

17. LAWRENCE AND THE RESURRECTION OF PAN

At the beginning of the Christian era, voices were heard off the coasts of Greece, out to sea, on the Mediterranean, wailing: 'Pan is dead! Great Pan is dead!' [D.H. Lawrence, 'Pan in America']

"I will not have it so", I said
"I heard his pipes:
Pan is not dead". [W. E. Hopkin, 'The Dispute']

The three books which meant most to Lawrence in his formative years were the Authorized Version of the Bible, the Congregational Hymnbook, and Palgrave's *Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics*. Palgrave was crammed with Wordsworth, who exerted a more powerful influence on Lawrence than any other writer, an influence which proved to be a very mixed blessing.

Some of the earliest Wordsworth poems memorably gave voice to sentiments of 'natural piety' which would no doubt have been Lawrence's in any case, contrasting 'Nature's holy plan' with 'what man has made of man' ('Written in Early Spring'). But as early as 'The Crown' (1915) Lawrence was ridiculing Wordsworth's anthropomorphism and sentimentality:

Let no one suffer, they have said. No mouse shall be caught by a cat, no mouse. It is a transgression. Every mouse shall become a pet, and every cat shall lap milk in peace, from the saucer of utter benevolence. This is the millennium, the golden age that is to be, when all shall be domesticated, and the lion and the leopard and the hawk shall come to our door to lap milk and to peck the crumbs, and no sound shall be heard but the lowing of fat cows and the baa-ing of fat sheep. ... The tiger, the hawk, the weasel, are beautiful things to me; and as they strike the dove and the hare, that is the will of God, it is a consummation. [Reflections, 275-6, 297]

Yet he never quite escaped its influence. What sounds would Lawrence rather hear than lowing and baa-ing? He seems deaf to what Hughes calls the 'screeching finales' of the victims of predators. It is possible to praise the perfection of the predator without discounting the prey. When Hughes claims that the tiger 'blesses with a fang' ('Tiger-Psalm'), he has earned the right to make such a claim by paying full attention to suffering:

Creation quaked voices -
It was a cortege
Of mourning and lament
Crow could hear and he looked around fearfully.

['Crow Tyrannosaurus']

Even Crow is not entirely heedless, but has the grace to weep as he walks and stabs.

The Wordsworth poem which remained Lawrence's favourite for most of his life was the 'Intimations' Ode, which no doubt helped to imprint in him the dualism against which he had to struggle for so long. For though Lawrence quickly came to rebel against Wordsworth's rejection of earth in favour of heaven and of body in favour of soul, and to reverse that choice, he accepted for many years that such a choice had to be made.

Another classic dualist text which Lawrence met early was Plato's *Phaedrus*:

Pure was the light and pure were we from the pollution of the walking sepulchre which we call a body, to which we are bound like an oyster to its shell. [57]

In Plato's (or Socrates') parable, the mind or ego is the driver of a chariot drawn by two horses, one white (spirit) and one black (body). The parable seeks to justify any amount of cruelty to the body and its needs and desires:

The driver ... jerks the bit from between the teeth of the lustful horse, drenches his abusive tongue and jaws with blood, and forcing his legs and haunches against the ground reduces him to torment. [63]

This image of cruelty to a horse, representing the delicate sensitivity of the body, affected Lawrence so powerfully that he returned to it several times in his works. In *Women in Love* there is Gerald's bullying of the Arab mare at the level crossing, which prefigures his later relationships with women and his final self-destruction. In *St. Mawr*, Rico precipitates the crisis when he treats the stallion exactly as Plato had recommended. In *Women in Love* the horse threatens to fall backwards on top of its rider; in *St. Mawr* it actually does so. It is a part of themselves, their own affective life, their Pan life, that such riders are damaging. Lou sees Pan in *St. Mawr*.

In his 'London Letter' to *The Laughing Horse*, Lawrence equates the death of Pan with the death of 'the horse in us'. In *The First Lady Chatterley*, Connie and Clifford argue about Plato's parable, which Connie sees as suicidal, a recipe for disaster.

Gradually Lawrence came to see all cruelty, perversion, pollution and sterility as a direct result of such blasphemous conceit as that of Socrates and Plato. Lawrence first responded by flying to the opposite extreme:

My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle.
[*Letters* I 503]

Lawrence is here quoting the Psalms: 'Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle' [32:9]. This is the Christianity of St. John of the Cross, Augustine, Aquinas, and the Puritans ('to whom all things are impure') down to Lawrence's day. In the same year in which Lawrence began *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Eliot quoted with approval St. John of the Cross: 'Hence the soul cannot be possessed of the divine union, until it has divested itself of the love of created beings'.

Lawrence soon saw the need to modify his position and began to write on this issue in a spirit of reconciliation. In *The Rainbow*, the rainbow itself was a symbol of reconciliation, harmony, between the sexes, between the universe and the innermost, between God and man. The rainbow is also the crown in the essay of that name: 'The iridescence which is darkness at once and light, the two-in-one'. Lawrence here modifies traditional dualism by arguing that the lion (body) and unicorn (spirit) are not fighting for ultimate victory, which would be the death of both, but for equilibrium. Yet even here there is no questioning the basic duality of existence. Whether he took sides or strove for reconciliation, Lawrence perpetuated a dualism he was unable to see beyond until he reached the American South-West.

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The elements of Lawrence's vision were there from the start - his love of nature and his ability to activate the responses of others to it, his hatred of urban ugliness and mechanization, his respect for the life of the body and its feelings. No great writer had ever been in a better position, growing up in a

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miner's home in the Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire coalfield, to know first-hand the truth of Wendell Berry's assertion that

Fossil fuels have always been produced at the expense of local ecosystems and of local human communities. The fossil-fuel economy is the industrial economy par excellence, and it assigns no value to local life, natural or human. [10]

As early as 1909 Lawrence expressed this as powerfully as it has ever been expressed in the opening paragraph of 'Odour of Chrysanthemums':

The small locomotive engine, Number 4, came clanking, stumbling down from Selston with seven full waggons. It appeared round the corner with loud threats of speed, but the colt that it startled from among the gorse, which still flickered indistinctly in the raw afternoon, outdistanced it at a canter. A woman, walking up the railway-line to Underwood, drew back into the hedge, held her basket aside, and watched the footplate of the engine advancing. The trucks thumped heavily past, one by one, with slow inevitable movement, as she stood insignificantly trapped between the jolting black waggons and the hedge; then they curved away towards the coppice where the withered oak-leaves dropped noiselessly, while the birds, pulling at the scarlet hips beside the track, made off into the dusk that had already crept into the spinney. In the open, the smoke from the engine sank and cleaved to the rough grass. The fields were dreary and forsaken, and in the marshy strip that led to the whimsey, a reedy pit-pond, the fowls had already abandoned their run among the alders, to roost in the tarred fowl-house. The pit-bank loomed up beyond the pond, flames like red sores licking its ashy sides, in the afternoon's stagnant light. Just beyond rose the tapering chimneys and the clumsy black headstocks of Brinsley Colliery. The two wheels were spinning fast up against the sky, and the winding-engine rapped out its little spasms. The miners were being turned up. [Prussian Officer 181]

The engine has the dignity of a number, but the woman has no name. The engine is a ludicrously ineffective machine, yet all life which cannot fly away (including the human beings trapped by the economic system) are subject to it. Nature here seems to have given up the struggle against pollution, as though succumbing to some hellish disease spreading from the

pit-bank. The locomotive is only an extension of the larger, equally clumsy and spasmodic machine, the colliery itself. We do not need to be told that the miners are often turned up maimed or dead. The paragraph is far more than background or scene painting. The subsequent story renders its meanings in terms of the specific tragedy of a single family.

And these meanings remain constant throughout Lawrence's life. They emerge most notably in the Wiggiston chapter of *The Rainbow*, the 'Industrial Magnate' chapter of *Women in Love*, and in Connie's drive through Tevershall in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. There Connie sees

the utter negation of natural beauty, the utter negation of the gladness of life, the utter absence of the instinct for shapely beauty which every bird and beast has, the utter death of the human intuitive faculty. [152]

The cinema offers *A Woman's Love* as a degraded substitute for the Eros which has been exiled to its last fastness in the woods artificially preserved for Clifford, the presiding Mammon, to look out on, shoot pheasants in, and drive his motorized wheelchair through. The pit-banks are the visible stinking excrement of the whole operation.

The beginning of *The Rainbow* harks back to a pre-industrial paradise. The early Brangwens had lived in cyclic, not in linear or historical time - an earthbound life with all the advantages and disadvantages of rootedness. The main disadvantage was the mental and imaginative and spiritual inertia. After the day's work was over there was nothing for them to do but gaze into the back of the fire. The industrial revolution, arriving belatedly here, brings not only the pits, but also improved communications and education, the lure of travel, knowledge, experience - ever widening circles of consciousness. The whole organization of the novel is in terms of the dualistic alternatives of the horizontal (the land, the life of the senses) and the vertical (Lincoln Cathedral, mental or spiritual aspiration), with the possibility held out of reconciliation in the arched (the rainbow). Ursula pursues a series of false rainbows (transcendental religion, romantic love, knowledge). The true rainbow she sees at the end of the novel symbolizes the reconciliation of all the opposites, worker and employer, man and woman, body and spirit, man and God, but it is only a momentary vision. It tells her, very vaguely, how the life that is in her wants to be lived, but not how to live it.

