

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Transformative Uses of Kabbalistic Concepts and Terms in The Rainbow*

#### **I. Lawrence and Kabbalah**

A version of the initiatory pattern that we detected in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* first appears in *The Rainbow*, which Lawrence began writing in 1913 and completed in 1915.<sup>1</sup> This should not be surprising because Lawrence was reading anthropological and Theosophical writings about initiation rites as early as 1908.<sup>2</sup> But the initiatory pattern in *The Rainbow* is different from that found in subsequent novels in at least two important ways. First, the sacralization–destruction pattern is repeated four times: once in the portrayal of the anonymous premodern Brangwen generations, and again in the depictions of each of the three named, and progressively more modern, generations: those of Tom and Lydia, Anna and Will, and Ursula and Anton. Second and more importantly, the pattern is reversed, with the vitalization phase appearing first and gradually giving way to a disintegrative phase. Thus, as readers proceed through the novel, they experience a fourfold rhythm of rising and falling energy and of integrated and splintered forms of awareness. Moreover, in the representations of the early generations, the vitalization stages are longer and stronger than the destruction phases, whereas in the depictions of the later generations, the reverse is true. Thus, as readers proceed, the sense of rising and integrating diminishes, and the sense of falling and splintering increases. The Fall is for Lawrence a fall from a boundless feeling of connection with the universe to a constricted state of self-consciousness and isolation; the world is no longer experienced with one's "whole being" but rather with the ego, the seat of reflexive thought. This sense of

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falling-disintegrating, which occurs both within and between generations, conveys the experience of the gradual emergence of the modern split subjectivity.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the reversal of the phases has the double aim of transforming the reader's subjectivity and offering a felt sense of the devolution of European consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

It might be objected that the reversal of phases disqualifies the form as that of an initiation rite, but this objection can be overcome if we realize that the practice of mortification often follows an initial mystical illumination. In her discussion of the lives of Christian mystics, Evelyn Underhill says that the first stage of spiritual development is usually characterized by a brief experience of illumination, which then motivates the would-be mystic to engage in the second stage, that of self-purification.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in *The Rainbow*, Lawrence first tries to evoke an initial sacred response in the reader and then attempts to remove obstacles to the further expansion of consciousness. It was probably his disillusioning experience of European relations in the years immediately before, during and after World War I that led him to begin subsequent novels with a strong destructive phase.<sup>6</sup> Evidently, he had concluded that the constrictive and defensive structures of the European mind needed to be shattered before positive transformation would be possible. In "The Crown," which he began writing in spring 1915, at the same time that he was revising *The Rainbow*, he refers to "our whole civilization" as "like a great rind full of corruption, of breaking down . . . a mere shell threatened with collapse upon itself" (*Reflections on the Death* 277). From *Women in Love* onward, Lawrence begins his novels by trying to dissolve his readers' own culturally constructed "shells."

In my analysis of the two phases, I focus on Lawrence's deployment of Kabbalistic concepts and terms. An understanding of the Jewish esoteric tradition not only clarifies Lawrence's initiatory intent but also illuminates passages deemed opaque. Kabbalistic literature, which Lawrence may have encountered as early as 1908 in the writings of the Theosophists, offers esoteric interpretations of the Bible as well as techniques for mystical and magical practice. Lawrence's deployment of Biblical language often is guided by a Kabbalistic perspective. An explication of Kabbalistic concepts and terms expands the range of symbolic meanings of the Biblical references. I show that each vitalization phase in *The Rainbow* is replete with Kabbalistic mystical concepts and resonances, while each destruction phase is dominated by magical terms.<sup>7</sup> The mysticism-magic distinction is important because Lawrence associated mysticism with an unselfconscious, receptive, unitive experience while he identified magic with selfish, manipulative, knowledge-driven

action. Lawrence found Jewish mysticism an attractive source of symbols because it draws on Biblical language familiar to his readers, uses this language in startlingly strange ways, is more body-centered than traditional Christian discourse, and offers a full set of eroticized symbols anchored in a pantheistic or panentheistic conception of the world.<sup>8</sup>

The main source of Lawrence's understanding of Kabbalah are the Theosophists Helen Blavatsky and Annie Besant.<sup>9</sup> The Theosophists credit the Kabbalah as possessing many of the tenets and symbols of the allegedly universal "secret doctrine" or "ancient wisdom." Lawrence may have also had some exposure to Kabbalistic ideas from members of the Golden Dawn Society in London, including A. E. Waite and founder S. L. MacGregor Mathers (a Rosicrucian); both men translated several Kabbalistic works.<sup>10</sup> Christian and Hermetic Kabbalists often read Christian meanings into their Jewish mystical sources, and sometimes they present flawed accounts of Kabbalistic texts, ideas, and symbols. A. E. Waite, for example, incorrectly asserts that Kabbalah is not pantheistic: while granting that there is "no separation between God, Man and Nature" and that "the mystic communication is permanent," he nonetheless insists that "the pantheistic doctrine of identity is quite foreign to the real position of Kabbalism" (185).

There are a variety of Kabbalistic texts, each with different cosmologies and symbologies, but the most influential text is the *Zohar*, the Book of Radiance, composed in thirteenth-century Spain by Moses de Leon, but traditionally thought to be authored by its second-century protagonist, the acclaimed teacher and scholar Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. Its supposedly ancient authorship, together with its vivid metaphors and striking ideas, gave it tremendous religious authority. Like the Kabbalists themselves, the leaders of the Theosophical Society and of the Golden Dawn Society also considered the *Zohar* the preeminent Kabbalistic text, and it is clear that its ideas, images and symbols had a profound effect on Lawrence. I briefly summarize the principal Kabbalistic concepts, mainly Zoharic, that have a direct bearing on my analysis of *The Rainbow*.

The *Zohar's* cosmology inclines toward pantheism: the creation of the universe is conceived as the self-manifestation—the energetic outpouring—of the Godhead. This conception unifies the invisible and visible realms by conceiving the latter as a manifestation of the former; everything is an emanation of the Infinite One (Ein Sof). The transcendent Infinite One is eternal, still, silent, all encompassing, unknowable; it precedes creation. The immanent God is a Creator God that emerges or emanates out of the transcendent, hidden Godhead. The Creator's creative powers are figured as a set of polarized and mediating forces known as the "sephiroth."

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In "The Crown," Lawrence also distinguishes between the transcendent "uncreated" God and the immanent "created" God and asserts that any creature that achieves a "pure relationship, or a consummation out of twoness into oneness" becomes "God created" (*Reflections on the Death* 303). In the *Zohar*, the ten sephirot are understood as divine emanations, forces, or attributes and are schematically arranged in seven levels with one or two forces on each level. These seven levels are organized into three vertical columns as indicated in the diagram below:

Level 1		Crown	
Level 2	Understanding		Wisdom
Level 3	Strength		Lovingkindness
Level 4		Beauty	
Level 5	Splendor		Victory
Level 6		Foundation	
Level 7		Kingdom/Presence	

On the highest level (Level 1) is the Crown (Keter); below the Crown are Wisdom (Chochmah) and Understanding (Binah); below these are Lovingkindness (Chesed) and Strength (Gevurah); below and between these is Beauty (Tipheret); below that are Victory (Netzach) and Splendor (Hod); below and between these is Foundation (Yesod); and below that is Kingdom (Malkhut), also called Presence (Shekhinah).<sup>11</sup> The forces on the right (Wisdom, Lovingkindness, Victory) are gendered masculine and receive their general tone from Lovingkindness; the forces on the left (Understanding, Strength, Splendor) are feminine and get their tone from Strength. The forces on the left and right have a yin-yang polarized relation to one another. The forces in the middle (Beauty, Foundation, Kingdom) equilibrate (mediate, balance) the polarized forces above them; the one exception is the Crown, which equilibrates the forces below it. Two of the equilibrating forces are also gendered: Beauty is masculine; Presence is feminine. When an imbalance of masculine and feminine forces occurs, particularly an overabundance of feminine Strength, an evil state (Sitra Achara, the Other Side) is activated. Similarly, in Lawrence's system, as expressed in "The Crown," the "supreme sin" is the destruction of the "perfect union in opposition" through the triumph of one divine force over its contrary force (*Reflections on the Death* 261).

