CHAPTER IV

Love.

In The Prospect of the Sea Thomas writes —

'Sure the grass mates, the green mates, the grains', said
Sam Rib, 'and the dividing waters mate and are mated. The sun with the
grass and the green, sand with water, and water with green grass; these
mate and are mated for the bearing and fostering of the globe'.

Thomas finds the universe sexual, and against this cosmic background he describes the human sexual process. This sexuality in human life shows the unity in the universal sexual pattern and asserts the invincible life-process. Sex has the reproductive and in view. Mating is for the 'bearing and fostering of the globe'. In human life children mean rebirth and renewal. They are the bond of human love. To deny sex is to go against the universal scheme of creative process. Sexual commitment is urged by the senses but feared. A profound need of love is felt in human life, but it is attended by fear. This fear in Thomas is due to his Puritanical upbringing as well as the conventional ideas of the society against which Thomas has so often fretted and protested in his poems and letters.

In the early poems of Thomas physical and compulsive love is described impersonally. But we find a conscious desire in Thomas to transcend sheer animality in a poem in 1930 Note book.
Do not mistake me,
I do not ridicule the animal,
But your breasts and thighs and navels are not enough.
I want something more of you,
Something sensless and unmecanical:
The actions of love are stale,
Let me find a new medium,
A new method of intercourse.
Let me dispense with the animal.
The animal is not enough.

John Main says, 'Thomas has added almost no good love poetry to the language, because he always seems to treat sexual love as an affair of glandular secretions and the mingling of fluids, which is only true as far as it goes.' In the early poems Thomas has described sexual love attended by the fear of death which is the ultimate reality. Nowhere do we find love which elevates the soul, the ecstasy that sexual union brings, the transmuting power of love that makes the world colourful and life meaningful and pleasant. But Thomas has not only described sexual love; in his later poems he has also described his affection for his aunt (After the Funeral), filial love (If my Head Hurt a Hair's Foot), an unknown airman's love for the people (Deaths and Entrances), his deep love for his dying father (Do not so gently into that good night, Elsay). Love is not simply a 'rub' (CF 12) and the end of love is not only a 'plague' (CF 20). It is something more. The indication of the spiritualizing
of love first comes in And Death Shall Have No Dominion —

Though lovers be lost, love shall not (CP 68).

To say that 'love unbolts the dark' (CP 171), to perceive the sacrificial value and redemptive power of love exemplified in Christ, is not to find love as 'an affair of glandular secretion and the mingling of fluids.' Moreover in marriage poems love is not an impersonal affair.

Love in the Asylum (CP 108) sums up the conflict in Thomas's attitudes to sex. Thomas's puritanism has created a tension in his poetry. In the madhouse of ordinary life fierce passion of irrational love asserts. Thomas feels attracted towards sex, though he has a nightmarish dread of it. In the arms of a woman he attains 'the first vision that set fire to the stars' (CP 108). He perceives love to be a cosmic, dynamic force in all things. Thomas emphasizes sexuality in his early poems since it is through sexuality that an adolescent asserts his individuality and independence. Sex must be integrated in life. The full acceptance of sexuality, and the way in which it pervades all aspects of life, is a sure test of maturity. To realize sexuality in all its richness is to act as an independent person. Though Thomas often expresses his horror of sex, he realizes like D.H. Lawrence that sex is a dynamic polarity between human beings. 'The sexual relation between man and woman consummates in the act of coition. ... We know its functional purpose of procreation. ... To the individual, the act of coition is a great
psychic experience, a vital experience of tremendous importance. On this vital individual experience the life and very being of the individual largely depends. Thomas in his struggle for identity realizes that the ability to have satisfying sexual relationships with the opposite sex constitutes the valid test of maturity in interpersonal relationships.

In If I were tickled by the rub of love (CP 12-13) Thomas tells that sex attracts and at the same time repels him. His Puritan conscience finds sin in sex, but rationally he realizes the emotional and biological necessity of sex. This necessity is inherent in nature but conventional religious ideas put a restraint on it and thereby create in man an emotional conflict.