Lawrence's search for the life proper to his species was interrupted by the war. The war put a spear through the side of his hopes for mankind. The

news from the front and the moral debacle at home combined with his ill-health, marital problems, and the persecution of himself and his work by the authorities to produce a misanthropy verging on madness. By the time he finished *The Rainbow*, the ordinary human world had come to seem to him a dead shell, like the dead shells of all the individual egos of which it is composed, artificially insulating humanity from nature and its gods. Ursula's rainbow vision becomes possible only when she has broken that shell, suffered an ego-death, and thereby entered another more real world where inner and outer realities are no longer polarized.

Lawrence was later to call this period of his life his 'nightmare', and the novel which came out of it, *Women in Love*, would be well described as 'a nightmare of mental disintegration and spiritual emptiness'. The hero, Birkin, imagines a future world, after some debacle, cleansed of humanity - 'just the long grass waving, and a hare sitting up'. Birkin recapitulates many of Lawrence's own earlier mistakes. His attachment to the shell of a dead world of ideas and values is what has to be violently broken when Hermione smashes a ball of lapis lazuli onto his head. Birkin, barely conscious, walks to a nearby hillside, takes off his clothes, rolls in the vegetation, presses himself against the trees. It is not delirium, any more than the behaviour of the Bacchantes was delirium. It is a return to sanity, a rediscovery of where he belongs and what really matters. The coolness and subtlety of the vegetation comes into his blood and heals him:

Why should he pretend to have anything to do with human beings at all? Here was his world, he wanted nobody and nothing but the lovely, subtle, responsive vegetation, and himself, his own living self. [107]

Of course he cannot stay there, and Lawrence is far from advocating a return to nature in that simplistic sense - he was later to satirize the hermit's attempt to be through with the world of men. The point is rather that nature should be there, within and without us, a perpetual source of healing and renewal.

Before 1914 Lawrence's work had been anthropocentric, concerned almost exclusively with human relationships, with nature as a background - a very lively and prominent background, but a background nonetheless. Subsequently it became much more central. What saved Lawrence's sanity in the worst days of the war was his deepening faith in the non-human world as a source of health and wholeness:

What massive creeping hell is let loose nowadays. It isn't my
disordered imagination. There is a wagtail sitting on the gate-post. I see
how sweet and swift heaven is. [Letters, II, 331]

In the years which followed, Lawrence's fiction suffered from his loss
of belief in people. You can't have novels without people. But you can have
poems without people. Lawrence's greatest work of the immediate post-war
period was his finest collection of poems *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*.

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In *The First Lady Chatterley* Lawrence was to write of 'a new
flux that would change one away from the old self as a landscape is
transfigured by earthquake and lava floods'. Sicily changed Lawrence in just
such a way, and provided him with rich imagery of such transformation.
What emerges through the fissure in these poems is not angels but streams
of red-hot lava, royal snakes, hounds of hell pursuing Persephone. All the
flora and fauna of Sicily are but manifestations of a deeper more potent life
in the underworld, the world under the world.

Lawrence's creed, which he offers as an alternative to Benjamin
Franklin's narrowly anthropocentric creed, focuses on the opening up of
communications between the human and the non-human, the self and the
not-self, the conscious and the unconscious. Lawrence believed:

'That I am I.'

'That my soul is a dark forest.'

'That my known self will never be more than a little clearing in the
forest.'

'That gods, strange gods, come forth from the forest into the clearing
of my known self, and then go back.'

'That I must have the courage to let them come and go.'

'That I will never let mankind put anything over me, but that I will try
always to recognize and submit to the gods in me and the gods
in other men and women.'

[Studies 22]

These strange gods are symbolized in the poems by birds, beasts and
flowers. There are several poems, 'Snake', 'Man and Bat' and 'Fish', for
example, about how difficult it is even to simply let them come and go, to
shed all the humanistic assumptions which mankind (the voice of one's

education) has been putting over one all one's life. The strong temptation is to anthropomorphize flora and fauna, which is an attempt to accommodate them to that which is known.

Lawrence's misanthropy was in one sense a sickness, but in another a healthy purging of his hitherto anthropocentric vision and of what was left of the anthropomorphic attitude to Nature of his youth. Man now appears on the scene, if at all, as the intruder, the aberration, who, in the presence of the sacred, can think of nothing better to do than to try to kill it (or, in psychological terms, refuse to acknowledge it, drive it into the seething darkness of the unconscious).

In 'Snake' Lawrence castigates the mistakes not only of unregenerate men, but also of his own earlier self, concentrating into a few minutes of poetic time an education in consciousness which had taken him decades. For by the end of the poem the narrator, our representative, has learned that he must expiate the pettiness of the whole perverse rigmarole of sin and guilt which Western Man has allowed to be foisted onto his psyche.

The narrator's problem is as much with the fissure into which the snake draws itself as with the phallic snake itself. In the fruit poems he calls it 'the female part'. But of course the fissure is very much more than the vagina. It is, among other things, an image for the creative or mythic imagination, corresponding to Joseph Campbell's description of myth as 'the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation' [*Hero*, 13]. As early as 1915, Lawrence had used the image in connection with the female, with prophetesses and 'some of the great women saints': 'the truth came as through a fissure from the depths and the burning darkness that lies out of the depth of time'. The fate of Cassandra at the hands of the male (including Apollo) Lawrence takes to be

symbolic of what mankind has done to her since - raped and despoiled and mocked her, to their own ruin. It is not your brain you must trust to, nor your will - but to that fundamental pathetic faculty for receiving the hidden waves that come from the depths of life, and for transferring them to the unreceptive world. It is something which happens below the consciousness, and below the range of the will - it is something which is unrecognised and frustrated and destroyed. [*Letters* II 297-8]

In *Kangaroo* we find:

Alone like a pythoness on her tripod, like the oracle alone above the fissure into the unknown. The oracle, the fissure down into the unknown, the strange exhalations from the dark, the strange words that the oracle must utter. Strange cruel, pregnant words: the new term of consciousness. [310]

And in a 1926 letter to Rolf Gardiner: 'We'll have to establish some spot on earth, that will be the fissure into the under world, like the oracle at Delphos' [V 591]. We are familiar with the Delphic oracle, through Greek tragedy, as the oracle of Apollo; but Lawrence is clearly thinking of the original Delphic oracle which was the Oracle of Mother Earth. (Cashford and Baring speak of 'her priestesses, sitting in the hot sun beside cracks in the earth' [305].) When Apollo wounded Python with his arrows, the serpent fled to the Oracle at Delphi 'but Apollo dared follow him into the shrine, and there despatched him beside the sacred chasm' [Graves, *Greek Myths I*, 76]. Zeus demanded expiation, but Apollo, having coaxed the secret of prophesy from Pan, 'seized the Delphic Oracle and retained its priestess, called the Pythoness, in his own service'.

For Lawrence Etna was such a 'fissure into the under world'; and the debate within him between the voice of spontaneous reverence for the creatures of that world, and the voice of his education, is a debate between Dionysos and Apollo, with Apollo, the apotheosis of reason, characteristically resorting to violence. Since the narrator in the poem is not Lawrence but a representative of our civilization it is essential that Apollo wins, by fair means or foul, leaving the man 'accursed'. He repents too late, seeing belatedly that the snake is

Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,
Now due to be crowned again. [Collected Poems, 351]

We cannot but think of Lucifer, once brightest of angels, and of what Frederick Carter calls 'the mysterious triple communion in the garden between woman and snake and man from which it would seem came the discovery of seed and its purpose' [BM 29]. The assault on the snake is a version of the primal sin, which, for Lawrence, was not the eating of the apple but the bruising of the head of the serpent. Kate Leslie in *The Plumed Serpent* is the new Eve, released, at last, from the compulsion to violate the serpent:

It was a snake, with a subtle pattern along its soft dark back, lying there over a big stone, with its head sunk down to earth.

It felt her presence, too, for suddenly, with incredible soft quickness, it contracted itself down the boulder, and she saw it entering a little gap in the bottom of the wet wall.

The hole was not very big. And as it entered it quickly looked back, poising its little, dark, wicked, pointed head, and flickered a dark tongue. Then it passed on, slowly easing its dark length into the hole. When it had all gone in, Kate could see the last fold still, and the flat little head resting on the fold, like the devil with his chin on his arms, looking out of a loop-hole. So the wicked sparks of the eyes looked out at her, from within the recess. Watching out of its own invisibility. So she wondered over it, as it lay in its hidden places. At all the unseen things in the hidden places of the earth. And she wondered if it was disappointed at not being able to rise higher in creation: to be able to run on four feet, and not keep its belly on the ground.