The metaphysics of Lawrence's essay "The Crown" can be understood as a truncated version of the Zoharic scheme. In that early philosophical

statement, the Crown is called the “keystone” under which the Lion of power and the Unicorn of love exist in a “stable equilibrium by the opposition of the other” (253). Like the *Zohar*, Lawrence emphasizes the centrality to human life of the polarized forces of power and love (Strength and Lovingkindness). He calls the Crown “the Absolute” that “consummates” and is “beyond” the two “eternities” of love and power; it is the highest manifestation of the immanent “created” God (259). In the *Zohar*, the Crown is also the highest (and first) manifestation of the immanent God. Lawrence’s metaphysics does not have the many different sephirotic levels, but maintains the masculine and feminine polarities, the equilibrating force, and many of the symbolic associations. In later discursive works like *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* (1921) and *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922), he mentions seven levels of forces but focuses on two: “Still remain to be revealed [are] the other great centres of the unconscious. We know four: two pairs. In all there are seven planes. That is, there are six dual centres of spontaneous polarity, and then the final one” (49). He also refers to the seven levels in *Apocalypse* (1931): “man has seven levels of awareness, deeper and higher: or seven spheres of consciousness” (101). Lawrence must have been particularly intrigued by the *Zohar*’s inversion of the standard mythic identification of strength with masculinity, and lovingkindness with femininity. In the *Zohar*, power (Strength) is feminine, and love (Lovingkindness) is masculine. This inversion of typical mythic associations parallels Lawrence’s own experience of his parents: the feminine sensuality of his father, and masculine spirituality of his mother.<sup>12</sup>

It should be noted that these seven levels also parallel the seven chakras described in Hindu and Buddhist systems.<sup>13</sup> Like the Theosophists, Lawrence was interested in identifying correspondences between various ancient spiritual systems. I would argue that the seven levels of consciousness discussed in *Apocalypse* simultaneously refer to the seven levels described by both Kabbalists and Yogis, even though some differences do exist between the two systems.

In Kabbalah, the arrangement of sephiroth is often figured as an upside down Tree of Life.<sup>14</sup> Given Lawrence’s love of trees and of organic metaphors, he would have found this arboreal image compelling. The roots correspond to the Crown, which is embedded in the transcendent Infinite One (Ein Sof) that is above, beyond and behind. The trunk is composed of the middle sephirotic forces, and the branches consist of the forces on the left and on the right. The sephirotic structure is also figured as the body of the Primal Man (Adam Kadmon): Crown, Wisdom, and Understanding form the head region; Lovingkindness and Strength the arms; Beauty the heart and torso; Victory and Splendor the legs; Foundation the phallus.

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The ennobling of the human body—including the sex organs—as an image of divinity would have also been very compelling to Lawrence.

According to the *Zohar*, Primal Adam is the androgynous Adam that exists before Eve is created as a separate being in Genesis 2: 21–2. Blavatsky describes Adam Kadmon as “Father and Mother both”; he is “the archetypal man . . . who in his individuality or unity is yet dual, or bisexual . . . for he is the prototype of all humanity.”<sup>15</sup> For Lawrence, Primal Man represents a person whose inner energies are equilibrated and who is in balanced, mutual relationships with others.

Lawrence would have been deeply impressed by the *Zohar's* sexualization of divinity. Indeed, the *Zohar* took the gendering of the sephiroth to its necessary conclusion: the mystic's highest aim is to help reunite the masculine and feminine aspects of the divinity, to effect a hierosgamos, a fully erotic divine marriage. This reunion was conceived in explicitly sexual terms. Many Kabbalists believe that when a married man and woman make love with holy intent the divine Presence (Shekhinah) resides between them.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, according to the principle “as below, so above,” the human act of coitus effects a temporary sexual reunion between feminine Presence and her masculine counterpart, Beauty, and sometimes engenders a human soul. It is the immanent God, not the couple, that creates their offspring's soul. Similarly, in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, Lawrence emphasizes that while the fertilized egg contains material from the mother and father, it nevertheless contains its “own Holy Ghost,” which is “unique . . . incalculable and intangible”; the “new individual” that is formed is “not a permutation and combination of old elements” but “is something underived and utterly unprecedented, a unique, a new soul” (71).

Union with the Presence (Shekhinah) is a main focus of Kabbalistic prayer, meditation and ritual action. At the bottom of the divine Tree of Life, Shekhinah mediates between divinity and humanity. Union with Shekhinah is often ecstatic and represents the first rung of mystical ascension. The achievement of union is sometimes figured as the entry into *Pardes*, the paradisaical Garden of numinous knowledge. Apple Orchard is one of Shekhinah's names. Of all the divine forces, she is most connected to the flesh and blood of the world. Indeed, she is the living energy and archetype of the cosmos. Shekhinah is a kind of Jewish mother goddess and is identified with the Sabbath Queen and with the seventh day of creation (in Genesis).<sup>17</sup> Human evil, symbolized by the disobedience of Adam and Eve, causes her to be separated from her rightful place in the divine unity.<sup>18</sup> She is the divine manifestation who accompanies Adam and Eve in their exile from Eden and who will continue to

accompany Israel until the Messiah brings redemption. As the Presence who protects and guides, Shekhinah is identified with the pillars of cloud and fire that lead the Israelites in the desert.<sup>19</sup> She also dwells in the tabernacle in the wilderness and then in the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem, where she sits upon the throne supported by the two Cherubim facing one another.<sup>20</sup> In "The Crown," Lawrence refers to "the lofty Cherubim that palpitate about the Presence, the Source" (*Reflections on the Death* 271). As a mediating, equilibrating, protecting, guiding, and inspiring figure, Shechinah is figured as a rainbow.

In "The Crown," Lawrence conflates the Holy Ghost with both Shekhinah (Presence) and the Crown: "the flame of the Holy Ghost: the actual Presence of accomplished oneness, accomplished out of twoness"; "the rainbow, the iridescence which is darkness at once and light, the two-in-one; the crown that binds them both"; "the Crown that belongs only to the consummation" (*Reflections on the Death* 303, 261, 269). Lawrence's conflation of Presence and Crown collapses the seven levels of sephirot into two: the level of the conflicting forces (Power versus Love) and the level of the equilibrating force (Crown/Presence/Holy Ghost).<sup>21</sup> Although the Zohar does not conflate Crown and Presence, it understands Presence to be the full realization of the Crown. Whereas the Crown is associated with the divine "I will be what I will be," the Presence is associated with the divine "I" or "I am."<sup>22</sup> In effect, the Presence is the most palpable manifestation of the Crown.

## II. Mystical Language in the Vitalization Phase

In the opening pages of *The Rainbow*, the sacred encounters of the anonymous, premodern Brangwens are represented in language that sometimes echoes the early passages of Genesis or represents a further sensualization of those passages.<sup>23</sup> The Biblical references, mostly to the divine act of creation and to the Garden of Eden, involve mythic events that Lawrence thought symbolize the divine potencies that exist within and beyond the world. Like the Kabbalists, Lawrence often conceived Biblical events as figurations of psycho-spiritual events. For him, as for the Kabbalists, the Garden of Eden symbolizes a sustained state of mystical union with the immanent God. In the novel's first few pages, references to the Brangwens' knowing "the intercourse between heaven and earth," having "ample" resources, living lives "full and surcharged," and having "senses full fed" indicate that the unnamed generations possess a relatively integrated mode of consciousness grounded in

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sensation and feeling (9–10). Lawrence believed that Adam and Eve experienced this mode of consciousness before they fell into conflicted, self-conscious, and shame-ridden sexuality, and into a sense of separation both from the living environment around them and from the passionate forces within.<sup>24</sup> Because the prelapsarian Adam and Eve had their basic bodily needs met, and lived in harmony with the numinous natural surroundings, they experienced a sense of fullness and amplex. In Genesis 2:9, the newly created Adam experiences the trees as sensually fulfilling: they are “pleasant to the sight, and good for food.” Kabbalists associate Shekhinah with “the fullness” of the earth.<sup>25</sup> Lawrence interprets the sense of plenitude and pleasure in prelapsarian Eden as meaning that fulfillment is a natural state of being. Fulfillment is natural because “there is always excess, a brimming over” in nature and because every human being “is a well-head built over a strong, perennial spring” (*Study of Thomas Hardy* 31–2). The excess in nature is the overflowing divine energy. The premodern Brangwens bestir themselves in action more than in talk and reflection, and their mode of knowing is simultaneously suffused and fused by abundant feeling and sensation. Whelan has identified their mode of consciousness as medieval because the church still has an authentically mystical value for them and because the body is glorified.<sup>26</sup> To Lawrence, the medieval consciousness represents a full-bodied awareness of the cosmos. He thought that the rapid growth of visual and verbal culture that began in the Renaissance eventually produced a devaluation of the body and the cosmos.<sup>27</sup> In a December 20, 1914 letter, he tells Gordon Campbell that he has had glimpses of the medieval vision: “It is necessary to grasp the Whole. At last I have got it, grasping something of what the mediaeval church tried to express.”<sup>28</sup>