If the past could accept sexual love, love that begets a child, he would 'not fear the apple, nor the bad blood of sin' (CP 12).

I would not fear the gallows nor the axe
Nor the crossed sticks of war. (CP 12)

The 'apple' and the 'flood' with their biblical reference mean sin and punishment. 'The bad blood of sin' suggests both regeneration and original sin. Breaking 'through her straws', breaking the prison of the girl's body, the speaker would be born. If the speaker could laugh at birth or the process of growth ('the hatching hair', 'the winging bone', 'the itch of man upon the baby's thigh' (CP 12), he would not fear sin or death in the gallows or in war. Sex is attractive but it is associated with the Fall, sin, and death which repel
the poet. 'Rehearsing heat upon a raw-edged nerve' (CP 12) is an image of masturbation.

'Devil in the loin' is sexual desire associated with sin, and 'the outspoken grave' (CP 12) is death. 'Crow's foot', 'lock/Of sick old manhood on the fallen jaws' (CP 12) are the disgusting images of old age. 'Time and the crabs and sweet-hearted crib/Would leave me cold as butter for the flies' (CP 12) are images of debauchery and dissolution. If the speaker were tickled by the ecstasy of sexual act, he would brave the old age and 'dream' himself in 'the sea of scums' (CP 12). The protagonist is in love —

Daft with the drug that's smoking in a girl
And curling round the bud that forks her eye. (CP 13)

He surrenders to the seductive charms of sex 'smoking in a girl'. Sex is viewed as a snare, a bait, and this idea runs through the poetry of Dylan Thomas. The girl is viewed impersonally; the protagonist sees 'her anatomically, in terms of "the bud that forks her eye" — the branching veins of her eyeball.' Lindell thinks that the 'bud that forks her eye' is the male bud on which her eye is fixed. Sex attracts and repels; but at the same time he dreads impotence and death that come with age.

An old man's shank one-narrowed with my bone,
And all the herring's sculling in the sea,
I sit and watch the worm beneath my nail
Wearing the quick away. (CP 13)

He is conscious of the bone of his shank in which future old age is
inherent and of the stench of corruption and lechery which arouses the feeling of attraction and aversion. This emotional uncertainty brings to him the realization of mortality, the supreme reality: 'the worm beneath my nail/wearing the quick away.' Thomas is haunted by fear of total loss of identity in death.

Death pursues and overtakes all. Love, the instrument of creation, serves death. In "when, like a running grave (CP 18-19) the act of love is accompanied by an act of destruction," 'Cadaver' is an important word in the poem. The creative agent of love becomes the agent of death. The male organ finds expression in deathly images; 'Cadaver's candle' (CP 19), 'Cadaver's shoot/ort bud of Adam', 'Cadaver in the hangar' (CP 19). The girl is an agent of death: 'Your nails and cuddled is a scythe of hairs' (CP 19). The act of love, 'Love in her gear', offers at the same time a picture of death, 'a turtle in a house' (CP 19). All images of creation in this poem imply destruction as well as creation. Tailor time comes like a pair of scissors to cut life short. The tailor cuts and sews the flesh to measure and the body is doomed to death. There is a conflict between head and heart in the poem when, like a running grave, and the poet is a victim of this conflict as well as of time. The instinctive physical urge feels inhibitive fear that produces frustration. The physical act is simultaneously a destructive act.

Heart of Cadaver's candle waxes thin;
When blood, spade - handed, and the logic time
Drive children up like bruises to the thumb. (CP 18)
The poet fears that he will never enjoy the sexual experience he so keenly desires.

I, that time's jacket or the coat of ice
May fail to fasten with a virgin o
In the straight grave.  (CP 18)

'The straight grave' is the vagina. Death is the consequence of love.
'The logic time' is an image of ruthless, inevitable process of time.

