapters of Women in Love, chapters which involve the most violent destruction in the novel, take place in an Austrian winter[32].

As discussed above, Gudrun sees Gerald at first as a still and silent wolf, connecting him with the Fenris-Wolf in its state of bondage. His penultimate, violent act of attempting to murder Gudrun suggests that, like the Fenris-Wolf in the final battle, Gerald has broken free of his bonds and rages destructively. It is in the final chapters of the novel, too, that Loerke, already likened to the Midgard Serpent, makes his appearance, spreading his "venom" in the form of malicious disruption of the order of things.

Violent destruction is what is most strongly indicated in the Norse mythologies which provide a background for Women in Love. That these myths do not relate directly to Birkin and Ursula is significant: although they, too, feel the annihilation in their world and in the greater world around them, it is annihilation of a different sort. They feel their spirits withering away and yet they fight to wrest stability

from chaos. It is the destruction of the action in the Austrian Alps which causes Birkin and Ursula (whose name is Latin in "origin") to flee to Italy where they feel that they can escape the apocalypse. In terms of Norse myth, Italy with its temperate climate is the mean between the frozen desolation of Niflheim and the burning wastes of Muspellsheim, a place which metaphorically embodies a balance between the sensual and the non-sensual and from which a new world can be realised. Like the conclusion of the Norse myth of the apocalypse where only Lif and Lifthrasir, man and woman, remain to create a new and fairer earth, Women in Love ends with Hermione forgotten, Gerald dead, and Gudrun gone to Dresden with Loerke. Only Birkin and Ursula, man and woman, are left to found a new world which rejects the deceit, violence and destruction of the past.

II

PRIMITIVE MYTHOLOGY

The fictional world of Women in Love is a reflection of the world in which Lawrence lived. Both are worlds which were being destroyed or, more precisely, were destroying themselves with technology, war and the impossibility of belief in God. With neither science nor religion to turn to for meaning, it is not surprising that Lawrence looked to the mythic sensibility of ancient cultures in order to discover, if not a solution to the problem of modernity, a foundation upon which to build a new world. His interest in the societies of the past is evident in his letter of 21(?) January, 1916 to Lady Ottoline Morrell:

> Bring one or two books, will you: . . . not novels nor verse nor belles lettres, but something a bit learned: Anglo-Saxon ballads -- like "The Seaman' [sic], translated -- on interesting Norse literature, or early Celtic, something about the Druids (though I believe it's all spurious) or the Orphic Religions, or Egypt, or anything really African, Fetish worship or the customs of primitive tribes. . . . (Not Frazer -- I've read him.) 1

By 1917, Lawrence had read Frazer's Totemism and Exogamy (1910), The Golden Bough (third edition 1911), Edward B. Tylor's Primitive Cultures (1871), Jane E. Harrison's Ancient Art and Ritual (1913), and Mme. Blavatsky's Isis Unveiled (1877) and The Secret Doctrine (1888).[2]

An interest in the past was not a phenomenon unique to Lawrence's day; Rousseau, in the eighteenth century, and

Wordsworth, in the nineteenth, to name only two important writers, looked to either pre-civilized times or pre-civilized sensibilities for a cure for social and moral ills. Anthropology and comparative religion as respectable subjects for academic study came to the fore in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Lawrence's extensive reading in these fields shows that he was well-versed in the intellectual pursuits of his day. But he does not indulge in sentimental nostalgia for the past in his use of primitive mythology; he finds in every form of primitive myth, whether it be Norse, Egyptian, Ancient Near Eastern, Ancient Greek, African or Buddhist, something destructive to man and he rejects these myths on this basis.

As suggested in Chapter I, Lawrence uses Norse mythology to heighten the impact of the destructive nature of the world of Women in Love. However, his use of myth does not function only as a parallel to the modern world. With references, explicit and implicit, to cultures of the past, Lawrence seeks to analyse metaphorically and symbolically the problems of the world of the novel and to suggest ways in which they can be overcome. It is in this fashion that Lawrence uses the primitive sculptures which Halliday owns; these, in conjunction with the implications of Norse myth, become central symbols which outline fully what must be overcome in both the world of the novel and the actual post World War I world.

The primitive sculptures are first encountered in the "Crème de Menthe" and "Totem" chapters of the novel. Their symbolic significance, however, can be fully understood only in retrospect, after certain later incidents in the novel are considered. In "Moony", Birkin, speaking here most clearly it seems as Lawrence's mouthpiece, meditates upon one of the sculptures he had seen at Halliday's.

> Suddenly he found himself face to face with a situation. It was as simple as this: fatally simple. On the one hand he knew he did not want a further sensual experience -- something deeper, darker, than ordinary life could give. He remembered the African fetishes he had seen at Halliday's so often. There came back to him one, a statuette about two feet high, a tall, slim, elegant figure from West Africa, in dark wood, glossy and suave. It was a woman, hair dressed high, like a melon-shaped dome. He remembered her vividly; she was one of his soul's intimates. Her body was long and elegant, her face was crushed tiny like a beetle's, she had rows of round heavy collars, like a column of quoits, on her neck. He remembered her: her astonishing cultured elegance, her diminished, beetle face, the astounding, long elegant body, on short ugly legs, with such protuberant buttocks, so weighty and unexpected below her slim long loins. She knew what he himself did not know. She had thousands of years of purely sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge behind her. It must have been thousands of years since her race had died, mystically: that is since the relation between the senses and the outspoken mind had broken, leaving the experience all in one sort, mystically sensual. Thousands of years ago, that which was imminent in himself must have taken place in these Africans: the goodness, the holiness, the desire for creation and productive happiness must have lapsed, leaving the single impulse for knowledge through the senses, knowledge arrested and ending in the senses, mystic knowledge such as the beetles have, which live purely within the world of corruption and cold dissolution. This

> was why her face looked like a beetle's:
> this was why the Egyptians worshipped the ball-
> rolling scarab: because of the principle of
> knowledge in dissolution and corruption.
> (285-286)

I quote at length because this is one of the most important passages in Women in Love. Several things should be noted: the fetish is African; it has a tiny head and huge buttocks; it belongs to a race which is spiritually dead. Since it is African, it comes from a land of intense heat, a land not unlike the mythological land of Muspellsheim in the Norse cosmology; this, in turn, associates the sculpture with a destructive force. On a more symbolic level, the statue, coming from African roots, represents an extreme defined by Lawrence as "mindless progressive knowledge through the senses" which leads to "disintegration and dissolution."

Mindless and with a beetle-like head, purely sensual and with protuberant buttocks, the statue is the antithesis of another destructive extreme presented in the novel by Hermione, "a tall, slow, reluctant woman with a weight of fair hair and a pale long face. . . . her hair was heavy, she drifted along with a peculiar fixity of the hips, a strange unwilling motion." (16) Lawrence continually emphasises the weight of Hermione's hair and the heaviness of her head in order to intensify his metaphoric meaning. In her search for knowledge, Hermione, "full of intellectuality" (17), presents the extreme to which the North is capable of going. She has denied the body. Her hips seem fixed.

She is incapable of sensuality. She is "nerve-worn with consciousness" (17). On the other hand, Halliday's savage sculpture has denied the intellect in its search for knowledge which it finds through sensuality and which, Lawrence and Birkin contend, goes "far beyond the scope of phallic investigation" (286). Lawrence has presented two equally destructive types of compulsion: Hermione embodies the Northern tendency towards a compulsive search for intellectual knowledge, while the savage sculpture embodies the Southern tendency towards compulsive sensuality. Both lead to destructive ends. Hermione and the culture and sensibility which she represents are plagued by "a terrible void", a "bottomless pit of insufficiency" (18); the statue represents a culture which is mystically dead. They both lack creative power. The one is full of dead facts and empty ideas; the other, of "knowledge arrested and ending in the senses."

Both, though, are frighteningly attractive, even to Birkin. At the outset of the novel, Lawrence makes it clear that Birkin and Hermione have been lovers for some time and that Birkin is breaking away from her. He can no longer tolerate the battle of will that he fights with her. After his accusation: "'. . . what you want is pornography -- looking at yourself in mirrors, watching your naked animal actions in mirrors, so that you can have it all in your consciousness, make it all mental'" (46), he admits to a desire for "'the

great dark knowledge you can't have in your head'" (46-47). This desire leads Birkin back to the society of the London Bohemians and the savage sculptures, a place with which he has certainly been intimately acquainted before the novel begins.