Lawrence uses several techniques to evoke in the reader a more unified mode of consciousness approximating that of the medieval Brangwens. The most evident device is the striking use of pluralized protagonists. For the first four and a half paragraphs, the protagonist is “the Brangwens”; in the middle of the fifth paragraph it becomes “the men”; and by the sixth paragraph it is “the women” (9–10). The movement from people to men to women is crafted to slowly bring the reader’s awareness to a progressively more differentiated, articulate and self-conscious state of mind, and to produce a sense of rising and falling. In the first few paragraphs, the collective, ungendered treatment of the multiple Brangwen generations not only stresses the relative impersonality and uniformity of their thought and action over time, but also attempts to activate the instinctual, preverbal, generically human dimensions of the reader’s mind. The narrator strives to activate these dimensions by



occluding sexual distinction and focusing on the collective actions and attitudes of the Brangwen “people” (9). The Brangwens in effect represent a kind of archetypal humanity, like the androgynous Primal Adam, before Eve is split off from his side. Most of the descriptions in the first half dozen paragraphs seem to apply to both Brangwen men and women. None of their characteristics, activities and attitudes—expectancy, freshness, slow speech, sense of ampleness, thrift, farmwork—are explicitly or even tacitly gendered. Moreover, their distinguishing features are represented with very broad strokes: “There was a look in the eyes of the Brangwens as if they were expecting something unknown”; “They were fresh, blond, slow-speaking people”; “the Brangwens came and went without fear of necessity”; “they had forgotten what it was like to be in straitened circumstances”; “Neither were they thrifless”; “They felt the rush of the sap” (9). The ungendered, plural description is interrupted only once in the opening paragraphs: in the first paragraph, masculine pronouns (“he,” “him”) appear, but they are easily read as gender neutral since they qualify “one”: “Whenever one of the Brangwens in the fields lifted his head from his work, he saw the church-tower at Ilkeston in the empty sky. So that as he turned again to the horizontal land, he was aware of something standing above him and beyond him in the distance” (9). Thus, for four and a half paragraphs, the reader is steeped in the archetypal perspective of a pluralized protagonist.

But in the middle of the fifth paragraph, the narrator suddenly introduces sexual difference into the reader’s mind when the pluralized protagonist becomes “men”:

The young corn waved and was silken, and the lustre slid along the limbs of the men who saw it. They took the udder of the cows, the cows yielded milk and pulse against the hands of the men, the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows beat into the pulse of the hands of the men. (10)

The shift in subject from “the Brangwens” to “the men” causes the reader to wonder whether the entire fifth paragraph describing the farm activities, and perhaps all the preceding paragraphs, are meant to refer only to the Brangwen men. The delay in introducing sexual difference is not meant to suggest that awareness of sexual difference is absent in an integrated consciousness but that such awareness is not self-reflexive. Significantly, the reader’s awareness of sexual difference emerges only in retrospect: actions and attitudes that had seemed gender neutral now appear to be masculine. In this way, Lawrence shows how reflection

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produces a self-conscious sense of difference. The conflation of the gender neutral and the masculine recalls Primal Adam, who is simultaneously androgynous and male.<sup>29</sup>

It is only in the sixth paragraph that the narrator clearly distinguishes the men and the women:

Then the men sat by the fire in the house where the women moved about with surety, and the limbs and the body of the men were impregnated with the day, cattle and earth and vegetation and the sky, the men sat by the fire and their brains were inert, as their blood flowed heavy with the accumulation from the living day. (10)

This paragraph not only differentiates the sexes but also suggests that the outdoor forms of intercourse described in the previous paragraph mainly, but not exclusively, involve the men. In subsequent Brangwen generations, outdoor interaction will diminish as domestic activities increase, a sign of the growing alienation from the natural environment brought about by modern urbanization, commerce and science. The growth of modern civilization is thus associated with the domestication—the housing and taming—of humankind.

The sense of sexual difference is both intensified and blurred in the next paragraph when the reader is explicitly informed of both female difference and similarity:

The women were different. On them too was the drowse of the blood-intimacy, calves sucking and hens running together in droves, and young geese palpitating in the hand while the food was pushed down their throttle. But the women looked out from the heated, blind intercourse of farm-life, to the spoken world beyond. (10)

The difference is one of degree of immersion in the immediate milieu: the men are totally immersed in “exchange and interchange” with “earth and sky and beast and green plants” while the women are only partially absorbed. The women are conscious of and “wanted another form of life” (11). They have a split subjectivity produced by their desire for “the world beyond . . . the far-off world of cities and governments” in which “knowledge” and “the other, magic language” determine who is “the master” (11–12). Lawrence in effect feminizes the desire for civilization and attributes this desire to female disharmony and dissatisfaction with the numinous natural environment, that is, the immanent God. He also implicitly links house and city, domestication and civilization, by

presenting them as unsatisfying “indoor” alternatives to open air living. In effect, a city is like a big house that insulates its inhabitants from the surrounding wilderness.

Lawrence comes close to adopting the Biblical position of blaming women for human conflict. Like Eve, the Brangwen women have a double desire to eat of both the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. In *The Symbolic Meaning*, Lawrence asserts that the birth of Eve represents the generation of an intellectual consciousness that is capable of self-reflection and hence of split subjectivity:

The Eve myth symbolizes the birth of the upper mind, the upper consciousness which, the moment it becomes self-conscious, rebels against the physical being, and is sensible of shame because of its own helpless connection with the passional body. The serpent is the symbol of division in the psyche . . . the divider, which sets spiritual being against sensual being, man against woman, sex against sex, the introducer of the hostile duality into the human psyche. (*Studies in Classic American Literature* 244)

Lawrence's Eve has fallen out of the harmonious relationship she once had with the divine passion in her body and in nature, while Genesis's Eve uses her body (by eating the apple) to rebel against God.

Once sexual difference is fully established, there is a shift from pluralized to singular protagonists. For Lawrence, the awareness of the distinction between male and female is simultaneously a recognition of the distinction between the one and the many, self and other, inner and outer. The next two paragraphs describe the outlook (“looked out”) of “the woman”—her distant, visual perspective on “the activity of the world at large” and on men engaged in “fighting outwards to knowledge” (11). The female focus on the outer as utterly distinct from the inner is the first main rupture in consciousness. Lawrence believes that in an integrated mode of knowing, the outer is experienced as the expression, utterance or manifestation of the inner, just as the immanent divinity is an emanation of the transcendental Godhead. Eventually the Brangwen woman compares the vicar to “her own menfolk” and concludes that his “soul was master” of theirs because he possesses greater “knowledge” (12). During the reading of this opening passage, the reader's mind too has been introduced to more and finer distinctions, and hence to greater degrees of analytic knowledge. Such knowledge involves the creation of new categories, new names; hence, rather appropriately, a Brangwen man is finally named at the end of the

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paragraph: "What power had the vicar over Tom Brangwen—none. Yet strip them and set them on a desert island, and the vicar was the master . . . it was a question of knowledge" (12). The overall movement of the opening passage from Brangwen "people" to "men" and "women" to "a woman" and "Tom Brangwen" parallels the movement in Genesis from androgynous Primal Adam to prelapsarian Adam and Eve to postlapsarian Adam and Eve.

The emphasis on "generations" in the novel's opening sentence highlights the Brangwens' generative powers, much as "the generations of Adam" are enumerated in Genesis 5. It is significant that the most evocative paragraph in the opening section—the fifth—is the one that describes "the heated, blind intercourse of farm-life" (9–10). The images involve contact, interpenetration and exchange between the Brangwens and their nonhuman but living environment. The description of the exchanges precedes the differentiation into men and women and so applies to all the Brangwens. The order of the images is significant: the first set of images depicts the Brangwens' passive experience of the powerful activities of the plant and mineral worlds, while the second set describes their active engagement with and mastery over the animal world. This order suggests to readers that any attempt to master nature should be predicated on connection with and appreciation of its power, beauty, and vital value.