The image of journey is seen in 'Stride through Cadaver's country in my force' (CP 18). 'Cadaver's country' is the world of life. The poet desires to make early use of his body which is subject to death. But

My pickbrain masters mourning on the stone
Despair of blood, faith in the maiden's slime,
Halt among sumachs, and the nitric stain
On fork and face.  (CP 18)

His 'pickbrain masters' (fingers) sends in Morse Code the message not to have any faith in the blood, in the 'maiden's slime' or normal sexual act and to join the sumachs with marks of sin of face. This negation of life is death. 'Pickbrain masters mourning on the stone' is also an image of masturbation which serves death. 'Descending hammer Descends ... on the entered honour' (CP 19) is an image of sex in its creative and destructive role. The hammer of sex descends on what it creates. 'Cadaver in the hangar' is an image taken from aeroplanes, 'Joy is the knock of dust' (CP 19). Both sex and death are implied in the image. Joy is
lost when love becomes a matter of the head. Thoughts put a curb on
the expression of normal passion by bringing in conventional moral
ideas.

Thomas perceives death in the very act of love. Death is
"the actions' end" (CP 19). Death is in the 'unwholesome wind' that
blows and in the 'whistler's cough' (CP 19).

... love for his trick,
Happy Cadaver's hunger as you take
The kissproof world. (CP 19)

W.S. Merwin states that in Shen, like a running grave the poet advo-
cates love of death, but the poet who wanted to be 'a shouter like
the cock, with the old dead back' (CP 19) repeatedly asserts
his faith in life is certainly not an advocate of love of death.

Our summer dreams (CP 14-15) presents the illusion of love
in different forms and contrasts it with reality. All our dreams,
aspirations, are 'seedless' (CP 14) and prove the barrenness of our
popular culture. The erotic dreams of the sleeping boys, 'winding-
toasted in their shawl sheet' are without 'light and love' (CP 14). Light
and love represent reality. These dreams are unrelated to
reality. They are 'sundered from the worm, /The bones of men' (CP 14).
The boys fold in their arms 'the widows of the night' (CP 14). This
love-making with the erotic phantoms of girls is infertile.

The phantasmal love is as worse as 'love on a reel' (CP 14),
'One-dimensional ghosts' of 'the guinan and sall,' 'speak their mid-
night nothings' (CP 14) and vanish when the camera is shut. We watch
the show of shadows kiss or kill' (CP 14) in their shadowy, celluloid-flavoured love which has no relation with real love-making. These shadows 'give love the lie' (CP 14).

Which is the real world? Cinema shadows or the dream phantasy?

... of our two sleepings, which
shall fall awake when graves and their itch
raise up this red-eyed earth? (CP 15)

"'Guru's, 'itch', 'red-eyed earth' represent the actual sexual reality with recoil". The society of 'the smug gentleman, the sneaking rich' (CP 15) are as fake as the phantasms of celluloid love.

The dream has sucked the sleeper of his faith
That shrouded men might narrow as they fly. (CP 15)

Shadows have sucked our faith that shrouded dead will 'marrow' again.
We are robbed of our faith in the future regeneration, in the world to be brought about by the 'red-eyed' revolutionaries.

'This is the world' (Section IV) of erotic dreams and photograph-culture which has 'one-sided skin of truth' (Section III). This is the world where 'trash' is 'honoured as the quick' (Section IV; CP 15). 'Have faith' (CP 15) in love, in 'quick' reality. We shall be a shooter like the cock, heralding a new dawn, 'blowing the old dead back' (CP 15). We shall blow the dreams away like the cock which frightens spirits back to their tombs and shoot at the screen figures ('our shots shall smack/The image from the plates', CP 15) and proclaim
the glory of love and life.

And we shall be fit fellows for a life,
And who remain shall flower as they love,
Praise to our faring hearts.  
(CP 15)

The future generation will be heartened by our energy of love and adventure and they 'shall flower as they love.' Given the love that dares and the faith that affirms, there is hope for a bright future.