Perhaps not! Perhaps it had its own peace. She felt a certain reconciliation between herself and it. [425]

The witty, throwaway style of 'Peach' or 'Figs' will not serve when it is a matter of recognizing and submitting to the gods of snakes, bats or fishes. What is needed is a technique for shutting out the voices of education and 'listening-in to the voices of the honourable beasts that call in the dark paths of the veins of our body, from the God in the heart' [*Phoenix* 759]. Description pulls us towards betraying similes. A pike is not, in the last analysis, 'like a lout on an obscure pavement'. He is not like anything in our world:

I had made a mistake, I didn't know him,
This grey, monotonous soul in the water,
This intense individual in shadow,
Fish-alive.

I didn't know his God.
I didn't know his God. [Fish']

Lawrence had an almost occult insight into the being of non-human creatures, even into the spirit of landscapes; but in the best poems of *Birds*, *Beasts and Flowers*, having gone further than any other English poet into

the non-human life mode, he has to acknowledge the essential unknowability of it and stand in silent awe, in the presence of gods not his. One of those gods was Lucifer, once brightest of angels, now exiled to the underworld, but 'due to be crowned again'. According to Jung, when God cast Lucifer out of heaven, he cut off a vital part of himself, his link with the world of the flesh; he repudiated nature itself. Lawrence always associated Satan with fallen Pan.

Lawrence also frequently gives to the god of the flora and fauna and of the underworld of the human unconscious the name of Dionysus or Hades (Pluto), who, according to Heraclitus, are one. The courage to admit messengers from that realm is only a stage in the journey. Much greater courage is needed to abandon the world of normal human consciousness altogether and follow those messengers back through the fissure into their world. That shamanic journey, is already adumbrated in one or two of the fruit poems, 'Grapes' for example:

And if we sip the wine, we find dreams coming upon us
Out of the imminent night.
Nay, we find ourselves crossing the fern-scented frontiers
Of the world before the floods, where man was dark and evasive
And the tiny vine-flower rose of all roses, perfumed,
And all in naked communion communicating as now our clothed
vision can never communicate.

Even beyond the journey into 'naked communion' is the leave-taking, the 'Orphic farewell' of dissolution described in 'Medlars and Sorb Apples':

Going down the strange lanes of hell, more and more intensely alone,
The fibres of the heart parting one after the other
And yet the soul continuing, naked-footed, ever more vividly
embodied
Like a flame blown whiter and whiter
In a deeper and deeper darkness
Ever more exquisite, distilled in separation.

For the full exploration of that dark region, without benefit of intoxication, we must wait for Lawrence's last poems, when he had to prepare himself in imagination for the 'imminent night' of death. The only fully open soul is that of a dying man. 'Bavarian Gentians' must come very

close to rediscovering in Lawrence's own soul the mysteries celebrated at Eleusis. Here Lawrence holds back from describing the wedding of Persephone and Pluto which takes place on the other side of his own death. In the rituals at Eleusis there was, apparently, no description, only a showing, perhaps the showing of a single ear of corn, but a showing which, given the receptive spiritual state of the participants, was at that moment a hierophany. Yet even in the magnificent spiritual and poetic achievement of 'The Ship of Death', Lawrence found himself betrayed back (partly by the Orphic myths and esoteric oriental doctrines he was studying) to the world of that which we can presume to understand. Here he undertook to describe and invest with attributes whatever lies beyond the life of the body, and that, he realized, is to violate the tabernacle:

But anyone who shall ascribe attributes to God or oblivion
let him be cast out, for blasphemy.
For God is a deeper forgetting far than sleep
and all description is a blasphemy. ["Tabernacle"]

Can we imagine poems which would eschew all description? They would indeed be 'new, strange flowers'.

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It seems that in the buoyant optimism of the first months of his relationship with Frieda Lawrence thought he could reconcile in himself Apollo and Dionysus, Christ and Pan:

I worship Christ, I worship Jehovah, I worship Pan, I worship
Aphrodite. ... I want them all, all the gods. They are all God. But I must
serve in real love. If I take my whole, passionate, spiritual and physical
love to the woman who in return loves me, that is how I serve God.
And my hymn and my game of joy is my work. [*Phoenix* 307]

By 1915 he felt he would have to make a choice. In 'The Crown' Lawrence discusses the two eternities, the Christian eternity, which is ahead, and the pagan eternity:

If I look at the eternity behind, back to the source, then there is for me
one eternity, one only. And this is the pagan eternity, the eternity of

Pan, of Dionysos, of the sensualist, and the scientist, and the mystic.
This is the eternity we have veered round to, in private life, during the
past few years. [Reflections, 300]

This is perhaps Lawrence's first use of Pan in this large sense, not as specific local god, nor the sinister, rather Gothic and literary figure of some of his short stories, nor as a way of idealizing the virility of some of his heroes, but as all the pagan gods rolled into one, the Pan of Pantheism: 'Pan, All: what you see when you see in full' [*St. Mawr* 65]. Why Lawrence's dissatisfaction with the present should have caused him to veer round towards the pagan eternity of Pan is explained by Jung:

The unsatisfied yearning of the artist reaches back to the primordial image in the unconscious which is best fitted to compensate the inadequacy and one-sidedness of the present. [*The Spirit in Man*, 82, 3]

Jung sees the reactivation of such images as the most valuable task the artist can perform: 'He has plunged into the healing and redeeming depths of the collective psyche' [105].

Whenever the collective unconscious becomes a living experience and is brought to bear upon the conscious outlook of an age, this event is a creative act which is of importance for a whole epoch. [ibid 98]

Lawrence's mature pantheism is very far from Wordsworth's. Lawrence certainly believed in impulses from woods and mountains, but not that they took the form of personal lessons about moral good and evil. Though there is a good deal that is mawkish and overblown and anthropomorphic in Lawrence's very early writings about nature, as early as *The White Peacock* we find a striking awareness of nature's impersonality and harshness. Annable, the first Pan figure, is no noble savage. His rejection of the insulation society offers against nature costs him his life.

Later, as soon as he was able, Lawrence took himself to some of the least comfortable and processed environments on earth and exposed his pantheism to the spirit of those places - to the lava-streaked slopes of Etna, the steaming jungles of Ceylon, the Australian outback, the mountains and deserts of the American South-West. These places are inimical to man, the intruder. His attempts to import a human scale of values seem both ridiculous and doomed. Man can live in these places, but only man racially

and religiously adapted, and with the aid of rituals and consciousness evolved over thousands of years. The wilderness does not need man. Wordsworth's world loses all meaning without man, whose mind invests it with meaning, virtually creates it.

The challenge was now to find a way to write about people, in fiction, without surrendering the newly won biocentric vision. And what, more than anything else, enabled Lawrence to do this, was his closeness, from 1922 to 1925, to the Indians of the American South-West. Here Lawrence found, for the first time, a human life which seemed to him truly religious:

To the Indian there is no conception of a defined God. Creation is a great flood, for ever flowing, in lovely and terrible waves. In everything, the shimmer of creation, and never the finality of the created. Never the distinction between God and God's creation, or between Spirit and Matter. Everything, everything is the wonderful shimmer of creation, it may be a deadly shimmer like lightning or the anger in the little eyes of the bear, it may be the beautiful shimmer of the moving deer, or the pine-boughs softly swaying under snow.

[*Mornings* 61]

'Indians and Entertainment' was written in 1923. 'Dance of the Sprouting Corn' and 'The Hopi Snake Dance' are also fine essays, but it was not until 1928, three years after his return to Europe, that Lawrence was able to express fully what the New Mexico Indians had meant to him:

It was a vast old religion, greater than anything we know: more starkly and nakedly religious. There is no God, no conception of a god. All is god. But it is not the pantheism we are accustomed to, which expresses itself as 'God is everywhere, God is in everything'. In the oldest religion, everything was alive, not supernaturally but naturally alive. There were only deeper and deeper streams of life, vibrations of life more and more vast. So rocks were alive, but a mountain had a deeper, vaster life than a rock, and it was much harder for a man to bring his spirit, or his energy, into contact with the life of the mountain, and so draw strength from the mountain, as from a great standing well of life, than it was to come into contact with the rock. And he had to put forth a great religious effort. For the whole life-effort of man was to get his life into direct contact with the elemental life of the cosmos, mountain-life, cloud-life, thunder-life, air-life, earth-life, sun-life. To come into

immediate *felt* contact, and so derive energy, power, and a dark sort of joy. This effort into sheer naked contact, *without an intermediary or mediator*, is the root meaning of religion, and at the sacred races the runners hurled themselves in a terrible cumulative effort, through the air, which is the life of the clouds, and so of the rain. It was a vast and pure religion, without idols or images, even mental ones. It is the oldest religion, a cosmic religion the same for all peoples, not broken up into specific gods or saviours or systems. It is the religion which precedes the god-concept, and is therefore greater and deeper than any god-religion. [*Phoenix* 146-7]

In New Mexico two of Lawrence's greatest needs, the need for bodily fulfilment, symbolized by the horse, and the need for spiritual fulfilment, symbolized by the monk, which had, since their reconciliation in the tenuous rainbow symbol of early 1915, run strangely parallel paths, spontaneously met. His search for god and his search for a vivid life of the body here on earth both led him to Pan. The first thing Lawrence wrote at the new ranch was an essay called 'Pan in America', where he defines pantheism as 'a vivid relatedness between the man and the living universe that surrounds him' [*Phoenix* 27]. It is not simply nature-worship, for Pan is fierce and bristling, sometimes malevolent, with the power to blast; and among the creatures of Pan there is an eternal struggle for life, between lives' [29]. There was indeed real danger up there. Three of the Hawks' horses from the Del Monte ranch below were killed by lightning. The very pine tree in front of Lawrence's cabin that much of 'Pan in America' is about, was terribly scarred by it.