It must be remembered that Lawrence presents two savage sculptures in Women in Love: one which mesmerises Gerald in the "Crême de Menthe" and "Totem" chapters and one upon which Birkin meditates in "Moony". The first is described in the following manner:

> But there were several statues, wood carvings from the West Pacific, strange and disturbing, the carved natives looked almost like the foetus of a human being. One was a woman sitting naked in a strange posture, and looking tortured, her abdomen stuck out. The young Russian explained that she was sitting in childbirth, clutching the ends of the band that hung from her neck, one in each hand, so that she could bear down and help labour. The strange, transfixed rudimentary face of the woman again reminded Gerald of a foetus, it was also rather wonderful, conveying the suggestion of the extreme physical sensation, beyond the limits of mental consciousness. (81-82)

While the appearance of this sculpture is important, Gerald's attitude towards it and what he sees in it are also of interest. He actually sees very little in the sculpture apart from its physical suggestion and appearance. When Birkin muses, he discovers all the destructive implications of what the sculpture represents; Gerald, although able to acknowledge that this statue displays something "beyond the limits of mental consciousness", can go no further. He can simply

pronounce "'Aren't they rather obscene?'" (82) and feel revulsion. Although Lawrence makes no authorial comment, the reasons for Gerald's disturbance are clear. Because he has been aligned with Niflheim he unconsciously fears the destructive potential of anything associated with Muspellsheim, as this statue undoubtedly is. Even though the sculpture is giving birth and resembles a foetus, it is not contradictory for Gerald to see it as an instrument of destruction. It clearly poses a threat to the existence which Gerald represents because it is capable of creativity of a non-mental sort. Curiously, all of Lawrence's 'Nordic' characters are incapable of this kind of creative act. And while Mrs. Crich has propogated the species, her children reach dead ends; for example, Diana, who drowns both herself and the young doctor in a desperate and destructive act. When Gerald looks at the sculpture, he sees it in terms of technology and science; he appears to be more concerned with the apparatus used by the woman to aid her labour than with the fact that she is giving birth. Lawrence's use of the statue in this case emphasises the major problem of the Nordic races. They are incapable of sensuous creativity.

This is emphasised further in "Totem", where the statue reappears and where Lawrence presents the attitudes of both Gerald and Birkin to it. When Gerald asks, "'What do you think of that figure there?'", Birkin tersely replies, "'It is art.'" (87) Why? "'It conveys a complete truth. . .

It contains the whole truth of that state, whatever you feel about it.'" (87) Birkin's definition -- art is truth, a truth which evokes a subjective response -- provides a means of deciphering Lawrence's intention with his characters. In other words, a character's reaction to any given kind of art, is ultimately a reflection of that character's personal truths and view of life. Gerald, "shocked, resentful", "hates the sheer barbaric thing" (87). This, together with his incessant questioning of Birkin, reflects his analytic, non-sensual perception of the world. Birkin sees things in a different manner. For him the statue is "'pure culture in sensation, sculpture in the physical consciousness, really ultimate physical consciousness, mindless, utterly sensual. It is so sensual as to be final, supreme.'" (87) This is exactly what Lawrence intends the sculpture to represent, but Birkin does not accept fully the implications of its finality until "Moony". He does, however, accept the truth that the sculpture, as a representative of the primitive, conveys; the state of consciousness that the sculpture reflects is "mindless" and "utterly sensual".

Loerke's sculpture appears in the "Continental" chapter, and although it is not primitive, it functions in a manner parallel to the African and West Pacific statues. It outlines the dangers of the Nordic view of the world.

> The statuette was of a naked girl, small, finely made, sitting on a great naked horse. The girl was young and tender, a mere bud. She

> was sitting sideways on the horse, her face in her hands, as if in shame and grief, in a little abandon. Her hair, which was short and must be flaxen, fell forward, divided, half covering her hands.
>
> Her limbs were young and tender. Her legs, scarcely formed yet, the legs of a maiden just passing towards cruel womanhood, dangled childishly over the side of the powerful horse, pathetically, the small feet folded one over the other, as if to hide. But there was no hiding. There she was exposed, naked on the naked flank of the horse. (482)

The description conveys a sense of tenderness, but there are jarring undertones in certain phrases: "as if in shame and grief", "cruel womanhood", "exposed naked". What Lawrence considers to be the Norse attitude to the sensual is exposed and the Romantic view of childhood is unmasked. The girl is violently juxtaposed to the great, naked horse (definitely a symbol of the male) in order to satirise Loerke's cruelly perverse 'northern' view of sexuality. The girl is presented as afraid of the power of sex because it can trample her as easily as a stallion can trample a child and because, for her, it is presented as a cruel and violent experience. Lawrence's northern characters reveal a perverse attitude to sexuality. Hermione, who, we must assume, has been physically intimate with Birkin, is obviously incapable of enjoying a satisfying sexual relationship. She attempts to "'make it all mental'" (46) In the appropriately named chapter "Death and Love", Gerald comes to Gudrun not only for consummation but "for vindication" (388) as well. Gudrun reacts to the situation in a typically 'northern' way: "And she, subject,

received him as a vessel filled with his bitter potion of death. She had no power at this crisis to resist. The terrible frictional violence of death filled her, and she received it in an ecstacy of subjection, in throes of acute, violent sensation." (388) In other words, Lawrence seems to suggest that there is something masochistic in the northern sensibility which results in an incapacity to come to terms with sensuality or to find any human fulfilment in it.

Loerke goes even further. The outcome of a conversation about women which is instigated by his statue presents him as a sadist who finds the female sex "'beautiful at sixteen, seventeen, eighteen -- after that, they are no use to [him]'" (487). He finds no meaning in sensual relationships with women at all and yet Lawrence says of his homosexual bond with Leitner that

> it was evident that the two men who had travelled and lived together, sharing the same bedroom, had now reached the stage of loathing. Leitner hated Loerke with an injured, writhing impotent hatred, and Loerke treated Leitner with a fine-quivering contempt and sarcasm. Soon the two would have to go apart. (475)

This type of relationship has been encountered earlier in the novel; Hermione, described as a "man's woman" (17), hates Birkin in the same fashion as Leitner hates Loerke and her attempt at "a delirium of pleasure", a "consummation of voluptuous ecstacy" (117) in the "Breadalby" chapter remains "somehow incomplete" (117). Birkin's unusual sensitivity

and Hermione's unusual mannishness combine to create (in the early stages of the novel) a liaison in which the sex roles become blurred and illustrate, in the same manner as the liaison between Leitner and Loerke, a typically 'northern' perversion of Lawrence's sense of natural order.

To return to the idea that our view of art reflects our view of the world, Loerke's reaction to his own sculpture emerges as a perversion of Birkin's reaction to the savage statues.

> 'It is a work of art, it is a picture of nothing, of absolutely nothing. It has nothing to do with anything but itself, it has no relation with the everyday world of this and other, there is no connexion between them, absolutely none, they are two different and distinct planes of existence, and to translate one into the other is worse than foolish, it is darkening of all counsel, a making confusion everywhere. Do you see, you must not confuse the relative world of action with the absolute work of art. That you must not do.' (484)

While Birkin is thrilled by, yet suspicious of, the savage sculptures because he rightly fears the reality behind "the relative work of action", Loerke flatly denies the existence of such reality. Loerke cannot see the two truths that his statue conveys: that women have been stereotyped as fearful of sexuality which supposedly is a cruel experience for them and that men hate women and prove it by stereotyping them in the same way that Loerke has stereotyped his former 'mistress'. If Loerke is correct in his assertion that art has no relation to actual everyday ex-

perience, Lawrence's novel becomes ultimately a meaningless tale of madness and sado-masochism signifying nothing. Of course, it is not; and because we determine the perversion of his view of art by comparing it to Birkin's, Loerke, of course, is wrong.

Lawrence prepares the reader to reject Loerke's philosophy of art and life early in the novel, through his presentation of the savage and the Norse as they are embodied in the character of Minette Darrington[4]. She is introduced in "Crême de Menthe"; like Hermione, Minette is wearing yellow, a "loose simple jumper" "made of rich yellow crêpe-de-chine" (71). She is initially described as

> . . . a girl with bobbed, blond hair cut short in the artist fashion, hanging straight and curving slightly inwards to her ears. She was small and delicately made, with fair colouring and large, innocent, blue eyes. There was a delicacy, almost a floweriness in all her form. . . (68)

There is a striking similarity between Minette as she is described here and the girl depicted in Loerke's statue. Both, with their short bobbed blonde hair, are child-like and innocent in appearance. The relationship is extended when Lawrence discloses that Minette has recently posed as a madonna. At the point of introduction, then, both Minette and Loerke's girl can be seen as virginal and vulnerable, yet Nordic and destructive because of their inability, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, to accept their sexual nature.