All all and all the dry worlds lever (CP 33-34) tells, as in the poem My world is pyramid (CP 30-32), that the life-force ('the drive of oil,' CP 34) compels man and nature to reproduce. The 'dry worlds' are constantly being renewed through the generative principle operating through them.

All all and all the dry worlds couple,
Ghost with her ghost, contagious man
With the womb of his shapeless people.  
(CP 34)

In reproduction life finds its fullness.

All that shapes from the caul and suckle,
Stroke of mechanical flesh on mine,
Square in these worlds the mortal circle.  
(CP 34)

'The gladdened marrow', 'the corpse's lover', 'the foaming marrow', 'the dry worlds lever' (CP 33) suggest sexual renewal.

Love in Thomas is not simply physical; it is political as well. Political rejuvenation is suggested in —
City of spring, the governed flowers,
Burns in the earth that turns the ashen
Towns around on a wheel of fire. (GP 33)

The agents of renewal are sexual and social. The social agents are hinted at by 'the working world', 'the heart in the ribbing metal', 'the trigger and scythe' (GP 33), 'the heart in the ribbing metal' is the strong heart of the revolutionary. There is a mechanical compulsiveness in the worlds that couple, in 'the arrows that turn the wheel' (GP 33) on the 'face' of the record. The dry worlds are constantly flowering through the generative impulses of male and female.

Each golden grain spat life into its fellow. (GP 30)

All is under compulsion. The mortal flesh is compelled to couple, and this defeat mortality in the flowering of life.

The poems discussed above were published in 1934. A Brief Age (GP 54-55), to be discussed now, is to be found in the second volume of poems, Twenty-Five Poems, published in 1936. 'A grief ago', a painfully long time ago, the bloomed girl ('Fate and Flower') whom the speaker holds, evolved from the sea through a process of evolution. She is 'water-laced'. The sea imagery expresses the idea of the evolutionary process of life.

A grief ago,
She who was who I hold, the Fate and Flower,
Or, water-laced, from the scythe-sided thorn,
Bull wind and sea,
A stem cementing, wrestled up the tower. (GP 54)
The girl was 'launed' by water and 'the myther-sided them'. The
'muther-sided them' is an image of pistilus, both deadly and life-
giving. Like 'mausted venus' or venus's banx or vivid tornal the
'sailed up the sun'. The girl, now fully grown, is 'sided' on a
male rod. The rod is described as the sennon's rod which 'had sprouted,
blazoned, and produced ripe almonds' (Numbers, 17:8). 'The same
rose cast to plagiu' (CP 56). 'Cast' is a metaphor for sexual repro-
duction.

Oo you not rather say, nor the erected am
For my tall tower's pine cast in her stone? (CP 49)

'Plague', we know from Eva loved's first found to lay plane (CP 12-20),
is offspring. She is creating children with the help of the rod. 'The
leaden bud, slit through the leaf'. The sennon's rod, like a gun,
forces the girl, 'a chrysalis', 'unswinkling', 'on the iron' or fish.
Ralph Hald observes that the complexity of the sexual imagery 'keeps
us at a distance from the sexual event'. This is the poem of dis-
tancing the intimate.

and she who lies,
Like a never a chapter from the garden,
Brand of the lily's anger on her ring,
Buried through the days.
Her ropes of heritage, the ears of pardon,
On field and sand
The twelve triangles of the chorus wind
Engrossing bodies. (CP 54)

The girl is identified with love and her sexual act with original sin.
The Old Testament imagery of the rose-like bud a chapter from the garden,\( f \) denotes the punishment for innocence. The imagery of the poem is botanical, Biblical, and sexual. The punishment for original sin is death and procreation. She 'flung through the days/her ropes of heritage'. The winds that blow bring death to her. She now becomes a general wind where she shapes 'all her whirls with the long voice of water' (\( CP \) 53). The 'people's sea drives on her' (\( CP \) 54). She is 'boxed into love' by 'the country-headed grass' (\( CP \) 55). It is sexual love that ensures immortality through procreation. Death is near. Death, 'a nitrode shape', comes like a lover and tears her, before death overtakes,

Let her inhale her dead, through rose and wild
Dew in their cones.\( \quad (CP \) 56)

Let her maintain the continuity of generations participating in the same procreative urge that brought the dead into existence, since we shall all re-enter into the natural process of creation, the best thing is to experience present life fully.