It seemed to Lawrence as much a violation of Nature to idealize, sentimentalize or humanize it as to reject or exploit it. He mocks Wordsworth for dressing up Pan as Lucy Gray, the sweet and pure child of nature, and for refusing to allow the primrose a soul of its own. On the other hand he admired Cézanne whose 'great effort was, as it were, to shove the apple away from him, and let it live of itself' [*Phoenix* 567]. A vernal wood becomes part of the furniture of Wordsworth's mind, teaching him only what he already knows. A true relationship must change us, and is therefore possible only with things which are wholly themselves. Lawrence does not have to shove the pine tree away. It keeps its distance, its resistance, 'a strong-willed powerful thing-in-itself', while at the same time, since it is 'within the allness of Pan', it serves to put him in touch with the many other lives which are part of its life:

The chipmunks skelter a little way up it, the little black-and-white birds, tree-creepers, walk quick as mice on its rough perpendicular, tapping; the bluejays throng on its branches, high up, at dawn, and in the afternoon you hear the faintest rustle of many little wild doves alighting in its upper remoteness. [Phoenix 25]

And the tree includes more than that:

The tree gathers up earth-power from the dark bowels of the earth, and a roaming sky-glitter from above. ... It vibrates its presence into my soul, and I am with Pan. ... I am even conscious that shivers of energy cross my living plasm, from the tree, and I become a degree more like unto the tree, more bristling and turpentiney, in Pan.

At the beginning of 'Pan in America', Lawrence places the death of Pan at the beginning of the Christian era. But earlier than that civilization itself had proved inimical to Pan:

Gradually men moved into cities. And they loved the display of people better than the display of a tree. They liked the glory they got of overpowering one another in war. And, above all, they loved the vainglory of their own words, the pomp of argument and the vanity of ideas. [23]

Lawrence is not suggesting here that all words and ideas are hubristic, simply those which set the mind of man apart from the rest of creation. An imaginative work is 'a new venture towards God': 'A book is a holy thing, and must be made so again'.

Lawrence finds that the God we have left out of our God-concept in the Christian era is the common element in all three mythologies - Greek, Celtic and American Indian. He calls this God Pan: 'And still, in America, among the Indians, the oldest Pan is alive' [31]. The Indians had rituals to enable them to handle the potent, potentially destructive, energies of Pan. For the white man there must be a death to the old false consciousness followed by a resurrection, equally painful, to a new and deeper reality - the stark, sordid, beautiful, awe-inspiring reality of Pan, which Lawrence himself was now wrestling with on his pack-rat infested, lightning-scarred, but certainly not god-forsaken ranch.

The first fictional fruit of this experience was *St. Mawr*, where Cartwright, who is based on Frederick Carter, defines Pan in terms identical with Lawrence's:

I should say he was the God that is hidden in everything... Pan was the hidden mystery - the hidden cause. That's how it was a great God; Pan wasn't *he* at all: not even a great God. He was Pan, All: what you see when you see in full. In the daytime you see the thing. But if your third eye is open, which sees only the things that can't be seen, you may see Pan within the thing, hidden: you may see with your third eye, which is darkness. [65]

'The third eye' is another way of expressing what Blake calls 'fourfold vision' - the vision with which we perceive that everything that lives is holy. Lawrence uses the term again in *Apocalypse* in describing the resurrection or second birth which takes place at the end of the ritual of the Mysteries of Isis:

The initiate is dead, and alive again in a new body. He is sealed in the forehead, like a Buddhist monk, as a sign that he has died the death, and that his seventh self is fulfilled, he is twice-born, his mystic eye or 'third eye' is now open. He sees in two worlds. [*Apocalypse* 107]

It is a dangerous world to enter, full of raw energies like lightning, without insulation or supports or orientations. It was this danger the ancients warned of in the story that to look upon Pan was to be blasted or driven mad. In 1924 Lawrence was to send three fictional women out into this world. The woman who rode away never returned; the princess returned, but without her sanity; Lou, in *St. Mawr*, survives in it, but whether Pan will have any use for her service is an open question.

The female protagonists of so many of Lawrence's fictions are perhaps projections of his own distressed anima, the subjugated feminine component in his psyche, which he is seeking to release from the male hegemony, or rather to reconcile with a chastened animus. James Hillman argues that the successful introjection of the anima in a man

does not mean acquiring the characteristics of the other gender: rather it means a double-consciousness, mercurial, true and untrue, action and inaction, sight and blindness, living the impossible oxymoron, more

like an animal who is at once superbly conscious in its actions and utterly unconscious of them. [125]

So, in *St. Mawr*, Lou imagines a regenerate man:

A pure animal man would be as lovely as a deer or a leopard, burning like a flame fed straight from underneath. And he'd be part of the unseen, like a mouse is, even. And he'd never cease to wonder, he'd breathe silence and unseen wonder, as the partridges do, running in the stubble. He'd be all the animals in turn, instead of one, fixed, automatic thing, which he is now, grinding on the nerves. [62]

The bored heroine Lou is persuaded by a stallion as Evangelist to flee the City of Destruction, to renounce Vanity Fair in favour of another, spiritually vibrant world in the Delectable Mountains of New Mexico, there to become a priestess of Pan. Lou is not, however, to be identified with Lawrence. Some of the finest pages Lawrence ever wrote describe the attempts of the nameless New England woman to tame the New Mexico Rockies, to impose New England plumbing and idealism, an attempt as doomed as that of Pentheus to tame the mountains of Cithaeron. Pentheus does not heed the fate of his predecessor Actaeon; not does Lou learn enough from the failure of the New England woman before her. Her romantic expectations compel her to blind herself to the packrats and the squalor and to cast a glamour over the universe. Lou sees the need to look to pagan gods, but it is not as a priestess of *the 'Apollo mysteries'* that she will find atonement at Las Chivas (which means 'the goats'). The goats are sacred to the goat-god Pan, who, in his splendour and savagery is very similar to the horned god Dionysus in *The Bacchae*. Lou has not yet reached at the end, and may never reach, Lawrence's own perception that the god in man and the goat in man cannot be separated.

It seemed to Lawrence, however, that the religion of the American Indians had specifically evolved in forms suitable for their race and place. The European, with his very different culture and consciousness, could find invaluable clues there, but would need a different life mode. The attempt to resurrect Pan in Mexico in *The Plumed Serpent* had been a failure. Pan had been too closely delimited by the spirit of place of a harsh and bloodthirsty land. As Lawrence began to long for the softer, greener, more feminine spirit of Europe, Pan came to seem atavistic and too oppressively male.

Pan's world came to seem like an ending rather than a new beginning. Of his heroine Kate Lawrence says:

Her world could end in many ways, and this was one of them. Back to the twilight of the ancient Pan world, where the soul of the woman was dumb, to be forever unspoken. [*The Plumed Serpent*, 312]

*

In February 1925 Lawrence nearly died in Mexico. But that spring at the ranch he experienced his own resurrection. As his health returned everything, in Frieda's words 'assumed the radiance of new life'. Just being alive in the phenomenal world seemed so miraculous to him that his recent preoccupation with power and with saving the world came to seem almost blasphemous to him. He realized, as if for the first time, his own limits. The life of his self-importance was over. His belief that human life 'consists in a relation with all things: stone, earth, trees, flowers, water, insects, fishes, birds, creatures, sun, rainbow, children, woman, other men' [*Reflections* 374] was confirmed, since that new life visibly flowed into him from these sources, from the pine tree (itself resurrected after a lightning blast) and all its associated life, from the four horses, Azul, Prince, Aaron and Ambrose, black-eyed Susan the cow, Timsy Wemyss the marmalade cat, and Moses the white cock:

And as the white cock calls in the doorway, who calls? Merely a barnyard rooster, worth a dollar-and-a-half. But listen! Under the old dawns of creation the Holy Ghost, the Mediator, shouts aloud in the twilight. And every time I hear him, a fountain of vitality gushes up in my body. It is life. ... When the white cock crows, I do not hear myself or some anthropomorphic conceit, crowing. I hear the not-me, the voice of the Holy Ghost. And when I see the hard, solid, longish green cones thrusting up at blue heaven from the high bluish tips of the balsam pine, I say : Behold! Look at the strong, fertile silence of the thrusting tree! God is in the bush like a clenched dark fist or a thrust phallus. [373]

In the light of all this, the leadership principle came to seem obsolete. What was needed was a tender, sensitive, delicate awareness. His next novel (ultimately *Lady Chatterley's Lover*) was to be called *Tenderness*.