There is, however, "a certain attractive grossness of spirit" (68) in Minette which excites Gerald and which suggests that she is not completely Northern in attitude as Loerke's girl is. That this grossness is attractive tells as much about Minette as it does about Gerald. She is obviously very aware of the games that men demand women to play. "She gave her hand with a sudden, unwilling movement, looking all the while at Gerald with a dark, exposed stare." (68) Unwilling yet willing, innocent yet knowing, Minette becomes, even in this brief introduction, an uneasy and frightening combination of the Norse and the savage.

The connection between Minette and the savage is subtly indicated by her reaction to the presence in the Café Pompadour of Julius Halliday, her most recent lover. "The girl only stared at him with an icecold look in which flared an unfathomable hell of knowledge and a certain impotence " (72, my emphasis). The words look forward to Birkin's meditation in "Moony" on the northern "frost-knowledge, death by perfect cold" (287) and the savage "knowledge in disintegration and dissolution, knowledge such as the beetles have" (286). Minette's hell does nothing to melt or alter the icy facets of her nature. She is left with a "certain impotence" not unlike the impotent hatred felt by the Nordic Hermione against Birkin and the loathing that Loerke and Leitner feel for one another.

Because beetles, for Lawrence and Birkin, are sym-

bolic of the savage world view, it is important that Minette, with her "unfathomable hell of knowledge", should fear them so greatly.

> 'Do they bite?' cried the girl.
> .....
> 'I don't know,' replied Gerald, looking around the table. 'Do black-beetles bite? But that isn't the point. Are you afraid of their biting, or is it a metaphysical anti-pathy?'
> The girl was looking full upon him all the time with inchoate eyes.
> 'Oh, I think they're beastly, they're horrid,' she cried. 'If I see one, it gives me the creeps all over. If one were to crawl on me, I'm sure I should die -- I'm sure I should.'
> .....
> 'It's metaphysical, as Gerald says,' Birkin stated.
> There was a little pause of uneasiness. (77)

If we ignore the game that Minette is playing with Gerald, her fear of beetles becomes something more than a mere seduction ploy. Gerald's attempt at wit, that the fear is metaphysical, comes directly to the point, a point that only Birkin can see. Birkin recognises the irony of the situation: Minette is pregnant as is the beetle-headed savage sculpture, yet she fears the emotional implications of the relationship that made her so. She is afraid of what she knows -- of the power of sexuality -- because her knowledge is of a non-analytical, non-northern kind. Because Lawrence, to a great extent, is using Minette as a symbol, her outward, blond and blue-eyed appearance identifies her more with the icy regions of the north than with the south. Thus, she projects a child-

like, vulnerable image and cannot come to terms with the sensuality that she uses so lightly. Because she is basically a Nordic figure, she fears the black beetles and the knowledge of dissolution and corruption because of their potential for destroying her. In terms of Norse mythology, she fears destruction by heat.

In addition to the implications he creates by presenting the African statues and Loerke's sculpture, Lawrence makes overt use of ancient mythology. Lawrence introduces Gudrun and Ursula as "sisters of Artemis rather than Hebe" (8). At first, this reference seems artificial and obscure; the reason for it seems arbitrary and contrived. However, if it is seen in the context of Women in Love as a whole, it becomes the first hint of conflicts in the novel which are to come.

Artemis, originally a Great Mother type, became goddess of child-birth, of chastity and the protectress of wild life of all kinds. She retained part of her original function in her association with the moon "because of its supposed influence on erotic and organic life."[5] Hebe, goddess of youth and servant to the gods, was frequently pictured as freeing men from chains and bonds. In drawing upon these myths, Lawrence's intentions are quite clear: the Brangwen sisters, although they have "the remote, virgin look of modern girls" (8) are capable at the same time of wielding sexual power over men. Because of the traditional relationship

between the moon and lunacy, there may also be a suggestion here that they can drive men mad.

At this early point in the novel, the reader has no clear indication of the differences between Gudrun and Ursula and therefore the implications of the above mythology apply equally to both of them. In retrospect, however, it can be seen that Gudrun acts, if not as a protectress of animals, at least as a person capable of a special relationship with them -- her sculptures are of tiny forest animals; she dances before the bulls at Shortlands; she and Gerald make a diabolic pact over Bismarck, the rabbit. Gudrun can also be seen as assuming Artemis' original role as Great Mother when she sees herself as mother to Gerald after their first violent consummation. Inversely, she does not picture herself as a type of Hebe, as a servant to men. She appears to allow Gerald to use her as a sexual object but she, in return, uses him in the same way. And rather than free Gerald from his chains, she helps to drive him to his death.

Ursula, however, reflects in a more positive way many aspects of the two goddesses. Like Artemis, she is identified by Birkin with the Great Mother, and while he feels smothered by her maternal attitude toward him, they resolve this conflict; and by the end of the novel, Ursula emerges as an assistant to him in breaking his chains.

It appears that Lawrence intends to convey more than a physical description of Gudrun and Ursula when he relates

them to Artemis. There should be no surprise, then, when Birkin meditates upon the Magna Mater and attempts to destroy the "accursed Syria Dea" (278) in his rejection of the female's traditional attitude towards men. Lawrence prepares the reader for this earlier in the novel when Birkin pronounces to Ursula that Aphrodite, goddess of love and fertility, is deathly.

> '. . .she is the flowering mystery of the death-process, yes,' he replied. 'When the stream of synthetic creation lapses, we find ourselves part of the inverse process, the blood of destructive creation. Aphrodite is born in the first spasm of universal dissolution -- then the snakes and swans and lotus -- marsh-flowers -- and Gudrun and Gerald -- born in the process of destructive creation.' (193)

Birkin's somewhat tedious argument rests in part on his understanding of the paradox in Aphrodite's function and creation: she is goddess of love and fertility but was created from sea foam, not from sexual union. She is the first instance of non-synthetic creation which ends with Gudrun and Gerald who only use one another's bodies. In other words, when they come together sexually, there is no synthesis, no co-mingling of their emotional essences; they work, rather, towards independent ends in what is ultimately a destructive relationship. Birkin also sees the potential within himself and Ursula to become fleurs du mal just as Gerald and Gudrun have done. The dangers of attempting to overcome the Aphrodite situation of total noninterest lie in the total abandonment of one person's will to another's.

This could lead to a curious kind of power structure: I gave myself to you totally; therefore, you are mine.

It is this conflict that Birkin attempts to resolve in his rejection of the Magna Mater, the goddess of fecundity, who is at the same time both the nurturing mother and the castrator.

> But it seemed to him, woman was always so horrible and clutching, she had such a lust for possession, a greed of self-importance in love. She wanted to have, to own, to control, to be dominant. Everything must be referred back to her, to Woman, the Great Mother of everything, out of whom proceeded everything and to whom everything must finally be rendered up.
>
> It filled him with almost insane fury, this calm assumption of the Magna Mater, that all was hers, because she had borne it. Man was hers because she had borne him. A Mater Dolorosa, she had borne him, a Magna Mater, she now claimed him again, soul and body, sex, meaning, and all. He had a horror of the Magna Mater, she was detestable. (224)

We must, I think, overlook Lawrence's own fear of women which resulted from the rather unnatural relationship between his mother and himself even though it undoubtedly plays a large part in the creation of this passage. It must be remembered that these are Birkin's thoughts and there is no indication, in the text of Women in Love at least, that Birkin as a character had experienced the quasi-Oedipal anxieties which plagued Lawrence. Birkin's almost overwhelming fear of Woman is quite justifiable within the context of the novel. He has had Hermione attempt to hold "him her everlasting prisoner" (224) in intellectual and emotional chains.

He has seen Gerald's sister, Diana (in Roman myth, the equivalent of Artemis, the Great Mother), drown herself and the young man who attempted to rescue her in a total and final "merging, ... clutching, [and] ... mingling of love" (224). Even Ursula, who is "unconscious of it herself" (225), worships him as if he were her child. Birkin fights against this; he wants to find meaning in life with a woman but not through or in woman alone. Woman must do the same. Man must not see himself wholly in relation to woman; woman must not see herself wholly in relation to man. Both must admit "the different nature in each other" (225) and in this manner they will create "the freedom of the other, balancing each other like two poles of one force" (224). It is the perfect relationship which transcends a total dependence upon sex (such as Gerald and Gudrun have) or a total dependence upon the mind (such as Birkin and Hermione had). Birkin, by rejecting what the Magna Mater represents, hopes to achieve a mutually fulfilling relationship with Ursula in which they will both be complete but at the same time "free, not under the compulsion of any need for unification, or tortured by unsatisfied desire." (224)

It is for these reasons that Birkin must also reject "the lotus mystery" (99). Lawrence, I think, suggests two different ideas in this phrase. In his pronouncement on Aphrodite, Birkin condemns the lotus as part of non-synthetic, destructive activity because it grows by itself from itself.