Child and motherly love is found in 'If my hand hush a horse's\( \frac{1}{2} \) foot' (\( CP \) 07-08), a poem of the middle period, 1926-30. The poem is a dialogue between an unborn child and its mother. The stanza says,

'If my hand hush a horse's\( \frac{1}{2} \) foot
Pack back the drowned bone'.\( \quad (CP \) 07)

The compassionate mother vents to the process of birth to save its mother from the agony of delivery. The mother replies that there is no escape for her or for the unborn child from the fated life and death.

Lost beyond choice in the dust-appointed grain. (\( CP \) 08)
The process of birth cannot be arrested though the challenge of the
outraged grave (CP 15) lies ahead. This is an insoluble existential
problem. The mother accepts Genesis 3: 16:

1: in labour you shall bear children.

The said 'inches this way to light and death from the rim of the grave'
(CP 96). The inevitability of life and death is to be accepted. 'There
and here you must couch and cry' (CP 96) for an appointed period of
time. Life is not to remain untouched or unmarked for ever. The biological
process of life and death is an endless process. Life is 'endless
beginning' (CP 96) that negates inevitable end. 'O joy joy' (CP 96).
This is how Thomas seeks to reconcile to life and death and trans-
scend existential problem.

In after the funeral (CP 97-98), another poem of the middle
period, love is spiritualized. The poem shows the extension of Thomas's
poetic sympathy to other human beings. The poem was first published in
1963. Thomas says, 'The next poem I'll read is the only one I have
written that is, directly, about the life and death of one particular
human being I knew — and not about the very many lives and deaths wheth-
er seen, as in my first poem, in the tumultuous world of my own being
or, as in the later poems, in war, grief, and the great holes and com-
nors of universal love.' The poem expresses poetic sympathy attained
through objective perception. In his early poetry Thomas is his own
world. In his later work he takes an objective view of man and nature.
In after the funeral, the poet mourns the death of his aunt. The child
remembers.
In the

Whose
dead
heart
once
died
in
pullez
round
the
parched
worlds
of
Wales...

Arno is an image of love, of a life-giving fountain that brought life

to the cold world around her. Her face is a "lily/flood" (CP 87).
Thomas uses the image of flood more and more as an image of love in his
later poetry. From the artificial paradise we come to nature where
Arno's heart calls all the seas and woods to her service, to celebrate
her love and her "best spirit" (CP 87). Imaginatively the poet trans-
forms the funeral scene from the paradise to the natural world where her
own natural virtue, "her word-tongued virtue," will " attest like a
ballad" over the "hanging heads" (CP 87). The "hanging heads" is an
image of the heads of trees bowing in homage to Arno and making a sort of
chapel of holy nature in contrast to the "brown chapel" (CP 87). The
living "fumed and fiery woods" (CP 87) are contrasted with the
"stuffed fox" and "stale foam" (CP 87). Love conquers the dry, conven-
tional religion of the chapel. Love is the only force that proves the
ills of the society. This is the "monumental argument of the lame
voice," which the poet prays will

Rose me forever over her grave until

The stuffed hung of the fox twitch and dry love

and the strutting fowl lay seeds on the black gills.