* * *

Lawrence returned to Europe in 1925 to continue his quest, and in the spring of 1927 embarked on a tour of the Etruscan sites with his American Buddhist friend Earl Brewster. There, in the flaked and faded frescos of the underground tombs of the Etruscans, Lawrence found what he had been seeking, evidence that it had been possible, if only for a century or two before Etruria came under the heel of the Romans, for a European people to get themselves into a right relation with nature. His long pilgrimage had brought him at last to these tombs, and in them he found the vivid human life he had been seeking, a life of perfect awareness and relatedness, without the crippling dualism of mind versus body, male versus female, human versus non-human, physical versus metaphysical, life versus death. Here he found a different Pan, with no malice toward men whose activities respected him:

The intensive culture of vine and olive and wheat by the ceaseless industry of naked human hands and winter-shod feet, and slow-stepping, soft-eyed oxen does not devastate a country, does not denude it, does not lay it bare, does not uncover its nakedness, does not drive away either Pan or his children. [*Phoenix* 45]

Lawrence was right in sensing that the Etruscans had preserved a lost secret. His description of their art is interchangeable with Groenewegen-Frankfort's description of Cretan art of a thousand years earlier:

Here and here alone (in contrast to Egypt and the Near East) the human bid for timelessness was disregarded in the most complete acceptance of the grace of life the world has ever known. For life means movement and the beauty of movement was woven into the intricate web of living forms which we call 'scenes of nature'; was revealed in human bodies acting their serious games, inspired by a transcendent presence, acting in freedom and restraint, unpurposeful as cyclic time itself.

[quoted by Kerenyi, *Dionysos*, 10]

Lawrence's primary image for this 'complete acceptance of the grace of life', this 'beauty of movement' of 'human bodies acting in freedom and restraint', was the dance:

There it is, the delightful quality of the Etruscan dance. They are neither making love to music, to avoid copulation, nor are they bouncing towards copulation with a brass band accompaniment. They are just dancing a dance with the elixir of life. And if they have made a little offering to the stone phallus at the door, it is because when one is full of life one is full of possibilities, and the phallus gives life. To the music one should dance, and dancing, dance. The Etruscan young woman is going gaily at it, after two-thousand five-hundred years. She is not making love to music, nor is the dark-limbed youth, her partner. She is just dancing her very soul into existence, having made an offering on the one hand to the lively phallus of man, on the other hand, to the shut womb-symbol of woman, and put herself on real good terms with both of them. So she is quite serene, and dancing herself as a very fountain of motion and of life, the young man opposite her dancing himself the same, in contrast and balance, with just the double flute to whistle round their naked heels.

[‘Making Love to Music’]

The dance image dominates not only *Etruscan Places*, but also the ending of *John Thomas and Lady Jane*, such paintings as *Dance Sketch*, and Lawrence’s unfinished Utopian fantasy of October 1927, ‘A Dream of Life’.

Blake used Newton and Locke as representatives of single vision.

Lawrence uses Socrates:

Later, when scepticism came over all the civilized world, as it did after Socrates, the Etruscan religion began to die, Greeks and Greek rationalism flooded in, and Greek stories more or less took the place of the old Etruscan symbolic thought. [*Mornings* 150]

To allow one's being to be reduced to single vision is to live in bad faith, or, in Lawrence's phrase, with impure heart:

But all attempt at divination, even prayer and reason and research itself, lapses into jugglery when the heart loses its purity. In the impurity of his heart, Socrates often juggled logic unpleasantly.

[154]

This murder of 'symbolic thought' was fatal not only for the Etruscans, but condemned Western civilization to over two thousand years of increasingly blasphemous living:

The old religion of the profound attempt of man to harmonize himself with nature, and hold his own and come to flower in the great seething of life, changed with the Greeks and Romans into a desire to resist nature, to produce a mental cunning and a mechanical force that would outwit Nature and chain her down completely, completely, till at last there should be nothing free in nature at all, all should be controlled, domesticated, put to man's meaner uses. [174]

Aldous Huxley was one of Lawrence's most sympathetic critics, but in his review of *Etruscan Places* he completely misunderstood what the Etruscans meant to Lawrence:

For the sake of the double flute and all that it stands for, he [Lawrence] was prepared to sacrifice most of the activities upon which, for the last two thousand years or thereabouts, humanity, at any rate in the West, has set the highest value. The philosophy and the practice of non-acceptance have made it possible for man to become, in some respects, more than human. But in the process he has had to sacrifice much of his former happiness; and while he has become spiritually and intellectually more, emotionally and physically he has, too often, degenerated and become less than human.

[*Spectator* 4 November 1932]

This would be an accurate enough account of Lawrence's position in, say 1913. But it is a travesty of his position in 1927. The crude choice between the spiritual and intellectual on the one side and the emotional and physical on the other is no longer to be found in Lawrence's writings at this date. Nor is he searching for happiness - that is a desirable but not inevitable by-product of what he is seeking, which is wholeness. He wishes to reinstate the body and its emotions not because he values it higher than the life of the spirit and of consciousness, but because he now knows that to pursue the life of the spirit or of the mind in opposition to the life of the body and to Nature, is to alienate, stultify or pervert the spirit and to turn the mind into a sterile mechanism or juggling act. It is because they had a rich physical life that the Etruscans were able to have a rich spiritual life, or vice versa, since

to distinguish between them at all is part of the Socratic sickness. The Etruscans confirmed for him what he had always known, that it is futile hubristic perversity to seek the life of the spirit apart from the given world; for God is in everything that lives and nowhere else.

According to Charles Olson Lawrence resisted the 'high temptation' to complete knowledge, intellectual perfection, which led, in Plato, Christ, Schopenhauer and Ortega y Gasset, to a kind of death. Lawrence belongs rather with Homer (and his 'unchristened heart', in Yeats' phrase) and with Euripides. In defining belief as 'a profound emotion that has the mind's connivance' Lawrence achieved, says Olson, 'a combination both archaic and prospective, which gives man, in his preoccupation with life, the proper instrumentation for its understanding and use'. It is the same high temptation to which Stephen Dedalus succumbs in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* when he propounds a view of art at the opposite pole from Lawrence's:

The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire or loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something; loathing urges us to abandon, to go from something. The arts which excite them, pornographical or didactic, are therefore improper arts. The esthetic emotion (I use the general term) is therefore static. The mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing. ... To speak of these things and to try to understand their nature, and having understood it, to try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, to press out again, from the gross earth or what it brings forth, from sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our soul, an image of the beauty we have come to understand - that is art. [186-7]

All this has the 'true scholastic stink' as Joyce is well aware, and Stephen's pride, his spurning of the gross earth, brings its appropriate Icarus-fall. Lawrence's art is always and avowedly in this sense 'improper'. He valued all art, but particularly the novel, only insofar as it was kinetic:

It is the way our sympathy flows and recoils that really determines our lives. And here lies the vast importance of the novel, properly handled. It can inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness, and it can lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead.[*Lady Chatterley's Lover*, 101]

* * *

When Lawrence returned from his Etruscan tour in the spring of 1927 he found among his accumulated mail Koteliansky's translation of extracts from Rozanov's *The Apocalypse of Our Times*. Lawrence was very excited:

Rozanov has more or less recovered the genuine pagan vision, the phallic vision, and with those eyes he looks, in amazement and consternation, on the mess of Christianity. ... He is the first Russian ... to see that immortality is in the vividness of life, not in the loss of life. The butterfly becomes a whole revelation to him: and to us.

[*Phoenix* 369]

Rozanov is discussing with two friends, Kapterev, a naturalist, and Florensky, a priest, the question 'in a caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly - which is the "I"?:

Then it became suddenly clear to me ... that the 'butterfly' is *really*, mysteriously, and metaphysically, the soul of the caterpillar and chrysalis. Thus happened this, cosmogonically overwhelming, discovery. ... Kapterev mused for a while and said: Observations show that in a caterpillar wrapped up in a cocoon and appearing as though dead, there actually begins after this a reconstruction of the tissues of the body. So that it does not only appear dead, but actually dies. ... And if you were to pierce the caterpillar, say, with a pin, then no butterfly will come out of it, nothing will come out of it, and the grave will remain a grave, and the body will not 'come to life again'. [Zytaruk]

It is, of course, not a discovery but a rediscovery of ancient wisdom. On the Mycenaean Ring of Nestor two butterflies flutter above the Minoan goddess. Sir Arthur Evans commented:

The symbolic significance of these, moreover, is emphasized by the appearance above them of two small objects showing traces of heads at the tip and with hook-like projections at the side, in which we may reasonably recognize the two corresponding chrysalises. ... It can hardly be doubted, moreover, that they apply to the two youthful figures who appear beside them on the ring, and must be taken to be symbolic of their reanimation with new life. ... We see here, reunited

by the life-giving power of the Goddess and symbolized by the chrysalises and butterflies, a young couple whom Death had parted.