The sentences describing the felt experience of plants and minerals are punctuated so as to suggest their to and fro, oscillating movements:

They felt the rush of the sap in spring, they knew the wave which cannot halt, but every year throws forward the seed to begetting, and, falling back, leaves the young-born on the earth. They knew the intercourse between heaven and earth, sunshine drawn into the breast and bowels, the rain sucked up in the daytime, nakedness that comes under the wind in autumn, showing the birds' nests no longer worth hiding. (9–10)

In the first clause of the first sentence the speed ("rush") of the sap is stressed, while the rest of the sentence mimes the motion of the wave. The wave's unhalting movement described in the second clause is enacted in the third clause, which also specifies its forward direction. The sense of the wave hitting its crest and hanging suspended is suggested by the "and" set off in commas while the wave's quick fall is evoked by the brevity of "falling back." The sentence also enacts in miniature the sense of rising and falling that the novel as a whole is trying to convey. The

relation between the first clause (describing the sap) and the second (describing the wave) is deliberately ambiguous: the wave could be a metaphor for the sap's movements, for the specific life energy producing the sap's movement, or for a more general wave of energy that engenders plant life. This blurring of the specific and the general produces a sense of the embeddedness of the particular plant in its living environment; it is also part of the narrator's overall strategy in this section of gradually differentiating the reader's consciousness, of introducing distinctions but not divisions.<sup>30</sup> In the second sentence the somatic forms and functions of the minerals are emphasized; the language relies on theriomorphism and anthropomorphism, but not on personification: it draws its figures from the animal or human body ("breast," "bowels," "sucked," "nakedness"), but not from the human personality.

When the Brangwens' active engagement with animals is depicted, their gentle mastery is stressed. It is not a mastery that overwhelms and destroys; the word "will" does not even appear until the end of the passage:

They took the udder of the cows, the cows yielded milk and pulse against the hands of the men, the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows beat into the pulse of the hands of the men. They mounted their horses, and held life between the grip of their knees, they harnessed their horses at the wagon, and, with hand on the bridles, drew the heaving of the horses after their will. (10)

Though the men are clearly controlling the animals, the animals' rhythms ("pulse," "heaving") are powerfully present and are conveyed to the men. The transmission of rhythms is represented by a repetition of words and metre: "the pulse of the blood of the teats of the cows . . . the pulse of the hands of the men." As in the passage describing the plants and minerals, there is a conflation of the specific and the general, but this time the conflation is unambiguous: the horses are explicitly figured as "life."

What distinguishes the forms of intercourse described in this opening section from those depicted in the subsequent accounts of the named generations is not only the pluralized protagonist but also the nearly exclusive focus on exchanges with the nonhuman environment. Human-human interchanges involving the medieval Brangwens are implied but only briefly described. They are a "slow-speaking" people who probably rarely engage in conversation. And while the opening pages suggest that they attend church and have business dealings, these activities are vaguely and incidentally treated. The focus of their energies seems to be on the

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natural world. It is also significant that their sex lives are elided. This elision becomes more evident in retrospect—after the sex lives of the named generations are described in detail. The erotic tone of the opening paragraphs suggests that libidinal energy also suffuses their domestic relations: the reader senses that silence and sensuality are palpable in the Brangwen homes. More generally, the narratorial omission of their sex lives indicates that these premodern generations hark back to a time when erotic energy was not as self-consciously reserved for, or exclusively channeled into, sexual activity. The anonymity of the premodern generations underlines the intimation that words—naming—played a less significant role in shaping their erotic activities. It was a time before sexual discourses created sex and sexuality as distinctive forms of bodily contact and pleasure.<sup>31</sup>

The descriptions of the sexual encounters of the first named generation—that of Tom and Lydia—are rife with Kabbalistic resonances. These resonances more often allude to Kabbalistic concepts of divinity than to actual Kabbalistic terms. Nearly all of the allusions are associated with the unknowable, transcendent Godhead existing behind and beyond the Primal Adam and with the immanent divine forces (sephirot) constituting Primal Adam's body. For Lawrence, the focal divine force is Shekhinah, the feminine Presence produced by sexual union, but we have seen that he conflates Presence, Crown, and Holy Ghost. At times, he also conflates Kabbalistic imagery of holy heterosexual union with New Testament language depicting the sacramental events in the life of Jesus; this conflation suggests that he sought to sacralize the marital act of coitus and to eroticize Jesus's mystical transformations.<sup>32</sup> Christian interpreters of Kabbalah often try to map Christian theological ideas like the Trinity onto the Jewish idea of the divine powers (sephirot). They note that nine of the powers (all but Presence) can be grouped into a trinity of triads, each triad consisting of a pair of polarized forces and a single equilibrating force.<sup>33</sup> Blavatsky asserts that Adam Kadmon is "a trinity; for he is body, soul, and spirit"; moreover, "the kabalistic trinity is one of the models of the Christian one."<sup>34</sup> Believing in the ancient authorship of the *Zohar*, she traces St. John's apocalyptic vision of Christ in Revelation 1 to the *Zohar's* description of Adam Kadmon.<sup>35</sup>

In the novel, the emphasis is on sacralizing Tom and Lydia's acts of intercourse. On their wedding night, Tom is equated with Jesus, while God the Father is linked to the "unknown"—the impersonal "it" that exists "behind" Lydia:

The time of his trial and his admittance, his Gethsemane and his Triumphal Entry in one, had come now.

Behind her, there was so much unknown to him. When he approached her, he came to such a terrible painful unknown. How could he embrace it and fathom it? . . . What was it then that she was, to which he must also deliver himself up, and which at the same time he must embrace, contain? (56)

The references to Gethsemane and Triumphal entry stress the death–rebirth rhythm essential for transformation. In “The Crown,” Lawrence also transvalues Christian symbols to express his non-Christian religious ideas. He feminizes God the Father in order to maintain a heterosexual hieros gamos, associating Yahweh with origin–body–earth–flesh–feeling–female and hence with a mother goddess; God the Son is a male god associated with goal–mind–heaven–spirit–thought–male; and the Holy Ghost is an androgynous god linked to soul–formation that comes through the establishment of relationship, especially through sexual consummation. The movement from bodily consciousness to intellectual consciousness, at both the individual and collective levels, is thus associated with the shift from goddess-centered to god-centered religion. In the passage just cited, the couple’s encounter expresses the paradox of Tom simultaneously embracing–containing Lydia and delivering himself up to her. This self-deliverance is simultaneously to her, to that which is behind her, and to the relationship, in that ascending order. The relationship, which is the door to the divinity within, between and beyond them, and which makes life holy, is valued more than unsanctified life and things. Tom wants “to be her husband . . . more than he wanted life, or anything” (56). In “Morality and the Novel,” Lawrence says that sacred encounters are experienced as “beyond life or death” because divinity encompasses both life and death (*Study of Thomas Hardy* 171).

The brief and restrained description of the first act of coitus, though intended to sacralize marital sex, cannot be expected to touch the reader’s deep feelings. As in *Lady Chatterley*, the revitalization effort is gradual. The abstract and metaphoric depiction of Tom and Lydia’s coupling is given in two sentences and stresses Tom’s emotional experience; the rest of the paragraph (and the subsequent paragraph) treats the emotional consequences for both Tom and Lydia:

And he let himself go from past and future, was reduced to the moment with her. In which he took her and was with her and there was nothing beyond, they were together in an elemental embrace beyond their superficial foreignness. But in the morning he was uneasy again. She was still foreign and unknown to him. Only,

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within the fear was pride, belief in himself as mate for her. And she, everything forgotten in her new hour of coming to life, radiated vigour and joy, so that he quivered to touch her. (57)

The phrase “reduced to the moment” suggests the language of mystic contemplation. Mystics use contemplative practices to reduce—break down, purify—mundane consciousness to numinous awareness, which is focused on the divine. Evelyn Underhill identifies three phases of mystical contemplation: “recollection,” in which the powers of the self are gathered and focused on a divine emblem; “quiet,” in which distractions are removed and attention is stilled; and “contemplation” proper, in which communication is achieved with God in vision, voice, feeling or intuition.<sup>36</sup> Both recollection and quiet bring about “reduction to the moment.” In this passage, sexual encounter is a kind of divine meditation in which the present moment is realized by letting go of “past and future,” but this realization does not involve a disincarnated transcendental consciousness; rather, the sacred experience is fully embodied, an “elemental embrace,” an immanent encounter. The authenticity of the exchange is confirmed for the reader by its fruits: Tom feels pride and believes in himself as a husband; Lydia exudes vigor and joy. The sacred energy that creates strength and elation is literally attractive, making him want to touch her.

The transformation of Tom’s consciousness produces a doubly new relationship: to himself and to the world. This new relationship is expressed in terms similar to those used to depict the medieval Brangwens’ exchanges with their environment:

It made a great difference to him, the marriage. Things became so remote and of so little significance, as he knew the powerful source of his life, his eyes opened on a new universe, and he wondered in thinking of his triviality before. A new, calm relationship showed to him in the things he saw, in the cattle he used, the young wheat as it eddied in a wind. (57)

Relationships—his marriage as well as his connection to things seen and used—take on the subject position in the first and third sentences, suggesting these new exchanges have an independent, dynamic reality. The impersonal “It” referring to the marriage recalls the “it” signifying the “unknown” in the frame scene.