(CP 88)

The poet is a vindication of Thomas's faith in spiritual love, and
this adds a new strain in his poetry.
Unluckily for a death (cp 195-200) gives a mature view of love. This poem occurs in Thomas' s volume of poems, 'Deathes and Entrances', published in 1453. In this poem Thomas offers an explicit exposition of his philosophy of love. Love has its root in the body, a denial of the body is a denial of life and love. In population without copulation, Platonic love begets no children. Love is holy and immortality is achieved by physical love and not by continence. To deny sexual love is to surrender to death. It is sexual union that defeats death, continence is evil. It is 'the choir and cloister, of the vintacy memory of the order of lust' (cp 199). The poem argues for love as 'the full ensemble in flower, of the living flesh' (cp 193).

Immortality comes through love, but the woman in the poem poses a problem by her refusal to participate in sexual congress. The woman is 'in shades, sainted nuns, and male, among the wadding bed' (cp 199). The 'kinds of love' have not freed her from her frigid abstinence, from the 'vintacy memory of the order of lust.' 'The beard of the kisse has not covered the clay cold earth' (cp 199).

The lover overcomes the sense of guilt that has so long been preached by Christianity about physical union. 'Loving on this embosged guilt, the 'holy lucky body' is 'caught and held and kissed.'

In the will of the midst
Of the demanding day, 

The dark preaching is removed by the Light of Venus. 'Out to the still star in the order of the quick' (cp 199) shows the triumph of love over the death-giving abstinence. Sexual union celebrates 'the ceremony of
souls" and "communion between souls" (CP 109). The lover shall never chant "about the saint in shades" (CP 109). The body of the woman is "the endless brevity ... of your prayed flesh? I there are "holy hosts" in every "inch and glance" (CP 109) and in them "is the globes of genera gnum" (CP 110). The religious imagery is carried through the poem by the words "saints", "chast clerics", "orders", "nuns", "hosta", "vowns", "celebrated", "ceremony", "communion", "breviary", "mn", "garden", "christ", "gensis". Through religious terms Thomas has sublimated sexual love.

Single life is death-biding life. Love flowers in the union of man and woman. "The death biding two live lonely" (CP 109). "Death/Continence" (CP 110) is monstrous. The poet gives an impression of monstrousity in the surreallistic image of some unnatural creatures.

I see the dragon in tears
In the underground dark
In striped and noon named tribes striding to holocaust,
The she nudes bear their minotaurs,
The double-billed platypus broody in a milk of birds.

The reminiscence of the flesh means an islanded life. No lover is an island. Physical love ensures immortality through procreation.

All love but for the full assemblage in flesh
Of the living flesh is monstrous or immortal,
And the grave its daughters, (CP 110)

Platonic or ascetic love is sterile and monstrous. The lover realizes that spiritual love is born of physical love. Love
Teaches with no tarrying
That the phoenix did the heaven and the desire after
Death in the carved nursery
Both shall fall if I bow not to your blessing. (CP 110)

The lover walks like God in the cool of the "mortal garden" (CP 110); the "mortal garden" is the body of the girl when he enjoys. The "mortal garden" holds the promise of fruit.

* * * O my true love, hold me,
In your every inch and place in the globe of Venus' span,
And the living earth your song. (CP 120)

Lavinia Thomae rejects orthodox restrictions of sexuality. Love is attainable where sexual consummation is possible. Peace and harmony between all parts of human nature are required by sexual consummation as the sexual act is a sacred commitment to a higher order of being.

Into her living dean head (CP 113-114) epitomizes Thomae's attitudes towards life and sex. In a letter to Vernon Watkins Thomae says that Into her living dean head is "a poem about modern love," she describes the theme of the poem thus:

"All over the world love is being betrayed as always, and a million years have not caused the uncalculated enormity of such betrayal or the terrible loneliness afterwards. Man is denying his partner sex or women and men with the whole night, begatting a monstrous brood; one day the brood will not die when the day comes but will hang on to the breast and the parts and squeeze his partner out of bed."

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The poem belongs to the group of marriage poems like A. When chance, but two sides agree, infidely for a death. Sex is an evil necessity in life. Through metaphor the poem proceeds to literary, biblical, and historical analogies to suggest the sexual fructicity and intercourse. Thomas's wife Caitlin dreams of infidelity. The vision of uncontrollable sexual passion and its necessity in procreation gives rise to the various images in the poem. Philistine, 'con-hering', working new life, flies like itself 'within dove' (CP 113) to Thomas's ark. Sexual drive is usual and irresistible.