[Baring 128]

Immediately Lawrence began *The Escaped Cock*. Easter 1927 represented a confluence of several streams in Lawrence's life and thought. His own change of life and nearness of death forced him towards a less metaphorical concept of resurrection than hitherto, a concept which would allow him to reconcile within himself the figures of Christ and Pan. His memories of the white cock Moses at the ranch, symbol of assertive life with the voice of the Holy Ghost, merged with the symbolism of the cock escaping from an egg which he had seen in a shop window in Volterra and the egg of resurrection held up by the man who had died in the Tomb of the Lionesses at Tarquinia. Lawrence was well aware of the pagan symbolism behind the Easter egg. Robert Graves tells us that 'the creation of the world, according to the Orphics, resulted from the sexual act performed between the Great Goddess and the World-Snake Ophion':

The Goddess then laid the world-egg, which contained infinite potentiality but which was nothing in itself until it was split open by the Demiurge. The Demiurge was Helios, the Sun, with whom the Orphics identified the God Apollo. ... Since the cock was the Orphic bird of resurrection, sacred to Apollo's son Aesculapius the healer, hens' eggs took the place of snakes' in the later Druidic mysteries and were coloured scarlet in the Sun's honour; and become Easter eggs.

[*White Goddess* 248-9]

The snake was also sacred to Aesculapius, who was a fertility and resurrection god as well as a healer (since the snake's ability to shed its skin was mistaken in the ancient world for an ability, like the phoenix, to regenerate itself). In Part I of *The Escaped Cock* the man who had died becomes a healer with a cock under his arm, an avatar of Aesculapius; and the phallic associations of the Aesculapian snake lead naturally towards his transformation into Osiris in Part II.

At the beginning of the story the cock-crow wakes the man who had died back into the life of the body and the natural world from which he had died. He learns from the cock how to re-establish his connection with the phenomenal world, to ride 'the wave of life of which the cock was the crest' [109]. The story ends with his affirmation that the world is 'a vast

complexity of wonders', and with a question which implies a the repudiation of his former mission in Part II: 'From what, and to what, could this infinite whirl be saved?' [120].

In *Etruscan Places* Lawrence had coupled Christ and Buddha:

and before Buddha or Jesus spoke the nightingale sang, and long after the words of Jesus and Buddha are gone into oblivion the nightingale still will sing. Because it is neither preaching nor teaching nor commanding nor urging. It is just singing. And in the beginning was not a Word, but a chirrup. [*Mornings* 126]

In *The Escaped Cock*, as in *Etruscan Places*, the villains are the Romans, who understand nothing but power, who trample on everything they do not understand, and burden the earth with their monuments:

Because a fool kills a nightingale with a stone, is he therefore greater than the nightingale? Because the Roman took the life out of the Etruscan, was he therefore greater than the Etruscan? Not he! Rome fell, and the Roman phenomenon with it. Italy today is far more Etruscan in its pulse than Roman; and will always be so.

[*ibid* 126]

The Etruscans, according to Lawrence, were a people who 'lived their own lives without wanting to dominate the lives of others' [Nehls III 137]. Both Jesus and Buddha had wanted to do that as much as the Romans, since saving is as much a form of domination as conquering. Both sought to lift man above greed and desire, yet themselves fell into the greed of the saviour. Lawrence had to rewrite 'The Escaped Cock' to make his resurrected man recognize and reject this form of greed also. He added this passage:

I have outlived my mission, and know no more of it. It is my triumph. I have survived the day and the death of my interference, and am still a man...The teacher and the saviour are dead in me; now I can go about my own business, into my own single life...My public life is over, the life of my conviction and my mission, the life of my self-importance...Now I can live without striving to sway others any more. For my reach ends in my finger-tips and my stride is no longer than the

ends of my toes. Yet I would embrace multitudes, I who have never truly embraced even one woman, or one man. [Escaped Cock 24]

He is discovering the Etruscan insouciance, as Lawrence had discovered it. The Etruscans knew the gods 'in their very finger-tips'; they entered into the flow of touch which comes not from pawing and laying hold, but 'from the middle of the human being' [*Mornings* 143-4]. In the revised version the man is much more aware that his earlier denial of the world, including the world of men, was a denial of the life-issue, leading to betrayal and crucifixion as inevitably as, in 'The Man Who Loved Islands', Cathcart's loathing 'with profound revulsion the whole of the animal creation' had led to his physical and spiritual dissolution. *The Escaped Cock* is the story of how Christ became an Etruscan.

Rozanov's challenge had been to 'remove' Christ, with all the accretions of the centuries, from human consciousness. Knowing the impossibility of this, Lawrence sought rather to transform a caterpillar Christ into a butterfly Osiris, to detach Christ from the life-denying Christianity of St Paul or St Augustine and to restore him to the company of the torn and resurrected fertility gods. Rundle Clark speaks of Osiris as

the most vivid achievement of the Egyptian imagination... the completely helpless one, the essential victim... the sufferer with all mortality but at the same time... the power of revival and fertility in the world. He is the power of growth in plants and of reproduction in animals and human beings. He is both dead and the source of all living. Hence to become Osiris is to become one with the cosmic cycles of death and rebirth. [97]

The priestess of Isis is able to draw the man back into the unfallen state, 'nakedly breast to breast with the cosmos' [*Apocalypse* 181]. Frazer speaks of Osiris 'diffusing the blessings of civilization and agriculture wherever he went'. But agriculture is impossible and civilization is not a blessing unless grounded in the fecundity of the goddess.

The story ends:

The man who had died rowed slowly on, with the current, and laughed to himself: I have sowed the seed of my life and my resurrection, and put my touch forever upon the choice woman of this day, and I carry her perfume in my flesh like essence of roses. She is dear to me in the

middle of my being. But the gold and flowing serpent is coiling up again, to sleep at the root of my tree. So let the boat carry me.
Tomorrow is another day. [61]

This clear and serene prose brings together many strands. The sun sinks into the sea each day, but rises refreshed on the morrow. 'The suns come back in their seasons. And I shall come again.' The seed is 'the eternal quick of all things, which yet divides and sub-divides, so that it becomes the sun of the firmament and the lotus of the waters under the earth, and the rose of all existence upon the earth' [*Mornings* 127]. So the man, who is sun-god and corn-god, as he commits himself once more to the waters of potentiality, takes with him in the perfume of the woman the 'essence' of all existence upon the earth, and leaves her pregnant with himself, as Horus was believed to be the resurrected Osiris.

We find now a willingness new in Lawrence to associate resurrection with procreation. This was very much the emphasis of Rozanov's phallic vision:

It means then the World of the future age' is pre-eminently determined by 'copulation'; and then light is thrown on its irresistibility, on its insatiability ... on its 'sacredness,' and that it is a 'mystery (the mystery of marriage). ... But it is obvious that in insects, cows, everywhere in the animal and vegetable world, and not only in man alone, it is a 'mystery, heavenly and sacred.' ... Then we understand 'the shame that attaches to sexual organs'; it is the 'life of the future age,' through which we enter into 'life beyond the grave,' into 'life of the future age.'
[Zytaruk]

The serpent had gradually accumulated more and more meanings for Lawrence. For the Etruscans 'the serpent represented the vivid powers of the inner earth, not only such powers as volcanic and earthquake, but the quick powers that run up the roots of plants and establish the great body of the tree, the tree of life, and run up the feet and legs of man, to establish the heart' [*Mornings* 207]. Lawrence knew that in yoga this power is called *kundalini*:

A hero was a hero, in the great past, when he had conquered the hostile dragon, when he had the power of the dragon *with him* in his limbs and breast...the liberation within the self of the gleaming bright serpent of

gold, golden fluid life within the body...For in his good aspect, the dragon is the great vivifier, the great enhancer of the whole universe...It is the same dragon which, according to the Hindus, coils quiescent at the base of the spine of a man, and unfolds sometimes lashing along the spinal way. [Apocalypse 124-5]

The serpent is also central to some versions of the Osiris myth. The star-son (also called Lucifer) is reborn every year, grows with the seasons, and destroys the Serpent-lover of the mother-goddess to become himself her lover. Her love kills him but another serpent is born from his ashes, which, at Easter, lays the *glain* or red egg which she eats, then gives birth to the son once again. Osiris was a Star-son, and though after his death he looped himself around the world like a serpent, yet when his fifty-yard long phallus was carried in procession it was topped with a golden star; this stood for himself renewed as the Child Horus, son of Isis, who had been both his bride and his layer-out and was now his mother once again.