The second sex scene occurs after a period of separation and estrangement. This oscillation of togetherness and apartness is the central



relational rhythm in this and subsequent novels. When the connection is reestablished, Tom experiences an influx of life energy that makes him feel superhuman. The superhuman status of the initiate will later be identified by the phrase “Son of God.” The Theosophists explain the phrase as indicating an initiate into the divine mysteries; Annie Besant explicitly links the phrase to “The Kingdom,” which is another name for Shekhinah.<sup>37</sup> In this passage, Tom’s channeling of both creative and destructive divine energies is stressed: “The tension, the bond, burst, and the passionate flood broke forward into a tremendous, magnificent rush, so that he felt he could snap off the trees as he passed, and create the world afresh” (60). During the period just before their sexual encounter, Tom experiences a similar surge—of blood, power, and life: “his limbs seemed strong and splendid to him, his hands seemed like passionate servants to him, goodly, he felt a stupendous power in himself, of life, and of urgent, strong blood” (60). In this sentence, the narrator registers the divine influx on three levels of being: on the animal level as an upsurge in blood; on the level of all life forms as an increase in life energy; and on the cosmic level as increased power. The reference to the three levels of being implies that the reader’s own revitalization involves a transformed relationship to his or her own animal nature, to life in general, and to the cosmos at large. Tom’s hands are “like passionate servants” of his impassioned body just as in *Lady Chatterley* the hands are agents of Mellors’s and Connie’s bodies. In Kabbalah, the right and left arms of Primal Adam are associated with Lovingkindness and Strength, respectively. Infused with love, Tom’s right hand can create the world afresh; infused with strength, his left hand can destroy the world.

Because Tom and Lydia’s relationship remains relatively balanced, they maintain access to the divine potencies within and between them. It is the dynamic stability of their relationship that allows its further growth. In several subsequent exchanges, the narrator uses vivid metaphors of movement, exploration and discovery to indicate the revelatory nature of authentic relationship. One exchange is represented in a manner that literalizes the Kabbalistic notion of God as the Ground of knowledge and being—a ground upon which lovers walk.<sup>38</sup> As in the second sex scene, the language of discovery and knowledge is deployed:

Their feet trod strange ground of knowledge, their footsteps were lit-up with discovery. Wherever they walked, it was well, the world re-echoed round them in discovery. They went gladly and forgetful. Everything was lost, and everything was found. The new world was discovered, it remained only to be explored. (90)

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In Kabbalah, the right leg of Primal Adam symbolizes the divine energy of Victory, and the left the energy of Splendor. Like all the other sephiroth, Splendor and Victory are gateways to divine encounter and consciousness. In effect, the couple celebrate the victorious discovery of the splendor created by their relationship. The theme of movement, exploration and discovery is further extended by the use of powerful door and light metaphors. When Tom and Lydia are transfigured by passion, they open the doors within and between them, doors opening onto a numinous, luminous space far more expansive than a pasture:<sup>39</sup>

They had passed through the doorway into the further space, where movement was so big, that it contained bonds and constraints and labours, and still was complete liberty. She was the doorway to him, he to her. At last they had thrown open the doors, each to the other, and had stood in the doorways facing each other, whilst the light flooded out from behind on to each of their faces, it was the transfiguration, the glorification, the admission. (90–1)

They face each other like the Cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies; in between the Cherubim, the divine Presence, Shekhinah, resides.<sup>40</sup> In the Gospel of John (10:9), Jesus is also figured as a door: “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” As in the earlier scene, Kabbalistic resonances are conflated with Christological language—transfiguration, glorification, admission. The conflation of several events in Christ’s life evokes the sense that this coital moment is in and beyond time; it encompasses an entire stage of sacred passage that leads to “entry into another circle of existence” (90). Thus, the new, deeper carnal mode of knowing engenders a change both in time-consciousness and in mode of being.

Through the couple’s joint transformation, divinity is made manifest in the world: “Now He was declared to Brangwen and to Lydia Brangwen, as they stood together. When at last they had joined hands, the house was finished, and the Lord took up his abode. And they were glad” (91). Their joined hands symbolize not only their connection to each other but also their joint commitment to be “servants of God.” Their home becomes a Temple of God, another figure for Primal Adam.<sup>41</sup> Alternatively, the house can be considered a symbol of “the Kingdom,” another name for Shekhinah. In Kabbalah, the sacred sexual union of husband and wife in the house is said to initiate a sexual union between Shekhinah and Tipheret (Beauty) in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem: as below, so above. In this passage, the house is an expanded inner space that

includes both Tom and Lydia. The scene is completed by the deployment of another Kabbalistic metaphor: Tom and Lydia are figured as divine manifestations, “the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud,” that offer Anna, implicitly figured as the people of Israel, both “safety” and freedom. The pillars are Shekhinah symbols, though in this case they are conflated with the right and left Temple pillars, between which Shekhinah resides. Anna can play in “confidence,” knowing that her father offers her “assurance on her right hand” while her mother provides “assurance on her left”; the right and left sides of Primal Adam are figured as masculine and feminine, respectively (91). As divine pillars and doors, Tom and Lydia produce a rainbow, another Shekhinah symbol, in the heavens above; the rainbow serves to shelter, and guard the liberty of, Anna down below: “She [Anna] was no more called upon to uphold with her childish might the broken end of the arch. Her father and her mother now met to the span of the heavens, and she, the child, was free to play in the space beneath, between” (91). Father, mother, and daughter form a trinity, a divine family. According to A. E. Waite, “the Zoharic Trinity [of Father, Mother and Son] constitutes a Divine Family in the World of Heaven” (207). Anna’s association with the Shekhinah is further alluded to in her freedom to play in the space beneath for, as Waite states, the Shekhinah is the “Daughter that . . . came down to earth” and represents “liberty below” (207–8).

The figuration of Tom and Lydia as equal pillars or arches with Anna between and below them is an image of perfect balance. Lawrence associates this balance of male and female with an early Renaissance mode of consciousness. In the “Study of Thomas Hardy,” he asserts that during the Renaissance “the theme was . . . the Spirit embracing the flesh in pure embrace. This was the perfect union of male and female” (*Study of Thomas Hardy* 66). In the novel, Tom is associated with “the female principle” of corporeality, and Lydia is identified with “the male principle” of spirit. Again, the gender inversion mirrors Lawrence’s family dynamics.

Kabbalistic conceptions are present in the descriptions of the second named generation—that of Anna and Will—but mystical terms and figures appear less frequently, subliminally informing the reader that there has been a generational drop in access to sacred energy. The decrease in number and intensity of these figures can be expected to produce a corresponding decline in the vivifying power of these passages for the reader. In this section of the novel, the mortification phase begins to gain strength and momentum. As the vitalizing passages decrease, the disintegrative passages increase, as indicated by the greater use of magical (not mystical) language.

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Mystical resonances predominate in the couple's early encounters, just before and after marriage, suggesting that the relationship is initially fed by the vital energy and openness of youth. However, because the relationship quickly becomes unbalanced, the energy is shunted into internecine combat. Both partners become depleted, and Anna emerges as the empty-handed victor. Because Anna and Will come of age in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, their interactions are shaped by the mode of consciousness that Lawrence associated with the rapid rise of industry and science.<sup>42</sup> For him, this rise represents the ascendancy of the male principle of mind and its culmination in the machine principle. The motion of machines produces friction that slowly grinds down the parts. Similarly, individuals who grow up in the machine age and value mind over body develop friction-filled relationships that wear them down. Anna and Will, and subsequent Brangwen generations, possess a modern—post-Renaissance—mentality. For Lawrence, the Renaissance marks the critical turning point in consciousness. He believed that premodernity culminated in the early Renaissance and that modernity commenced in the late Renaissance.<sup>43</sup>

The many sexual encounters that must have occurred during the several weeks of Will and Anna's honeymoon are summarized by a few brief but powerful characterizations. Whereas in *Lady Chatterley* the summary description of a single encounter, like that of Connie and Mick, often had a deflating effect, here, the summary, generic treatment of several encounters contributes to the sense that the experiences are archetypal, like those of the medieval generations. And while in *Lady Chatterley*, the widespread use of abstract language generally has a bludgeoning, blunting or mortifying effect, here the evocative use of abstract terms contributes to the sense of the numinous encounters being both in and beyond this world. Finally, whereas the ubiquitous use of the stative was meant to convey the stultifying effect of scientific language in *Lady Chatterley*, here the evocative use of the copula is intended to suggest the numinosity of copulation: "to be" is not static, but potent with seedlike potentiality. In Jewish tradition, forms of "to be" comprise several divine names. Indeed, the central divine name "Yahweh" (the Tetragrammaton) is probably an amalgam of "will be/am/was"; moreover, the divine name "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh" (which was revealed to Moses at the burning bush) means "I am what I am"—or more accurately, "I will be what I will be"<sup>44</sup> Thus, in these honeymoon passages, Lawrence is able to innovatively and effectively use a variety of devices for vivifying purposes.