For the Buddhist, the lotus becomes a symbol for the goodness that can be attained in the slime of life. But, of what value is this good if it is reached only through self-effort? The answer is clear.

The lotus mystery must be rejected for reasons other than this. The Vajrayana or Tantric school of Buddhism sees the lotus as a symbol of both the male and the female. (Lawrence would likely have been familiar with this idea through his reading of Mme. Blavatsky and historical works about India[6].) The rites of the Tantric school are primarily sexual in nature. In them, a man and a woman engage in a highly formalised and stylised kind of sexual intercourse. During the ceremony, the words OM MANE PADME OM are chanted: Behold the thunderbolt in the lotus. This chant immediately sets up one kind of relationship that Lawrence is attempting to overcome in Women in Love: the male as thunderbolt is stronger and more powerful than the weak and fragile female, the lotus.

At the same time as the outward Tantric ceremony is taking place, psycho-physiological events are going on. In both the man and the woman, Kundalini, the sleeping serpent at the base of the spine, awakes. Gerald experiences a very similar sensation as he becomes sexually aroused by Minette: "her being suffused into his veins like a magnetic darkness, and concentrated at the base of his spine like a fearful source of power".(80) When she is fully awakened, Kundalini

moves upwards through the centres of consciousness to unite with the Buddha of the Thousand-Petalled Lotus, located in the head. It is at this moment of simultaneous orgasm that the non-duality of all things is realised. The primal dichotomy between man and woman, between male and female, is obliterated and freedom is attained.[7] This lotus mystery, then, is working at direct odds with Lawrence's and Birkin's philosophy of duality. In Birkin's view, only through the recognition of the differences between man and woman can true freedom be gained and, thus, the lotus mystery must be totally rejected.

Lawrence includes one other manifestation of the primitive in Women in Love: the dance. There are three dances in the novel; the first is the ballet at Hermione's; the second, Gudrun's dance before the bulls at Shortlands; the third, the dance at the Austrian Hotel. The relationship between the three is, not surprisingly, that they reveal certain attitudes and qualities in the relationship between man and woman. Lawrence's interest in the dance as a primitive form may have been influenced by Jane Harrison's Ancient Art and Ritual (1913) which he had read in the year of its publication[8]. In her second chapter, "Primitive Ritual: Pantomimic Dances", she writes:

> In both these kind of dances, the dance that commemorates by re-presenting and the dance that anticipates by pre-presenting, Plato would have seen the element of imitation that the Greeks called mimesis.... The

> commemorative dance does especially re-present ... the emotion felt about the [act commemorated]. This they desire to relive. The emotional element is seen still more clearly in the dance fore-done for magical purposes. ... it breaks out into mimetic anticipatory action. But, and this is the important point, the action is mimetic, not of what you see done by another; but of what you desire to do yourself.[9]

The dance at Hermione's begins as a commemorative gesture. Gudrun, Ursula and the Contessa play the roles of Ruth, Naomi and Orpah mourning the loss of their men. This dance is to be a re-creation of a Biblical event. The dance itself is not primitive but a highly stylised art form, "a little ballet, in the style of the Russian Ballet of Pavlova and Nijinsky" (101). The emotion of grief expressed is primitive in its essence. But, as Harrison suggests, the commemorative dance is performed for the emotion involved in it. What reason do these modern women have for grief? Lawrence must be suggesting that there is cause for them to mourn for the relationship between man and woman. It is Ursula who comforts the other two, especially Gudrun, as if she has a special understanding of the situation and the dance takes on overtones of foreshadowing. In this way, it suggests that Ursula will attempt to console Gudrun, who smiles "with subtle malevolence" (102) in her unnamed, future loss and will "refute her [own] grief" (102) through some unknown means.

This ballet precedes the whole Breadalby party's

engagement in a modern, rag-time dance. Birkin, however, not knowing the steps, creates his own and dances "rapidly and with real gaiety" (103). As Langdon Elsbree convincingly suggests: "... Birkin (like Lawrence) will always dance his own step and ultimately tell Ursula that, though he is happy with her, 'I wanted eternal union with a man too: another kind of love.' (541)[10] This answers a question about the source of Ursula's future grief. After Ursula has danced as Naomi, Birkin realises that "she was his future" (102) and Gerald is excited by Gudrun and cannot forget her. In this scene, Lawrence very subtly introduces two major relationships of the novel and implicitly outlines the conflicts that will plague them.

Gudrun's dance before the bulls is very much like the second type of dance outlined by Harrison -- a mimetic action of what she, herself, desires to do. The dance is very sensual, with Gudrun

> ... lifting her body towards them as if in a spell, her feet pulsing as if in some little frenzy of unconscious sensation, her arms, her wrists, her hands stretching and heaving and falling and reaching and reaching and falling, her breasts lifted and shaken towards the cattle, her throat exposed as in some voluptuous ecstasy towards them... . (187)

Obviously, Gudrun does not wish to have bestial relations with the bulls, but the passage certainly suggests her animalistic feelings towards men. Her dance can be seen as a kind of fertility rite not unlike the spring rites of Dionysus in

which women danced before the sacred bull, the emblem of the god, in order to insure fecundity in all things[11]. The suggestion of Dionysus conveys a two-fold meaning. It first suggests that Gudrun is a type of Bacchante, a frenzied follower of Dionysus, who is quite capable of tearing a man apart. She does this with Gerald; she wears him down emotionally until he commits suicide. Second, this fertility dance is performed before "wild Scotch bullocks" (188), castrated animals. The dance is ultimately futile as a fertility rite, but depressingly suggests that Gudrun herself is capable of sensuous activity only in the face of sterility. This in part explains her relationships with Gerald and with Loerke. Both relationships are barren and ultimately lead nowhere.

The third dance, which takes place in the Alpine hotel, is, like the dance at Hermione's, a commemorative and a pre-presenting type of dance. It is a courtship dance[12] in which the male is required to be dominant. It is interesting to note that it is Gudrun who changes partners continually while Gerald remains with the professor's daughter and Birkin with Ursula. Ironically, it is from the dance that Gudrun concludes that Gerald is "naturally promiscuous" (464). Thus, for Gudrun, the dance commemorates the courtship ritual through which she has gone with Gerald and in which he played a dominating role. It also looks forward to her own promiscuity which follows shortly after this.

In contrast, Ursula's dance with Birkin leads her to the understanding of his philosophy of duality. She finally sees how different he is from her. She attains "freedom in the knowledge of her selfness and Birkin's, their otherness to each other"[13] and, in their "bestial" actions (Ursula's words) "she was unabashed, she was herself. Why not? She was free, when she knew everything, and no dark shameful things were denied her." (464) There are unconvincing overtones to Ursula's realization: if she is truly free, how can any action be shameful? This, I think, points towards the novel's unresolved conclusion; for Ursula cannot, in a fully sustained fashion, accept Birkin's otherness. Lawrence, however, by allowing the situation at the end of Women in Love to remain incomplete, shows that a step has been taken towards the development of a viable view of the world. The rejection of the essences involved in the various types of primitive mythology discussed here lays the groundwork for Lawrence's final and perfected philosophy in Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928).

III

BIBLICAL MYTHOLOGY

> And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually ... The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.
> (Genesis 6: 5, 11-12)

These words, written to introduce the destruction of the earth by water, can easily apply to the world of Women in Love. This world, as we have seen in the two preceding chapters, is on the verge of destruction because of its wickedness, violence and corruption. Just as the Bible contains a series of apocalyptic visions, so too does Women in Love; and Lawrence draws heavily upon Biblical myth to make his reader fully aware of the impending destruction of mankind and to show him where the possibilities of redemption lie. The world in which Lawrence lived and the world of his novel show a profound influence of Nietzsche's philosophy. The German philosopher's attacks on the traditions emanating from Jerusalem and Athens made belief in God and the Good (that which transcends the individual) extremely difficult for those who were intellectually aware. Redemption cannot be sought on a universal level; it depends on the individual. When Lawrence refers to Birkin as a Salvator Mundi (144), then, he does not mean to equate him with Christ or even necessarily

to suggest that Birkin is to be seen as a Christ figure. What is suggested is that Birkin is a man deeply involved with attempting to find a better world, and this better world is ultimately within.