Lawrence knew all this from his reading of such books as Petrie's *The Religions of Egypt*, Pryse's *The Apocalypse Unsealed*, and Madame Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled*. But he was not interested in displaying his knowledge of mythology, anthropology and Oriental religions, nor in quarrying them for fragments to shore against his ruins. The last paragraph of *The Escaped Cock* needs no notes. What we happen to know of its sources and antecedents and parallels will make fertile connections for us. Words such as 'boat', 'current', 'night', 'seed', 'resurrection', 'roses', 'serpent' and 'tree' are bound to make such connections without our being aware of it, independently of any mythic context. The passage works as simple poetic prose, creating a sense of atonement between the innermost needs and powers of the man and the woman of his choice, his unborn child, the currents and seasons of life itself, the larger world of the distance and the future for him to adventure into, even the Romans, against whom he sharpens his wits and his weapons. The scene in its wholeness is the very opposite of a crucifixion. We imagine this Christ escaping into the Greater Day with the enigmatic Etruscan smile on his lips.

Did Lawrence know an already famous poem also written on Lake Lemman just seven years earlier - 'The Waste Land'. There, at the end, Eliot also uses a boat to express the poem's strongest affirmation, that control which is the opposite of death by water:

Damyata: The boat responded

Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar.
The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
To controlling hands

The image is, surely, not very satisfactory. Those 'controlling hands' are too reminiscent of the assured 'young man carbuncular' whose 'exploring hands encounter no defence'. The woman's heart, like the sea, is supposed to respond to and obey the expert handling of the man. Control, in this sense, becomes the imposition of one man's will upon woman and nature, a variant of Plato's chariot driver. Lawrence calls this greed. The man who had died's boat is controlled partly by him and partly by the current: 'So let the boat carry me'.

Eliot reprimanded Lawrence for 'using the terminology of Christian faith to set forth some philosophy or religion which is fundamentally non-Christian or anti-Christian' [Draper 361]. Lawrence might have responded, with Blake, that he was seeking to rescue Christ from the Christians. It was a daring undertaking in 1928, and caused much outrage at the time. Lawrence was called a traitor to the human race. But such is the tact and sensitivity with which he carried it through that many Christians have subsequently responded warmly to it as a corrective to the tendency of orthodox Christianity to be life-denying, and to evade the implications of the phrase 'the resurrection of the body'.

One might wish that Lawrence had been able to follow his regenerate man still further, and imagine a life for him wherever he is heading. We can get a hint of that from 'The Risen Lord', an essay Lawrence wrote in August 1929, which might almost be regarded as an outline for a third part to *The Escaped Cock*:

If Jesus rose in the full flesh, He rose to know the tenderness of a woman, and the great pleasure of her, and to have children by her. He rose to know the responsibility and the peculiar delight of children, and also the exasperation and nuisance of them. If Jesus rose as a full man, in the flesh, He rose to have friends, to have a man-friend who He would hold sometimes to His breast, in strong affection, and who would be dearer to Him than a brother, just out of the sheer mystery and sympathy. And how much more wonderful this, than having disciples! If Jesus rose a full man in the flesh, He rose to do his share in the world's work, something he really liked doing. And if He

remembered His first life, it would be neither teaching nor preaching, but probably carpentering again, with joy, among the shavings. If Jesus rose a full man in the flesh, He rose to continue His fight with money-makers of every sort. But this time, it would no longer be the fight of self-sacrifice that would end in crucifixion. This time it would be a freed man fighting to shelter the rose of life from being trampled on by the pigs. [Phoenix II, 575]

* * *

Of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* Lawrence wrote:

As I say, it's a novel of the phallic Consciousness: or the phallic Consciousness versus the mental-spiritual Consciousness: and of course you know which side I take. The *versus* is not my fault: there should be no *versus*. The two things must be reconciled in us. But now they're daggers drawn. [Letters VI 340]

In letter after letter Lawrence insisted to his friends that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was a phallic, not a sexual novel. Few of them, I imagine, could see any difference. What Lawrence was trying to draw attention to was the religious symbolism, for a phallus is the male organ in its function as fertility symbol. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it as 'symbolical of the generative power of nature'. Lawrence at this time frequently used the term 'phallic consciousness' to mean simply the opposite of mental consciousness - that is any instinct or intuition or desire or knowledge which bypassed the tyranny of the intellect. 'Phallic consciousness' is the opposite of 'sex in the head', but it also signifies any pre-mental consciousness, not only sexual. In *A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover* Lawrence tried to explain the distinction:

If England is to be regenerated ... then it will be by the arising of a new blood-contact, a new touch, and a new marriage. It will be a phallic rather than a sexual regeneration. For the phallus is only the great old symbol of godly vitality in a man, and of immediate contact. It will also be a renewal of marriage: the true phallic marriage. And still further, it will be marriage set again in relationship to the rhythmic cosmos. ... For the truth is, we are perishing for lack of fulfilment of our greater needs, we are cut off from the great sources of our inward

nourishment and renewal, sources which flow eternally in the universe. Vitally, the human race is dying. It is like a great uprooted tree, with its roots in the air. We must plant ourselves again in the universe. ... But the two great ways of knowing, for man, are knowing in terms of apartness, which is mental, rational, scientific, and knowing in terms of togetherness, which is religious and poetic. The Christian religion lost, in Protestantism finally, the togetherness with the universe, the togetherness of the body, the sex, the emotions, the passions, with the earth and sun and stars. [Lady Chatterley's Lover 328-31]

Since these words were written science has changed a good deal and is now almost as concerned as pagan religion or poetry with systems and relationships.

Thus, when Lawrence speaks of sex he is also necessarily speaking of what we have come to call ecology, the relationship between people and the natural environment, which he called the cosmos or circumambient universe. Ecology was not, for Lawrence, a matter simply of the conservation of natural resources, but the deeper ecology of a different consciousness, a wholeness, an atonement, a being in touch. And of all the ways of being in touch which our civilization has almost killed off, perhaps the one which can still give us an inkling of that consciousness is sex.

Any form of regeneration must be preceded by a death - the death of the old false consciousness, an ego-death. The Elizabethans called orgasm the 'little death', because it seemed to them the only experience short of death where the soul escaped from the hard shell of self to meet and touch the other, the not-self. The phallus is in this sense a bridge not only between man and woman but between self and cosmos. This, then, is what Lawrence meant when he wrote, in 1927, 'the phallus is a great sacred image: it represents a deep, deep life which has been denied in us, and still is denied' [V 648], and in his last work *Apocalypse*: 'The phallos is the point at which man is broken off from his context, and at which he can be re-joined' [181]

* * *

The most lasting and central value of Lawrence's work lies in the degree to which it can help us in this matter of life and death. Even as he neared death he poured his life into everything he wrote. Into wonderful fictions such as *The Escaped Cock*, where the risen Christ repudiates his former mission and sacrifice in favour of 'the greater life of the body' in the

phenomenal world: 'From what, and to what, could this infinite whirl be saved?'

Lawrence's later fiction contains some of the most wonderful descriptions of the natural world in our literature, but the late poems are perhaps even more charged with his sacramental vision:

They say that reality exists only in the spirit
that corporeal existence is a kind of death
that pure being is bodiless
that the idea of the form precedes the form substantial.

But what nonsense it is!
as if any Mind could have imagined a lobster
dozing in the under-deeps, then reaching out a savage and iron claw!

Even the mind of God can only imagine
those things that have become themselves:
bodies and presences, here and now, creatures with a foothold in
creation
even if it is only a lobster on tip-toe.

Religion knows better than philosophy.
Religion knows that Jesus was never Jesus
till he was born from a womb, and ate soup and bread
and grew up, and became, in the wonder of creation, Jesus,
with a body and with needs, and a lovely spirit. ['Demiurge']

Lawrence continued to develop these ideas to the end of his life, and their fullest theoretical expression is in his last work *Apocalypse*. In an early draft his vision is bleak:

The triumph of Mind over the cosmos progresses in small spasms: aeroplanes, radio, motor-traffic. It is high time for the Millennium. And alas, everything has gone wrong. The destruction of the world seems not very far off, but the happiness of mankind has never been so remote. ...How they long for the destruction of the cosmos, secretly, these men of mind and spirit! How they work for its domination and final annihilation! But alas, they only succeed in spoiling the earth, spoiling life, and in the end destroying mankind, instead of the cosmos.