The descriptions of Will and Anna's honeymoon experiences concentrate on how they experience the world—the outer world and their

shared inner world—rather than on how they experience each other. In general, the exchanges focus on the awareness and bridging of boundaries between inner and outer. In one scene they are figured as Noah and his wife during or after the Flood:

It was all very well at night, when the doors were locked and the darkness drawn round the two of them. Then they *were* the only inhabitants of the visible earth, the rest were under the flood. And being alone in the world, they were a law unto themselves, they could enjoy and squander and waste like conscienceless gods. (134)

Unlike the scene with Tom and Lydia that stresses doors opening to the unknown, this scene emphasizes doors closing to outside interference. The closing of doors is also part of mystical meditation: the mystic closes her awareness to the ordinary order of things, especially to distractions, and opens her consciousness to the numinous realm. But the metaphor of doors closing represents a less inclusive vision than the metaphor of doors opening, suggesting that Will and Anna's relationship, even at its height, may not be as all-encompassing, as porous to omnipresent divinity, as Tom and Lydia's. Having locked out the natural environment, they do not resemble the medieval Brangwens, who always "knew the intercourse between heaven and earth" (10). Yet, despite Will's merely partial sacred awareness, he is still "translated with gladness to be in her [Anna's] hands," just as Lydia had been transfigured in Tom's hands (139).

Closed off from the world of restraining law and duty, the couple become like autonomous gods who freely follow their impulses, not their Christian consciences. This autonomy is also an overthrow of Old Testament law, for a few pages later, the reader learns that "down went his [Will's] qualms, his maxims, his rules, his smaller beliefs. . . . He stood and gazed and grinned with wonder whilst his Tablets of Stone went bounding and bumping and splintering down the hill, dislodged for ever" (140). By inhabiting the numinous realm of experience associated with the Noachian Age, they precede Mosaic law. The breaking of the Mosaic tablets through matrimonial connection shows Will that "it was true as they said, that a man wasn't born before he was married"; he thinks that "All that mattered was that he should love her and she should love him and they should live kindled to one another, like the Lord in two burning bushes that were not consumed" (190–1). The burning bush is another Shekhinah symbol, but while the Kabbalists believed that divine inspiration comes from matrimonial union, they insisted that

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this revelation would support, not overthrow, Biblical law. Thus, Lawrence stresses the erotic and cosmic dimensions of Kabbalah while countering what he considered its narrow emphasis on law. At the same time, the numinous experiences of Will and Anna are themselves narrower than those of the medieval Brangwens, who experienced the sacred energy everywhere, even in bushes. For Anna and Will, the burning bush is only a metaphor; their contact with the nonhuman is less extensive.

Having established that the inward–outward opposition can be bridged, the narrator then uses a series of extended metaphors based on this polarity. The experience of these metaphors is intended to integrate the reader's consciousness. The multiplicity of metaphors not only has a cumulative vivifying effect but also demonstrates the relative, dynamic value of any particular incarnation of divine energy, a strategy we saw in *Lady Chatterley*. The metaphors, most of which can be found in the "Study of Thomas Hardy," link the inner–outer polarity in the human world to a like polarity in other organic life and in the cosmos at large. Thus, the reader comes to feel that this fundamental opposition can be bridged in all realms of existence. That is, the overcoming of a dualistic relationship with another person or with oneself is fundamentally tied to the overcoming of dualistic responses to nonhuman beings; a sense of integrity within the human realm leads to a sense of integrity with the nonhuman realm, and vice versa. The nonhuman realm includes the biophysical realm of the earth, the cosmological realm of the universe, and the transcendental realm of the Absolute.

The first set of metaphors involve botanic life and are used to indicate that the shift from Will's bachelor life to his married life involves the discarding of his self's peripheral, rougher, worldly interests in favor of its core, sensitive, vital impulses. The discovery and development of these impulses is understood as the beginning of a new organic cycle—of a rebirth—and is figured as the unshelling and planting of a nut or seed in rich, fertile soil. In Kabbalah, divine Wisdom is figured as a divine seed; however, Mathers likens Ein Sof (Infinite One) to a seed that contains within it the ten divine powers, while Blavatsky likens Ein Sof to a dark light that becomes radiant light when it emanates.<sup>45</sup> While the metaphors of discovery used to describe Tom and Lydia's exchanges suggested that sacred knowledge could be found in or through relationship with one another, the seed metaphors imply that such knowledge is also obtained by relating directly to the core of one's own self, a core that is associated with divine reality. The seed metaphors indicate a concentric model of the self, with vital, fragile substance at the center, and expendable, protective qualities

at the perimeter:

So suddenly, everything that had been before was shed away and gone. One day, he was a bachelor, living with the world. The next day, he was with her, as remote from the world as if the two of them were buried like a seed in darkness. Suddenly, like a chestnut falling out of a burr, he was shed naked and glistening on to a soft, fecund earth, leaving behind him the hard rind of worldly knowledge and experience. There it lay, cast off, the worldly experience. He heard it in the hucksters' cries, the noise of carts, the calling children. And it was all like the hard shed rind, discarded. Inside, in the softness and stillness of the room, was the naked kernel, that palpitated in silent activity, absorbed in reality. (134–5)

The shell has been shed, just as the door had been closed. In Kabbalah, the *klippot* are shells or husks that trap and insulate divine light and so are associated with the forces of evil, the Sitra Achra. The removal of the husks liberates the divine light.

In the next two paragraphs, the metaphor of the wheel is used to embody the inner–outer distinction in the cosmos at large. Whereas the organic figures were employed to characterize the vital qualities of the concentrically organized self, this more mechanical figure, of hub and rim, is used to depict Will's experience of the world as concentrically structured.<sup>46</sup> In the first paragraph, the narrator indicates that Will experiences the room as hub and the world as rim. The hub is still, eternal and beyond time; the rim is moving, noisy, distant, time-bound. The wheel of life is a common image in Western and Eastern religious literature and in Platonic philosophy. The description of the room as a center centered upon itself is how the Kabbalah describes the Ein Sof:<sup>47</sup>

Inside the room was a great steadiness, a core of living eternity. Only far outside, at the rim, went on the noise and the distraction. Here at the centre the great wheel was motionless, centred upon itself. Here was a poised, unflawed stillness that was beyond time, because it remained the same, inexhaustible, unchanging, unexhausted. (135)

The language of negation, coupled with the language of centrality and of the beyond, suggests that the room is experienced as a transcendental reality at the core of the cosmos.

In the second paragraph, the wheel metaphor is applied to the couple's joint experience, their shared moment, within the room. Their joint

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movement to the cosmic center has bridged the inner–outer gap between them:

As they lay close together, complete and beyond the touch of time or change, it was as if they were at the very centre of all the slow wheeling of space and the rapid agitation of life, deep, deep inside them all, at the centre where there is utter radiance, and eternal being, and the silence absorbed in praise. (135)

Paradoxical language is used to both establish and overcome the inner–outer distinction: the inside seems to radiate outward, for “utter radiance” suggests the uttering–outring of radiance. This connotation of “utterance” is also emphasized by the Kabbalists, who conceive the emanations as utterances of the Infinite One.<sup>48</sup> A. E. Waite says that Shekhinah “is to [the transcendent] God that which the vowel point is to the letter—a thing not distinct therefrom but the means of its utterance” (347). The odd phrase “silence absorbed in praise” suggests that the silence is absorbed in giving praise or that praise absorbs the silence; either meaning is paradoxical. In a December 20, 1914 letter to Gordon Campbell, Lawrence describes the Cherubim and Seraphim as “absorbed in praise eternally.”<sup>49</sup> The Shekhinah resides in the space between the Cherubim. In a later exchange, “pure love” comes between Will and Anna, and Will is figured as a six-winged Seraph absorbed in praise: “Then as if his soul had six wings of bliss he stood absorbed in praise, feeling the radiance from the Almighty beat through him like a pulse, as he stood in the upright flame of praise, transmitting the pulse of Creation” (158).