That there is no redemption or transcendental good to be found outside the individual is made clear by Gerald's death.

> Gerald went along. There was something standing out of the snow. He approached with dimmest curiosity.
>
> It was a half-buried crucifix, a little Christ under a little sloping hood at the top of a pole. He sheered away. (533)

This trek through the mountains is the fulfillment of Gerald's death-wish. "Never again to stay, till he came to the end, that was all the desire that remained to him." (531-532) The crucifix as a symbol of the institution of Christianity represents an orientation towards both the transcendent and death. Gerald sheers away from it because he knows that his time to die has not yet come. Because it is in a hollow and is half-buried, it represents as well a dead God rather than a living, fully resurrected one. Here can be seen the seeds of Lawrence's idea of the Salvator Mundi which is later fully articulated in The Man Who Died (1928). The Salvator Mundi does not bring a transcendent salvation to the world through martyrdom; he is the man who finds inner peace without fleeing from reality and without sacrificing his manhood.

In the preceding chapters we have seen that Gerald, Gudrun and Hermione are living lives bent on destruction.

Through the use of Biblical mythology as well as the primitive and the Norse, Lawrence deepens the significance of their insufficiencies. According to the Biblical tradition, the first important action of Adam and Eve was to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree; their second was to recognise their nakedness and to make clothing for themselves. It is significant, then, that Lawrence should pay close attention to the clothing worn by Gerald (who is always portrayed as impeccably dressed), Gudrun and Hermione.

> Gudrun was the more beautiful and attractive, [Hermione] had decided again, Ursula was more physical, more womanly. She admired Gudrun's dress more. It was of green poplin, with a loose coat above it, of broad, dark green and dark brown stripes. The hat was of a pale, greenish straw, the colour of new hay, and it had a plaited ribbon of black and orange, the stockings were dark green, the shoes black. It was a good get-up, at once fashionable and individual. Ursula, in dark blue, was more ordinary, though she also looked well. (92)

Gudrun is stunning and individual in her choice of clothing. As discussed previously, there is an insufficiency in Gudrun that forbids her from sincere relationships and this insufficiency is mirrored by her outlandish costumes. "In short, like Adam and Eve modern man wears clothes to cover his nakedness, but because his nakedness is not always physical his clothes are not always material."[1] Gudrun's clothing, then, calls attention to her outer self in order to disguise the fact that inside she is empty.

> Hermione herself wore a dress of prune-coloured silk, with coral beads and coral-

> coloured stockings. But her dress was both shabby and soiled, even rather dirty. (92)

Hermione, also devoid of inner vitality, appears to be a soiled imitation of Gudrun. Gudrun's costume, in general, draws attention to her sexuality. The dirtiness of Hermione's clothing suggests her attitudes towards sex as well and reminds the reader of her affairs of the mind.

Ursula appears plain and ordinary. This does not suggest that underneath her clothing she is plain and ordinary as well. Rather, as one who is not devoted to costume, she is far more involved with inner being and in this respect resembles Birkin. His first appearance in the novel is at the wedding of Laura Crich.

> Although he was dressed correctly for his part, yet there was an innate incongruity which caused a slight ridiculousness in his appearance. His nature was clever and separate, he did not fit at all in the conventional occasion. Yet he subordinated himself to the common idea, travestied himself. (22)

There is the suggestion here that Birkin, uncomfortable in his properly formal attire, feels that clothing is nothing more than protection from the elements and should be functional and comfortable. His appearance is incongruous with his natural self and he becomes a travesty -- not only a ridiculous parody of himself but overdressed as well.

Gerald represents the wrong attitude towards costuming. "He wanted to keep certain illusions, certain ideas like clothing". (87) The ambiguity here is significant. Not

only would Gerald feel uncomfortable without the security of his expensive clothing, he would also feel insecure without the ideas that keep him from seeing reality and from showing his true self to the world. Birkin manifests the proper attitude towards clothing both in a literal and a metaphorical sense. He tells Ursula, "'There's somewhere where we can be free -- somewhere where one needn't wear much clothes -- none even -- . . . . '" (356) and she agrees. The clothing here refers not to material covering but to the games of decorum and thought that society demands its members to play and with which Birkin and Ursula refuse to be involved.

> And the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.
> (Genesis 3: 22-23)

Because man has gained knowledge, he is forever banished from the peaceful and idyllic life of Eden. Lawrence uses the idea of knowledge to show how fallen the world of Women in Love is and, when Minette stares at Gerald with "an unfathomable hell of knowledge" (72, my emphasis), it is clear that Lawrence wishes to equate knowledge with hell or with an unfulfilled, troubled and demonic existence.

Hermione is the best example of the tortures that knowledge can bring to modern man.

'To me the pleasure of knowing is so great,

> so wonderful -- nothing has meant so much to me in all life, as certain knowledge -- no, I am sure -- nothing. . . . Yes, it is the greatest thing in life -- to know. It is really to be happy, to be free.' (95)

This passage raises two questions: what does Hermione know? and how can something which originally left man outside the realm of happiness and freedom bring happiness and freedom to a world so far removed in time and corruption from them? Hermione knows many important and powerful people, as evidenced by her group of visitors at Breadalby; and she, no doubt, has many facts stored away in her unusually large head. She is aware of the latest styles in clothing and of the newest developments in the arts. She has knowledge for its own sake or, as Birkin says to her, "'You have only your will and your conceit of consciousness, and your lust for power, to know.'" (46) Birkin makes this comment while visiting Ursula in her classroom at Willey Green Grammar School. Thus Ursula is also associated with knowledge, but hers is conveyed to others whereas Hermione's acquisition of "knowledge" is for herself alone. Hermione's kind of knowledge, then, is destructive because it implies an attempt to hold power over someone else. This is made clear at the end of the"Breadalby" chapter where Hermione attempts to kill Birkin because she cannot know him.

> She was at once roused, she laid as it were violent hands on him, to extract his secrets from him. It was a dreadful tyranny, an obsession in her, to know all he knew. (99)

If Hermione knew Birkin in this way, he would effectively cease to exist as Rupert Birkin but would become a puppet of her master mind, a mind which would know all but understand nothing. The existence of the ideal of star equilibrium would not be possible and this would lead to tyranny and obsession rather than to happiness and freedom. Hermione is too busy eating of the tree of knowledge; she refuses to taste of the tree of life. "'She is the real devil who won't let life exist.'" (47) Here again Lawrence equates knowledge with something demonic; knowledge used as power is, in part, destroying mankind.

Gudrun appears to desire knowledge with the same obsessiveness that Hermione displays.

> She reached up, like Eve reaching to the apples on the tree of knowledge, and she kissed him, though her passion was a transcendant fear of the thing he was, touching his face with her infinitely delicate, encroaching, wondering fingers. Her fingers went over the mould of his face, over his features. . . . Her soul thrilled with complete knowledge. This was the glistening forbidden apple, this face of a man. . . . She wanted to touch him and touch him and touch him, till she had him all in her hands, till she had strained him into her knowledge. Ah, if she could have the precious knowledge of him, she could be filled and nothing could deprive her of this. (374)

Like Hermione, Gudrun desires to have complete knowledge of Gerald, but her knowledge is of a different kind. Where Hermione must know Birkin's every thought and idea because the body is virtually of no use to her, Gudrun gains her knowledge of Gerald through her fingers; her knowledge of

him is physical. Lawrence may be using the word 'knowledge' here in its Biblical sense to mean sexual intercourse. Although Gerald and Gudrun have not yet had sexual intercourse at the time that this passage occurs, the use of knowledge in conjunction with the forbidden apple (which itself gave man knowledge of the pleasure and pain of sexual difference) suggests that their relationship will soon be consummated. But because Gudrun is explicitly associated here with the falling Eve, the passage has negative overtones. Gudrun fears the "thing" that Gerald is -- a man -- and again Lawrence illustrates an unhealthy view of the man-woman relationship. Gudrun, however, does not wish to be the victim, but the victor in her relationship with Gerald, just as Eve gained a perverse kind of power over Adam by eating the apple. "Her fingers had him under their power. The fathomless, fathomless desire they could evoke in him was deeper than death, where he had no choice." (374-375) Physical knowledge, a knowledge not unlike the kind that is represented by the primitive statues discussed in the preceding chapter, is as destructive as the mental knowledge that Hermione seeks. "And this knowledge was a death from which she must recover." (375) Gerald is not so fortunate; "for to desire is better than to possess, the finality of the end was dreaded as deeply as it was desired." (375) Gerald's end, then, appears to be a direct result of a merely physical relationship, of knowledge that leads to tyranny and

death.