Man cannot destroy the cosmos: that is obvious. But it is obvious that the cosmos can destroy man. Man must inevitably destroy himself, in conflict with the cosmos. It is perhaps his fate. [199-200]

In the final version Lawrence managed to rekindle a spark of hope. Here are the last words of his last work:

What man most passionately wants is his living wholeness and his living unison, not his own isolate salvation of his 'soul'. Man wants his physical fulfilment first and foremost, since now, once and once only, he is in the flesh and potent. For man, the vast marvel is to be alive. For man, as for flower and beast and bird, the supreme triumph is to be most vividly, most perfectly alive. Whatever the unborn and the dead man know, they cannot know the beauty, the marvel, of being alive in the flesh. The dead may look after the afterwards. But the magnificent here and now of life in the flesh is ours, and ours alone, and ours only for a time. We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive and in the flesh, and part of the living, incarnate cosmos. I am part of the sun as my eye is part of me. That I am part of the earth my feet know perfectly, and my blood is part of the sea. My soul knows that I am part of the human race, my soul is an organic part of the great human soul, as my spirit is part of my nation. In my own very self, I am part of my family. There is nothing of me that is alone and absolute except my mind, and we shall find that the mind has no existence by itself, it is only the glitter of the sun on the surface of the waters. So that my individualism is really an illusion. I am part of the great whole, and I can never escape. But I *can* deny my connections, break them, and become a fragment. Then I am wretched. What we want is to destroy our false, inorganic connections, especially those related to money, and re-establish the living organic connections, with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with mankind and nation and family. Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly, slowly happen. [149]

Here Lawrence both repudiates the 'Immortality Ode' and anticipates Ted Hughes' poem 'The sole of a foot', where Adam resists the high temptation of the 'religion of the diamond body' and the Icarus flight, and accepts that for man the essential connection is that between the sole of his foot and the rock, to which he says:

I am no wing
To tread emptiness.
I was made

For you.

* * *

Wordsworth himself was unable to sustain his pantheism against his adulation of 'the mind of man'. In the very year of Wordsworth's death, 1850, Tennyson published *In Memoriam*, with its prophetic rejection of Darwinian nature:

Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die. [CXVIII]

Had Earl Brewster quoted these lines to Lawrence when he replied:

But the point is I don't *want* the tiger superseded. Oh, may each she-tigress have seventy-seven whelps, and may they all grow in strength and shine in stripes like day and night, and may each one eat at least seventy miserable featherless human birds, and lick red chops of gusto after it. Leave me my tigers, leave me spangled leopards, leave me bright cobra snakes, and I wish I had poison fangs and talons as good. I *believe* in wrath and gnashing of teeth and crunching of cowards' bones. [Letters III, 719]

Lawrence was pushed to such shrillness by his sense that both religion and rationalism were ranged against him. In the year before Lawrence was born T.H. Huxley had published *Evolution and Ethics*, where he claimed that the purpose of education was 'the application of [man's] intelligence to the adaptation of the conditions of life to his higher needs'. To this end he must be 'perpetually on guard against the cosmic forces, whose ends are not his ends, without and within himself'. He concluded: 'That which lies before the human race is a constant struggle to maintain and improve, in opposition to the State of Nature, the State of Art'. In Lawrence's adulthood that was still the received wisdom, and had become the basis of our entire urban

industrial society. Pantheism meant either something archaic or something to do with the Wordsworthian pieties. It had nothing to do with the realities of modern life. It was certainly not a serious option as a religion for the twentieth century. Lawrence took it upon himself to make it so. It was a Herculean task at a time when nature seemed to be disappearing under the 'century-deep deposits of layer upon layer of refuse' [*St. Mawr*], when the machine seemed to have triumphed utterly, when H.G. Wells and the majority for whom he spoke complacently assumed that history was the story of man's progress towards the triumph of mind over both nature and human nature. In the year before Lawrence wrote *St. Mawr* Wells had published *Men Like Gods* in which he argued that man should 'bring to trial' every other creature, from the rhinoceros to the tubercle bacillus, and either bring it into line with his requirements or get rid of it.

In the 1950s Kingsley Amis was expressing a preference for 'woods devoid of beasts' ['Against Romanticism'] and echoing, in poems like 'Here is Where', Socrates' view that 'it is not fields and trees which will teach me anything, it is men in the city' [Plato's *Phaedrus*]. Perhaps this was still the received wisdom as recently as 1969, when Patricia Merivale ended her book *Pan the Goat-God: His Myth in Modern Times* with the statement that 'later writers [than Lawrence] have taken no interest in the Pan-Christ dialectic, or the closely related theme of the death of Pan, or the Romantic transcendental Pan' [218] and that 'Pan is unlikely to become a literary fashion or a public myth again' [228]. Lawrence is assumed to be the last Romantic in this respect, the last writer to try to take Pan seriously. Yet within a year Ted Hughes, reviewing a book on ecology, was invoking Pan in exactly Lawrence's sense:

When something abandons Nature, or is abandoned by Nature, it has lost touch with its creator, and is called an evolutionary dead-end. According to this, our Civilization is an evolutionary error. Sure enough, when the modern mediumistic artist looks into his crystal, he sees always the same thing. He sees the last nightmare of mental disintegration and spiritual emptiness. ... But he may see something else. He may see a vision of the real Eden, 'excellent as at the first day', the draughty radiant Paradise of the animals, which is the actual earth, in the actual Universe: he may see Pan, ... the vital, somewhat terrible spirit of natural life, which is new in every second. Even when it is poisoned to the point of death, its efforts to be itself are new in every second. This is what will survive, if anything can. And

this is the soul-state of the new world. But while the mice in the field are listening to the Universe, and moving in the body of nature, where every living cell is sacred to every other, and all are interdependent, the housing speculator is peering at the field through a visor, and behind him stands the whole army of madmen's ideas. [Faas 186-7]

Though the madmen are still at the helm, Gaia is now a public myth, or a public reality again: 'because this is what we are seeing: something that was unthinkable only ten years ago, except as a poetic dream: the re-emergence of Nature as the Great Goddess of mankind, and the Mother of all life'. (The name 'Gaia' was suggested to Lovelock by William Golding.)

Developments in the decades since then have confirmed that Lawrence was at the beginning, not the end of an era; and what is now called deep ecology is but the latest name for Pan.

Appendix

At the Nottingham Lawrence conference in 2012 Howard Booth drew attention to three passages which, had I been aware of them at the time, would certainly have figured in this essay. They illustrate very clearly how central Lawrence's utopian Pantheism was in a romantic tradition he would have encountered in his youth. The first of them is remarkably close to Lawrence's 'A Dream of Life'.

The narcissus, anemone, and hyacinth still tell their tales of love and death. Hesper still gazes on the shepherd from the mountain head. The slender cypresses still vibrate, the pines murrnur. Pan sleeps in noontide heat, and goatherds and wayfaring men lie down to slumber by the roadside, under olive-boughs in which cicadas sing. The little villages high up are just as white, the mountains just as grey and shadowy when evening falls. Nothing is changed - except ourselves. I expect to find a statue of Priapus or pastoral Pan, hung with wreaths of flowers the meal cake, honey, and spilt wine upon his altar, and young boys and maidens dancing round. Surely, in some far off glade, by the side of lemon-grove or garden, near the village, there must be still a pagan remnant of glad Nature-worship.

John Addington Symonds, *Sketches in Italy and Greece*, London: Smith, Elder, 1874, p.6.

And when the Civilisation-period has passed away, the old Nature-religion - perhaps greatly grown - will come back. The immense stream of religious life which beginning far beyond the horizon of earliest history has been deflected into various metaphysical and other channels - of Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, and the like - during the historical period, will once more gather itself together to float on its bosom all the arks and sacred vessels of human progress. Man will once more feel his unity with his fellows, he will feel his unity with the animals, with the mountains and the streams, with the earth itself and the slow lapse of constellations, not as an abstract dogma of Science or Theology, but as a living and ever-present fact. Ages back this has been understood better than now. Our Christian ceremonial is saturated with sexual and astronomical symbols; and long before Christianity existed, the sexual and astronomical were the main forms of religion. That is to say, men instinctively felt and worshipped the great life coming to them through Sex, the great life coming to them from the deeps of Heaven. They defied both.

Edward Carpenter, *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure and Other Essays*, 1889;

London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1891, 45.

But our own modern Pan, our modern Great God Pan, the great Spirit which lurks in Everything and permeates everywhere, might help us, if we are capable of a great revulsion, to look far, far down the vistas of the ancient forest of history, and catch some glimpse of the primeval Pan. Before the gentleman with the brown face and horns and goat legs was visualised, before the hosts of nymphs and dryads, fauns and satyrs were discriminated among the flowers and fruit, a greater, darker, more mysterious presence. The Pan who was Everything, and a very great god, among the most ancient of trees. When trees were trees, and spoke aloud, without needing any dryad to voice them. When waters in themselves went running and intending, and no nymph could rise out of them, to leave them spiritless. Because after all, this faun and nymph business was the first step in the Spirit and Matter split. The nymphless spring of water was matter spiritless. The great Pan was not even a god. He was not even he. Only Pan, All.

D.H. Lawrence, 'Pan in America' [earlier version], *Mornings in Mexico and Other Essays*, ed. Virginia Crosswhite Hyde, 2009, 201.

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