Having applied organic and cosmological analogs to the self’s core, the narrator then describes this core in more psychological terms. That is, there is a humanization of the inner–outer distinction. The inner “reality” consists of “one’s own being, strange feelings and passions and yearnings and beliefs and aspirations” (139). These bodily and spiritual forms of desire are “the permanent bedrock,” which is “knitted . . . with the woman one loved” (139). In *Lady Chatterley*, the bedrock self is more purely sensual for it is revealed during the anal intercourse scene; and the metaphor of knitting is reserved for spiritual connections, probably because of its associations with culture and with the Lady of Shallott. The later novel is more rigid and narrow in its symbolism; the meanings of symbols have become more codified, as they do in the later prophetic poems of Blake.

Kabbalistic mystical language is at a minimum in the scenes depicting Ursula’s liaison with Anton Skrebensky, indicating a further decline in



sacred energy. The initiatory intent in these scenes is more mortifying than vivifying, as we shall see when we examine the use of magical discourses. The couples's relationship is highly unbalanced, and so their exchanges rarely achieve a numinous quality. They come of age in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and so represent the first fully modern generation. Anton is especially a man of the times, for he becomes committed to the ideology of the modern state. While he is a soldier in the Boer War, he expresses the view that the integrity of the state is more important than personal integrity: "What did a man matter, personally? He was just a brick in the whole great social fabric, the nation, the modern humanity" (304). Initially, he had seemed to be Ursula's match, but both Ursula and the reader soon discover his inability or unwillingness to develop his singularity, strength and courage—all preconditions for being a "Son of God." In many scenes, his character and impact on Ursula are described in ambivalent terms by using a mix of sacred and mundane discourses. His energy is freeflowing but diminished. While appearing to be one of "those Sons of God" whose "soul stood alone" and whose actions are "spontaneous," he nevertheless "made no exuberant movement" (271). The expanded consciousness he evokes in Ursula does not include an increased sense of intimacy and individuality. Thus, while he "seemed more and more to give her a sense of the vast world," he also provokes in her "a sense of distances and large masses of humanity" (272). Moreover, he makes her feel both more vital and more narcissistic: even while she "thrilled with a new life," she becomes "For the first time . . . in love with a vision of herself: she saw as it were a fine little reflection of herself in his eyes. And she must act up to this: she must be beautiful" (272). The link between ocularcentrism and narcissism is stressed, as it is in Ovid's myth of Narcissus.

Most of the numinous language is reserved for describing Ursula and Anton's relationship before their first act of sexual intercourse. Thus, Ursula feels that her "adventure in life was beginning" and that she has entered the "world of passions and lawlessness" which is "another, harder, more beautiful, less personal world" (277). This illicit, passionate world recalls the licentious honeymoon experiences of Will and Anna. And after Ursula and Anton kiss, she is genuinely "all warm with electric warmth, as if the gush of dawn were within her, upholding her" (278). Later, his "awareness" and "attentive[ness]" make her feel "rich and augmented," as if "she were the positive attraction and he the flow towards her" (280). But the lack of sacred discourse in the depictions of the coital acts themselves indicates that the relationship is unbalanced. The discourse of magic, mesmerism and hypnosis predominates in these scenes.

### III. Magical Language in the Mortification Phase

While mysticism stresses the union with God out of a sense of love, reverence or obedience, magic emphasizes the calling forth of numinous forces to attain human ends. Christian Kabbalists like the Rosicrucians—unlike most Jewish Kabbalists—place a heavy accent on magic. Eliphas Levi, a nineteenth-century Rosicrucian, was especially interested in the magical side of Kabbalah. He was an acknowledged master of magic and a vivid writer, whose writings were later translated by A. E. Waite. Defining magic as “the traditional science of the secrets of Nature which has been transmitted to us from the Magi,” Levi employs the Kabbalistic language of forces, polarization and equilibrium.<sup>50</sup> He also stresses the role of will and knowledge: “TO KNOW, TO DARE, TO WILL, TO KEEP SILENCE—such are the four words of the Magus.”<sup>51</sup> An accomplished magician, he says, is “invested with a species of relative omnipotence and can operate superhumanly.”<sup>52</sup> Levi distinguishes between “a Divine and an Infernal Magic,” the latter being a “false science” connected to the devil; indeed, while the “magician is the sovereign pontif of Nature, the sorcerer is her profaner only.”<sup>53</sup> MacGregor Mathers, a Rosicrucian and Mason, made magic a cornerstone of his Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the occult society to which Yeats belonged for many years. In 1900, Mathers published a translation of *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*.

Lawrence believed that magic was more than hocus pocus. In an April 28, 1918 letter to Mark Gertler, he says that “Certainly magic is a reality—not by any means the nonsense Bertie Russell says it is” (*Letters*, vol. 2, 1565). But Lawrence was critical of magic precisely because of its stress on will and intellect. His critique may have been influenced by Evelyn Underhill, who links magic to the scientific will to knowledge and control:

In magic, the will unites with the intellect in an impassioned desire for supersensible knowledge. This is the intellectual, aggressive, and scientific temperament trying to extend its field of consciousness, until it includes the supersensual world.<sup>54</sup>

Lawrence also associated magic with an ancient, unrecoverable mode of consciousness:

Magic also interested me a good deal. But it is all part of the past, and part of a past self in us: and it is no good going back, even to the wonderful things. They are ultimately *vieux jeu*.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, he acknowledges that magic may once have been wonderful—when humans beings were less self-conscious and intellectual.

Lawrence uses the language of magic, mesmerism and hypnosis to register sustained imbalances in the energetic exchanges of the second and third named generations. As we said, he follows the Kabbalists in associating prolonged disequilibrium with evil and sometimes with black magic. He uses magical discourse to indicate that self-conscious, self-centered, and coercive elements have disrupted the freeflowing exchange between participants. The magical language is often deployed in the context of combat and hunting metaphors that indicate a power imbalance between conqueror and conquered, hunter and hunted. Mesmerism and hypnosis are treated as degraded, pseudo-scientific versions of magic. Magic, mesmerism, and hypnosis all put one person's mind and will under the control of another's. Lawrence believed that the trances induced by magical or hypnotic means are transient mental states that trick the conscious mind, not the body; they do not engage the soul (the deep unconscious): "A trance means that all her *individual*, personal intelligence goes to sleep, like a hen with her head under her wing. But the *apparatus* of consciousness remains working. Without a soul in it" (*Studies in Classic American Literature* 102). The dynamic equilibrium and minimal self-consciousness in the mature erotic relationship between Tom and Lydia is indicated by a near absence of magical terms in the depictions of their exchanges. In contrast, magical discourse is very much present in the portrayals of the last series of exchanges between Will and Anna and between Ursula and Anton.

In "Anna Victrix," Anna's defeat of Will produces a powerful restructuring of their relationship. Hierarchy, not dynamic equilibrium, is the new mode of organization, and within this structure, neither has a balanced self: hers is ruled by Apollonian day consciousness while his is dominated by Dionysian night consciousness. Thus, the imbalance between them is matched by imbalances within them; the two forms of disequilibrium dialectically construct one another. While Anna is the overall victor, her victory is most apparent during the day; she is figured as "the daytime" and has "daytime authority," while he is "the shadow" (201). At night, he is "potent with an overwhelming voluptuousness" and rules her (201). In other words, mentally she rules him; physically, he dominates her; but since mind ultimately has supremacy over body, she is the ultimate sovereign.<sup>56</sup>

A conscious, willful interchange occurs between the couple a few years after Ursula's birth. Unlike earlier marital battles in which each tries to dominate and destroy the other, this encounter is figured as that of a

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black tomcat who stealthily and hypnotically overcomes his feline mate. In effect, Anna allows Will a specious sense of sexual triumph, knowing that she has won in the overall game of life. The hypnosis metaphor stresses the interplay of the couple's eyes; his ocular light darkens her consciousness and eye:

Sometimes, when his eyes met her, a yellow flash from them caused a darkness to swoon over her consciousness, electric, and a slight, strange laugh came on his face. Her eyes would turn languidly, then close, as if hypnotised. And they lapsed into the same potent darkness. (200)

As in *Lady Chatterley*, the focus on eyes indicates that head-centered manipulation is involved. The hypnotic stealth results in sexual manipulation, not mutual exchange.