Gerald, too, is guilty of pursuing false forms of knowledge but his knowledge differs slightly from Gudrun's (although he naturally shares with her knowledge rooted only in the physical). Like Cain, whose mark he bears, Gerald is the wanderer, moving aimlessly from adventure to adventure and, judging by his brief relationship with Minette, from woman to woman. His demonic kinship with Gudrun appears to be something that he did not acknowledge until directly confronted with it in the chapter "Rabbit".

> Glancing up at him, into his eyes, she revealed again the mocking, white-cruel recognition. There was a league between them, abhorrent to them both. They were implicated with each other in abhorrent mysteries.
> .....
> There was a queer, faint, obscene smile over his face. She looked at him and was him, and knew that he was initiate as she was initiate. (272-273)

It is in this chapter, in which the very title "Rabbit" suggests unlimited physical knowledge, that Lawrence outlines fully the destructiveness of the relationship between Gerald and Gudrun. Their relationship springs from "mutual hellish recognition" (272), demonic knowledge of each other in which no star polarity can exist. The basis of the relationship is the hellish knowledge shared by the two, rather than any respect for each other's separateness. There is also a suggestion that they both can see where their liaison will lead; the league (itself suggesting a pact rather than a

loving relationship) is "abhorrent to them both." They fear the future but do nothing to stop their impending destruction.

In fact there is nothing that Gerald can do to stop his own destruction because he is likened to Cain's kin. "He suffered badly. He had killed his brother when a boy, and was set apart, like Cain." (192) Lawrence may have in mind Genesis 4: 24 where Cain's grandson, after committing murder himself, laments: "If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold." How much will Gerald be avenged since he is so far removed from Cain in time and corruption? Gerald, as one of the tribe of Cain, bears a mark "lest any who came upon him should kill him" (Genesis 4: 15). Thus, he is fated to die by his own hand. Lawrence prepares the reader for Gerald's death by suicide early in the novel in passages dealing with the 'accidental' murder of his brother. Birkin meditates at Shortlands:

> And Gerald was Cain, if anybody. Not that he was Cain either, although he had slain his brother. There was such a thing as pure accident, and the consequences did not attach to one, even though one had killed one's brother in such wise. Gerald as a boy had accidentally killed his brother. What then? By seeking to draw a brand and curse across the life that had caused the accident? A man can live by accident, and die by accident. Or can he not? Is every man's life subject to pure accident. . .?
> .....
> He did not believe that there was any such thing as accident. It all hung together, in the universal sense. (28)

Birkin realises with horror that Gerald is bent on his own destruction or, as Ursula contends, "Perhaps there <u>was</u> an

unconscious will behind it. . . . This playing at killing has some primitive desire for killing in it, don't you think?'" (53-54) Gudrun does not accept this suggestion, perhaps because she recognises her own desire to kill yet does not wish to confront it at this time. Lawrence makes it clear in the opening scenes of Women in Love that nothing can be done to save Gerald; he is doomed to destruction from the beginning.

There are indications that some salvation will be attained in the novel when Lawrence periodically suggests that Birkin is a type of Salvator Mundi. The first hint of this is in the "Crême de Menthe" chapter. "Birkin was drinking something green" (68), the crême de menthe of the title. Green is the colour of hope, of regeneration and it is Birkin alone who drinks the green liqueur suggesting that he is the one person who can find salvation in a corrupt and self-destructive world.

Later, after Hermione has attempted to murder him -- with her left hand, a decidedly traitorous gesture -- Birkin makes a conscious decision to reject all the aspects of humanity which he finds hateful.

> As for the certain grief he felt at the same time, in his soul, that was only the remains of an old ethic, that bade a human being adhere to humanity. But he was weary of the old ethic, of the human being, and of humanity. He loved now the soft, delicate vegetation, that was so cool and perfect. He would overlook the old grief, he would put away the old ethic, he would be free in his new state. (120, my emphasis)

Birkin finds solace with the vegetation which links him to any number of dying and rising gods who suggest the possibility of regeneration. The passage, however, suggests the language of theology. Like Christ, who looked for new ways to overcome the old grief found in the Old Testament, so Birkin seeks a new state by rejecting the corruption of the world which to him is old and dying. The passage relates also to Ursula dancing the role of Naomi just prior to Birkin's decision to reject the old world. The suggestion of Bethlehem, which was the birthplace of Naomi, can be coupled with Birkin's resolution that Ursula "was his future" (102). This joining, together with his casting off of the old ethic, presents Ursula and Birkin as ultimately springing from the same source and as two people who can find inner peace through themselves in a corrupt world.

Ursula, however, must go through a maturing process under Birkin's influence in order to become his perfect mate. For a short while, she attempts to treat him in the same fashion that Hermione does, but cannot. "But she was held to him by some bond, some deep principle. This at once irritated her and saved her." (159) Birkin is quite definitely not attempting to change Ursula; he is, instead, developing the ideas and instincts already within her. She realises this and works with him to find their mutual salvation.

Ursula's objection, "'I don't want to live in chinks.'" (407), in reply to Birkin's statement that because they are

not the meek and cannot nor should not want to inherit the earth, reflects for the most part Lawrence's own hatred of amassing material possessions.

> 'All the world,' she said.
> 'Ah, no -- but some room.' (407)

This part of the conversation reminds us of the images of Donne who wished to contract the world in order to give saintly lovers a hermitage in which to live. While this does not present Birkin as a saviour, it does suggest that he has an understanding of the special nature of his relationship with Ursula and his disdain of material things suggests that he is likened to a holy rejecter of an uncomprehending world.

To a great extent, Lawrence's use of Biblical mythology in Women in Love is apocalyptic. If the Bible is considered as a unified work, all the actions contained within it can be seen as reflections of St. John's vision in Revelation and as conscious strivings towards that Apocalypse. Thus the Fall, the Deluge, the Destruction of Jerusalem and even the Crucifixion are apocalyptic -- they contain within them both destruction and the vision of the possibility of a better world. In simple structural terms, the Bible begins with the first man and the first woman whose actions are followed by a series of destructions and creations which eventually lead to the apocalyptic marriage of Christ and the Church. Women in Love appears to be modelled on the inverse of this plan; the novel begins with a marriage which

is followed by a series of creations and destructions, culminating with the emergence of a new man and a new woman in Birkin and Ursula as we see them in the chapter "Continental".

While Gerald and Gudrun sink further into corruption, Birkin and Ursula rise in an attempt to overcome corruption by paradoxically moving backward in Biblical time from a fallen to an unfallen state. Lawrence says of Ursula early in the novel:

> She knew humanity could not disappear so cleanly and conveniently. It had a long way to go yet, a long and hideous way. Her subtle, feminine, demoniacal soul knew it well. (142)

This passage suggests Ursula in the role of a fallen Eve, knowing demonically. Because she understands the horror of the fall to knowledge, she can understand the plight of mankind. The idea of Ursula as fallen Eve is reinforced by the idea of Birkin as Fallen Adam. "'Oh yes. Adam kept Eve in the indestructible paradise, when he kept her single with himself, like a star in its orbit.'" (167) This is the star equilibrium for which Birkin is searching but cannot find and it suggests that he is not a pre-lapsarian Adam but a fallen one. Thus, Lawrence presents a fallen Eve and a fallen Adam searching for a way back to Paradise.

Birkin and Ursula progress backwards, as it were, to becoming like the sons of God and the daughters of men.

> She looked at him. He seemed still so separate. New eyes were opened in her soul. She saw a strange creature from another world in him. It

> was as if she were enchanted, and everything were metamorphosed. She recalled again the old magic of the Book of Genesis, where the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair. And he was one of these, one of these strange creatures from the beyond, looking down upon her, and seeing she was fair.
> .....
> 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. (352-353)

Lawrence is basing Ursula's thoughts on a very curious passage from Genesis:

> And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. . . . There were giants on the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. (6: 1-2, 4)

It is interesting to note the parallels between Lawrence's use of the language and the language of the Bible which, in turn, reinforces the parallel between Ursula and Birkin and the Biblical characters. Birkin, then, is a man of renown, a representative of a golden age, the only man untarnished by the corruption of the world around him, and by implication, Ursula must be similar: she must be a mighty woman in order to be aligned with him.