The next paragraphs are replete with the discourse of spells, trances, insinuations and other magical or hypnotic effects. They are intended to have a mildly repulsive, mortifying effect on the reader. The focus is again on the eyes:

Only she knew him when the darkness set him free, and he could see with his gold-glowing eyes his intention and his desires in the dark. Then she was in a spell, then she answered his harsh, penetrating call with a soft leap of her soul, the darkness woke up, electric, bristling with an unknown, overwhelming insinuation. . . . She learned not to dread and to hate him, but to fill herself with him, to give herself to his black, sensual power, that was hidden all the daytime. And the curious rolling of the eyes, as if she were lapsing in a trance away from her ordinary consciousness became habitual with her. . . . And she, in all the darkness, belonged to him, to his close, insinuating, hypnotic familiarity. (200–1)

Will's hypnotic powers, at first novel to Anna, soon become known, and her own trances quickly become routine ("habitual"). His impact on her diminishes because neither his power nor her response are rooted in the numinous unknown; rather, his power is based on recalled, recycled energy, not on fresh force, while her trance is a "mechanical" shutting down of surface consciousness that does not lead to the opening of a more expansive consciousness based on immediate feeling.

Magical, mesmeric, and hypnotic discourses are ubiquitous in the depictions of Ursula's and Anton's encounters, and these discourses are deployed in the context of negatively inflected combat and hunt

metaphors. These passages are intended to have the most powerful mortifying effects on the reader. As the most modern generation, the couple are the least in touch with the unselfconscious, sacred energies of the body, and the most in contact with the conscious, willful forces associated with the modern ego. Still, neither Ursula nor Anton has the characteristics of the extreme modern type portrayed in *Lady Chatterley*. Lawrence portrays Clifford and his comrades as so committed to the intellectual life that they are nearly devoid of vitality. While Anton may not be exuberant, he initially has much bodily force; it is his subsequent failure to participate as a mature individual in a mutual exchange that will finally deplete his vitality and emasculate his soul.

The dance at Fred Brangwen's wedding is the prelude to the sexual encounter that will nullify Anton's self-esteem. The dance is figured as "endless . . . movement" that "would continue forever" (295). There has been a breakdown in the movement-exploration-discovery motif that was vividly represented in the scenes involving Tom and Lydia. The polarized connection between Ursula and Anton has dissolved, and each moves infinitely in his or her own direction. The relationship no longer possesses the requisite rhythm of movement and rest, and because desire does not issue in "consummation," positive passion is not renewed. The couple have not surrendered their wills to their emotional bond; instead, their wills are "locked in a trance of motion, two wills locked in one motion, yet never fusing, never yielding one to the other. It was a glaucous, intertwining, delicious flux and contest in flux" (295). They are fixed in the Heraclitean flux of the world, incapable of peace, stillness, transcendence.

The dance bifurcates into a discordant contest as the dancers pursue their own motions, tendencies, satisfactions. The mortifying language becomes increasingly intense. Like the split between Anna and Will, the bifurcation between Ursula and Anton is figured as light against dark, moon against earth/underworld. Ursula is drawn to, identified with, and filled by the "great white moon," which represents the reflected, cool, hard light of mind or ego as well as "the cold liberty to be herself, to do entirely as she liked" (296). Instead of desiring Anton, she wants "communion" and "consummation" with the moon, and so "cleaved like a transparent jewel to its light" and "her body opened wide like a quivering anemone" (296). The cold, hard, indomitable passion that fills her makes her hands feel "like metal blades of destruction" (297). They are no longer servants of Primal Adam bestowing a balance of Lovingkindness and Strength; rather, Strength has won out. Her corrosive power is also associated with the "pillar of salt" she becomes (297). Similarly, in

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*Lady Chatterley*, Connie, before affirming her “worship” of Mellors’s maleness, is compared to one of the Bacchae who seeks to use and tear apart Mellors; only when their bond is reestablished does her body open like an anemone to the gamekeeper. In *The Rainbow*, Anton is linked to “the depths of the underworld” and its “dark, impure magnetism”—the forces of black magic (295–6).

Disturbing hunt and battle metaphors, emphasizing the use of and resistance to power, structure the modern couple’s engagement. They are meant to intensely repulse the reader. Anton strains his will “to encompass and compel her” and “to weave himself round her, enclose her, enclose her in a net of shadow, of darkness, so she would be like a bright creature . . . caught” (297). Only by capturing her can he “have” and “enjoy” her. She resists the “soft weight” of his body always “bearing her down” and “overcoming her life and energy, making her inert along with him” (297). Eventually she becomes “a beam of gleaming power” and is “seized” by “a sudden lust . . . to lay hold of him and tear him and make him into nothing,” and her hands and wrists feel “like blades” (298). Her youthful lust has developed into an annihilating power.

Their act of sexual intercourse is figured as a combat-hunt in which each tries to capture the other. The narrator seeks to repulse the reader by reporting the painful, destructive effects of their coital encounter. Anton attempts to “net” Ursula, to capture “the salt, compact brilliance of her body,” while “her kiss seized upon him, hard and fierce and burning corrosive as the moonlight” (298–9). Because Ursula is more connected to her vital powers, the contest results in her soul “triumph[ing],” much as Anna’s had, but while Will’s soul had revived to some degree, Anton’s is decimated: “his soul was dissolved with agony and annihilation. So she held him there, the victim, consumed, annihilated. She had triumphed: he was not any more”; he was a “nothingness” (299). This is not the positive self-obliteration that precedes spiritual rebirth, as it did in the case of Connie Chatterley; rather, it is a sterile emptiness. Because Anton has prevented his self from individuating and connecting, it atrophies and is eventually destroyed. Ursula is unwilling to acknowledge what she has done; instead, she “restored the whole form and figure of him. But the core was gone” (299–300). This core is his “distinct male” self (300). Significantly, the defeat of his masculinity is registered in his heart: it is not sexual impotence that causes his emasculation, but a failure of emotional strength. A strong heart is tempered by intense erotic activity, while a weak heart is incinerated. Having lost his power, Anton “would be subject now, reciprocal, never the indomitable thing with a core of overweening, unabateable fire” (300). His unwillingness

to know the depths of his singularity is one reason for his weakened male identity; another reason is the knowledge that he no longer has hypnotic influence: "the male in him was scotched by the knowledge that she was not under his spell nor his influence" (306–7). His abuse of his male power, which he had used to create transient, trance effects, results in his loss. In an exchange that occurs after his return from the Boer War, he recovers a little of his lost influence; for a short while, she is "aware of him as if in a mesmeric state," but she refuses his marriage proposal, sensing that he "had no soul" (384, 386).

The psychonarration of their relationship after Anton's return from a six-year stay in India makes it clear that the couple have talked themselves into considering a new beginning possible. Their largely physical connection is enough to give them glimmers of hope, but the series of erotic encounters of this mismatched pair inevitably leads to the dissolution of the relationship because their rapprochement is not based on deeply felt passion. The initial erotic encounters seem to have a genuinely transformative effect on Ursula, indicated by the reappearance of the mystical, Edenic language of "original immortality" and "pristine darkness of paradise," but the next few interchanges indicate that Ursula's connection with nature and with religious monuments is more profound than her tie to Skrebensky (418). During their trip to Rouen, Anton realizes that Ursula prefers the city and its church to her contact with him. The language of death—"he had a cold feeling of death"—is reintroduced to describe his experience of his diminished position (422). Similarly, when they go on vacation to Sussex, she experiences him as a nonentity: as they make love, it is as if she connects with the stars, instead of with him, much as she had earlier connected with the moon. Because he has extinguished his own male, starlike singularity, she instead relates to actual stars: "it was as if the stars were lying with her and entering the unfathomable darkness of her womb, fathoming her at last. It was not him" (430–1).

In their last sexual encounter, the mortifying language of combat reappears, and Anton is again declared the mortal loser: "The fight, the struggle for consummation was terrible. It lasted till it was agony to his soul, till he succumbed, till he gave way as if dead. . . . He felt as if the knife were being pushed into his already dead body" (445). Thus, the couple's failure to produce a mystical exchange gives way to a lethal struggle involving magical-mesmeric forces and ends in psychic death for Anton and in relationship death for both.

We have seen that named Brangwen generations embody the historical shifts in consciousness associated with the rise of modernity, which is

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initiated, in Lawrence's view, during the Renaissance. Consciousness becomes more and more splintered. The result is that larger and more enduring splits are created between mind and body, self and other, human and nonhuman. Thus, the later generations experience inner schisms and outer conflicts more frequently and intensely. The increase in both internal and external disharmony produces distortions in vital energy symbolized by the shift from mystical to magical discourses. The willful, irresponsible use of erotic energy in turn leads to psycho-spiritual destruction; hence, the language of black magic is ultimately a language of power and annihilation. As the reader proceeds through the novel, his or her consciousness is increasingly subjected to the mortifying effects of the magical discourse and decreasingly introduced to the vivifying effects of the mystical discourse.