With the realisation of the goodness inherent in their union, Birkin and Ursula consummate their relationship.

> It was so magnificent, such an inheritance

> of a universe of dark reality, that they were afraid to seem to remember. They hid away the remembrance and the knowledge. (361)

Again the parallels between the language of the Bible and the language of this passage cannot be ignored. But whereas Adam and Eve "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden" (Genesis 3: 8) in fear because they have disobeyed God's commandment and have tasted knowledge, Birkin and Ursula have gone beyond the concepts of good and evil. The hiding of their knowledge, therefore, unlike that of Adam and Eve, is not a manifestation of their fallen nature but a realisation that this knowledge is beyond the realm of "dull sublunary" comprehension.

As their relationship continues to grow, Birkin and Ursula attain a state comparable to Adam and Eve in an unfallen Eden.

> She had the perfect candour of creation, something translucent and simple, like a radiant, shining flower that moment unfolded in primal blessedness. She was so new, so wonder-clear, so undimmed. And he was so old, so steeped in heavy memories. Her soul was new, undefined and glittering with the unseen. And his soul was dark and gloomy, it had only one grain of living hope, like a grain of mustard seed. But this one living grain in him matched the perfect youth in her.
>
> 'I love you,' he whispered as he kissed her, and trembled with pure hope, like a man who is born again to a wonderful, lively hope far exceeding the bounds of death. (416)

Ursula is described explicitly as a freshly-created unfallen Eve. Birkin's hope, "like a grain of mustard seed", is drawn

from the New Testament parable; the mustard has the smallest seed but grows to huge proportions as a plant. (Mark 4: 31) In other words, "if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ... nothing will be impossible unto you." (Matthew 17:20) There is a tension between Birkin's oldness, which associates him with the Old Adam, and the newness of his hope "far exceeding the bounds of death" which associates him with a resurrected "man who died". Birkin, then, understands the corruption of the past but has the possibility of a paradisal future. "This marriage was his resurrection and his life." (417) Birkin and Ursula solemnise their union by participating in a marriage which parallels the kind described in Revelation and which seems to suggest the fulfilment of Lawrence's apocalyptic vision. Women in Love, however, does not end here.

At the beginning of the "Continental" chapter, Birkin and Ursula appear to have resolved the problems which have faced them. She looks forward to their excursion to the Alps:

> In the midst of this profound darkness, there seemed to glow in the heart the effulgence of a paradise unknown and unrealised. Her heart was full of the most wonderful light, a light which was not shed on the world, only on the unknown paradise towards which she was going, a sweetness of habitation, a delight of living quite unknown, but hers infallibly. (437)

Ironically, their sojourn in Austria is anything but paradisal. Lawrence, though, intends much more in the passage. Ursula is moving spiritually towards a state of paradise with Birkin, a state which echoes strongly Milton's "paradise within"

and which is suggestive of Birkin's "one room". This paradisal state seems to arrive when Ursula and Birkin engage in what is generally supposed to be sodomy.

> The flickering fires in Birkin's eyes concentrated as he looked into Ursula's eyes. Then the lids drooped with a faint motion of satiric contempt. Then they rose again to the same remorseless suggestivity. And she gave way, he might do as he would. His licentiousness was repulsively attractive. But he was self-responsible, she would see what it was. (464)

On the surface, this passage appears to suggest that Ursula is acting in much the same fashion as her sister does. Gudrun allows Gerald to do sexual things to her; Ursula allows Birkin to "do as he would". But whereas Gudrun is quite uninterested in her relationship with Gerald, Ursula vows to "see what it was" and "see", with its connotations of understanding as well as looking, suggests that Ursula is concerned with learning to make her relationship with Birkin complete in all aspects. There is, therefore, nothing evil or destructive about this sexual act because, for the moment, they have attained a pre-lapsarian mentality. "There would be no shameful thing she had not experienced. Yet she was unabashed, she was herself. Why not? She was free, when she knew everything, and no dark shameful things were denied her." (464) Because of their paradisal state, the words "dark" and "shameful" no longer have meaning; Birkin and Ursula can act in the same manner as we consider that Adam and Eve did before the fall -- with the knowledge that all

things springing from their relationship are good.

This paradisal state, however, does not last. As the tension between Gerald and Gudrun mounts, Ursula feels the need to escape. Birkin agrees, not because he cannot cope with the situation at hand but because he has come to a reluctant understanding of what he has told Ursula earlier in the novel:

> Ursula said, 'It's no good our worrying. We can't really alter [Gerald and Gudrun], can we?'
> 'No,' he said. 'One has no right to try -- not with the best intentions in the world.' (408)

By the end of the "Continental" chapter, when he and Ursula travel to Italy, Birkin has abandoned half of the role that he misguidedly was attempting to play -- that of the Christ-like Salvator Mundi who consciously was striving to bring salvation to Gerald. He has finally realised that all of his efforts to show Gerald the way to a better world, especially the one chronicled in the suggestively titled chapter "Gladiatorial", have failed. At last Birkin sees that true redemption can be gained only through individual effort.

Women in Love ends not with the vision of a New Jerusalem or of a Paradise Regained but with an unresolved quarrel.

> 'He should have loved me,' Birkin said. 'I offered him.'
> She afraid, white, with mute lips, answered:
> 'What difference would it have made!'
> 'It would!' he said. 'It would.' (539)

Ursula, for the moment, is the stronger of the two; she can

see that Gerald could not have been saved except through his own efforts. Birkin's desperate insistence suggests that he knows that Ursula is right but is reluctant to accept her judgement. Ursula's attitude, however, is unacceptable within the framework of the novel. The star equilibrium has temporarily disappeared from their relationship because she cannot accept the otherness of Birkin's dream, "'eternal union with a man, too'" (541). Because Ursula regards this dream as '"a perversity'" (541), the paradisal state that they attained in "Continental" has, for the moment, gone underground. However, Ursula and Birkin resemble human people and are therefore capable of disagreeing and having different points of view, despite the fact that they have gained more in their relationship than all the other characters in the novel. The very fact that they do disagree is proof that they have not been consumed by each other's personalities and suggests that the star polarity in their relationship is not gone forever and that their "Continental"state of bliss will be reattained.

Ursula and Birkin are not finally and triumphantly enthroned at the end of Women in Love. Rather, like Lif and Lifthrasir, like Adam and Eve, Birkin and Ursula are working towards becoming the new man and the new woman. By the conclusion of the novel, Lawrence has disposed of all his characters but two, two in whom the means by which a better world can be found are suggested. Women in Love, then, does not

actually end; by leaving the novel unresolved, Lawrence looks hopefully towards a free and peaceful future.

CONCLUSION

The scope of the mythic allusions used by Lawrence is very wide. In this thesis, I have limited myself to a discussion of the major allusions, ones which are developed consistently throughout Women in Love and which aid in a consistent development of Lawrence's theme. Unlike the few articles appearing in the critical journals and the passing references made to myth in longer critical works, I have devoted these pages to a systematic analysis of Lawrence's use of myth and have suggested that these mythic allusions are not merely randomly used similes, but consitute a well-organised metaphorical means of deepening the significance of his message.

In Women in Love, Lawrence has presented a bleak evaluation of the modern world. By seeing in this world reflections of the will to destroy himself that man has displayed throughout his history as chronicled in various mythologies, he has given even further significance to the world's horrifying situation. His use of Norse, Primitive and certain aspects of Biblical mythology bears this out. Lawrence, however, being a man possessed of more than the usual organic sensibility (to paraphrase Wordsworth), wishes to see the world of technology disappear without destroying the world of nature, tenderness and sensitivity. As an intelligent man, though, Lawrence is also aware that a disappearance of this

kind is impossible. How does one live, then, in this modern world?

In Women in Love, Lawrence provides an answer through his creation of Norse and Primitive sensibilities. One must not abandon oneself totally to the Norse life of technology and intellect; neither must one plunge into the Primitive life of total dependence on the senses. The Norse and the Primitive must be integrated and must be kept in perfect balance, in star equilibrium. As presented in Birkin and Ursula, this star equilibrium is not simple to attain and, because of the self-destructive attitudes intrinsic to man, it is difficult to maintain. The fact that the star equilibrium is attainable should be impetus enough for those sufficiently intelligent and sensitive who wish to find their way out of the ruins of contemporary society. In Women in Love, Lawrence has given the world a new mythology which rejects the destruction of the past and which looks to the freedom and happiness of the future.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

[1]Edward Shanks, "Fiction", London Mercury (August, 1921), 433.

[2]Middleton Murry, "The Nostalgia of Mr. D. H. Lawrence", Nation and Athenaeum (13 August, 1921), 714.

[3]Evelyn Scott, "A Philosopher of the Erotic", Dial (April, 1921), 459-460.

[4]T. S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order and Myth" (1923) in Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson Jr., ed., The Modern Tradition (New York, 1965), p. 681.

[5]F. R. Leavis, D. H. Lawrence: Novelist (London, 1957), p. 169.

[6]Ibid., p. 169.

[7]Eliseo Vivas as quoted by H. M. Daleski in The Forked Flame (Evanston, 1965), pp. 169-170.

[8]Daleski, ibid., p. 170.

[9]T. A. Smailes, "The Mythical Bases of Women in Love", (D. H. Lawrence Review I, 1968), 129-130.

[10]Ibid., 132-134.

CHAPTER I

[1]D. H. Lawrence, letter of 21(?) January, 1916 in Harry T. Moore, ed., The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence (New York, 1962), I, 416. Of interest, perhaps, is George H. Ford's notation of this letter in Double Measure (New York, 1965). Although Ford cites Moore as his source, he says that Lawrence " asked [S. S.] Koteliansky to bring him books on 'Norse, Anglo Saxon or early Celtic' cultures. . . ." (p. 186.)

[2]George H. Ford, Double Measure (New York, 1965), p. 186.

[3]Sir James G. Frazer, The Golden Bough (London, 1911), X, 101-105.

[4]Moore, ed., Letters, I, 41.

[5]Ibid., 53.

[6]Rose Marie Read Burwell records no such reading by Lawrence in "A Chronolgical Catalogue of D. H. Lawrence's Reading from Early Childhood" (D. H. Lawrence Review III, 1970, 193-324), her exhaustive survey of his reading. No list of this kind, however, can ever be complete, and because of the parallels between works of Norse mythology and Women in Love and obvious allusions to these myths in the novel, it must be concluded that Lawrence had a considerable knowledge of them.

[7]Snorri Sturluson, trans. by A. G. Brodeur, The Prose Edda (London, 1916), pp. 16-17. This English translation, as well as many others, was available to Lawrence: G. W. Dasent, Stockholm, 1842; Rasmus B. Anderson, Chicago, 1880; I. A Blackwell, London, 1847. F. G. Bergmann published a French translation of the "Gylfaginning", Strassburg, 1871 (second edition). Also there were three nineteenth-century German translations: Friedrich Rühs, Berlin, 1812; Karl Simrock, 1855; and Hugo Gering, Leipzig, 1892 (p. xx.). All of these translations would have been possible reading material for Lawrence both because of their dates of publication and the fact that he knew all three languages.

[8]Ibid., p. 17.

[9]Ibid., pp. 16-21.

[10]Ibid., p. 41.

[11]Sir Paul Harvey, The Oxford Companion to English Literature (4th ed.; Oxford, 1967), p. 679.

[12]Snorri, Prose Edda, pp. 77, 115.

[13]Ibid., p. 42.

[14]Ibid., p. 27.

[15]Ibid., p. 42.

[16]Ibid., p. 77.

[17]Ibid., p. 79.

[18]Ibid., p. 83.

[19]Burwell, "A Chronological Catalogue", 209, 224.

[20]Robert W. Gutman, introduction to William Morris, trans., Volsunga Saga (New York, 1962), pp. 18-19. Because of the date of publication of this translation (1888), it would have been available reading material for Lawrence. As Burwell notes ("A Chronological Catalogue", p. 50), Lawrence had read other writings by Morris and I think it possible to suggest that he had read the Volsunga Saga as well.

The portion of the Volsunga Saga which relates to Women in Love contains the legend of Sigurd, Gudrun and Brynhild. This legend, while differing from the Norse but arriving at the same conclusion, is presented in Wagner's Götterdämmerung (Twilight of the Gods). It should be noted that the Ragnarök of Norse mythology means twilight of the gods as well and the two should not be confused. Wagner appears to be interested in the demise of god-like men and women; Norse myth focuses on the destruction of both the gods and mankind. Although both appear to have been utilised by Lawrence, it seems that the Norse tradition rather than the Germanic has had the stronger and more consistent influence.

[21]Morris, trans., Volsunga Saga, pp. 167-168.

[22]Ibid., pp. 169-224.

[23]T. A. Smailes, "The Mythical Bases of Women in Love", D. H. Lawrence Review, I (1968), 132.

[24]Ibid., 134.

[25]D. H. Lawrence, Women in Love (Harmondsworth, 1960), p. 51. All subsequent references to the text are taken from this edition.

[26]cf. Smailes, "The Mythical Bases", 133.

[27]P. A. Munch, revised by Magnus Olsen, trans. by Sigurd B. Hustvedt, Norse Mythology (New York, 1926), p. 7.

[28]F. R. Leavis notes this also in D. H. Lawrence: Novelist (London, 1957), p. 169. "We have here the clear presence of Nidhögg, the evil power who gnaws at the roots of Yggdrasil, the tree of life."

[29]That both Gerald and Loerke parallel Loki is also briefly discussed by Smailes, "The Mythical Bases", 132, where the "protean abilities" of all three are noted. Smailes' argument is rather specious; he fails to see a distinction between Loki's physical shape-shifting and the artisitc licence that Lawrence employs by describing his characters in terms of animals.

[30]Frank Kermode, D. H. Lawrence (New York, 1973), p. 54.

[31]cf. Smailes, "The Mythical Bases", 132, who sees Gerald as "the conch blowing Triton of the wedding reception."

[32]cf. Leavis, D. H. Lawrence: Novelist, p. 169. "And that in imagining the snow-death, with its symbolic significance, Lawrence was consciously, as well as profoundly affected by his knowledge of northern mythology . . . is beyond doubt -- northern mythology with its vision of the end of life in the cold dreadful final winter that heralds the last battle of the Gods."

CHAPTER II

[1]D. H. Lawrence, letter of 21(?) January, 1916, in Harry T. Moore, ed., The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence (New York, 1962), I, 416.

[2]This information is recorded by several critics: Michael Bell, Primitivism (London, 1972), pp. 66-67, 71. Rose Marie Read Burwell, "A Chronolgical Catalogue of D. H. Lawrence's Reading from Early Childhood" (D. H. Lawrence Review III, 1970), 229, 237, 251, 252.
W. Y. Tindall, "D. H. Lawrence and the Primitive" (Sewanee Review, 45, 1937), 200, 205.

[3]Michael Bell, Primitivism (London, 1972), p. 6.

[4]The symbolic function of Minette is most thoroughly explored by Robert L. Chamberlain in "Pussum, Minette and the Africo-Nordic Symbol in Lawrence's Women in Love", Publications of the Modern Language Association, 78 (1963), 407-416. Chamberlain's thesis concerns itself with the textual changes that Lawrence made after 1920. These changes were necessitated by the threat of a libel suit on the part of Philip Heseltine who appears in the novel as Julius Halliday. They include the transformation of Halliday's mistress from the dark, sultry Pussum to the blonde, childlike Minette. While I am concerned with the novel as it is now published, Chamberlain's conclusion that Minette is the central, unifying symbol of Women in Love has assisted in the development of my arguments.

[5]E. H. Blakeney, Smaller Classical Dictionary (London, 1910), p. 45.

[6]Bell, Primitivism, p. 71.

[7]Mme. Blavatsky does not devote space to a coherent explication of Tantric rites; instead, she makes discreet suggestions as to the possible uses of the discipline. I refer the reader to the comprehensive bibliography of Yoga: Immortality and Freedom by Mircea Eliade (London, 1958) where he will discover the vast number of Indian religious texts that were translated into French, German and English between ca. 1850 and ca. 1910. Again, Lawrence was in a position to have read these.

[8]Burwell, "A Chronological Catalogue", 229.

[9]Jane Harrison, Ancient Art and Ritual (London, 1913), pp. 43-44.

[10]Langdon Elsbree, "D. H. Lawrence, Homo Ludens, and the Dance", D. H. Lawrence Review, I (1968), 22.

[11]Harrison, Ancient Art, pp. 75-100.

[12]Elsbree, "D. H. Lawrence, . . ., and the Dance", 26.

[13]Ibid., 25.

CHAPTER III

[1]Evelyn J. Hinz, "D. H. Lawrence's Clothes Metaphor", D. H. Lawrence Review, I (1968), 89.

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