The woeful verse (CP 113) indicates the sexual act. Tom Juan, King Lear, Queen Catherine, or Queen, are analogies for uncontrollable sexual passion of the male.

There the dark blades and wanton sighing how doth
To a mossy couch and the swishing of his arms
Haloed and whistled a hundred times.

Before the evening morning climbed. (CP 113)

The image of a hayfield gives the male as the mower and the female as the hay to be mowed. Sexual urge is an impersonal, natural force. At the end of Part I of the poem men is mugged as an island and the woman's limbs have been blinded by the 'luminous charms' of the 'enamored island'; she is caught and 'laid in the scanned sand' (CP 113).

Part II gives Thomas's idea of the woman's view of sex. The male with his passion appears to her as 'A furnace - nostrilled column-numbered/super-or-near sun' (CP 114).
-19-

Close and far she announced the theft of the heart
In the taken body at every age. (CP 114)

Sex, or sexual awareness, is the thief that steals away her innocence.
The darkness of the night is "sensational nightshade" celebrating
her holy unholy union with the "always anonymous beast" (CP 114). But
all this happens in her dreams, in her subconscious mind. Unreinforced
sex floods her mind, but the husband, lying by her side, "has no
"lovely part" in the dream he dreams she dreams."

And out of every cased and well-heeled shall
One voice in chains declaims
The final, deadly, and male
Lividious betrayal. (CP 114)

Sex is not limited to men and women. This physical act is true of
the whole of nature. Every element in nature proclaims the truth that
"there is no love, only sex, in the sea of the unconscious." The
lovelorn sexual drive unites as well as betrays. The six-bird "sings
to the trending hunt" (CP 115) for copulation and reproduction; her
mate thinks of tomorrow's flight of betrayal. After lovelorn copula-
tion comes the terrible loneliness, but the man still dreams of
the "anonymous beast" (CP 115).

Open as to the air to the naked shadow
0 she lies alone and still. (CP 115)

The man "turns up course in the sole night" (CP 115) of his soul. "The
final victors in the whole dream are the score cells, the second
score." They are "saviors" because their coming signifies the end.
of sexual pleasure, and having achieved their objective, they "rest their pulse and bury their dead" in her words. 2 The sperm-cells are the cause of fierce sexual drive that leads to betrayal. Though there can be no love without sex, it is betrayed by it. The male is a deadly temptation for the female and the female faithfully dreams of an "always anonymous beast" for the sake of reproduction.

I make this in a warlike shape (p. 72-76), a poem of the middle period, treats marital love as continuous warfare. The wife's denial of marital favours to the husband is a negation of the cosmic act in which all are involved.

A blade of grass longs with the wind. (p. 110)

The man's anger at being refused is like Jesus' fury against the Philistines:

I make a weapon of an ass's skeleton
and walk the warred sands by the dead town,
Cudgel great air, wave east, and topple sundown.

(p. 76)

The man's self-realisation is balked by the refusal of the woman to have sexual communion with him. The poem speaks of the lustful conquest of the man, and the peace and reconciliation following the consummated act. Love has 'substance' only in the actual being of the lovers. Jesus realises that in love, value is not external to the lovers, but springs from their relation. Lovers have value as an active force that draws them towards each other and opens up possibilities they did not have before.
Not from this source. (P 30) concerns an antithesis crisis in the life of French. The wife's refusal to participate in sexual union frustrates the cosmic purpose of creation. "Refused struck her Join" and she remains barren. The consequent anger keeps her equally unproductive. Creation demands coupling. Domestic quarrel that produces temporary estrangement defeats the force that through the green line drives the flower. Unproductive refusal and consequent anger have produced images of sterility and frustration. Isolated life proclaims the victory of death. "The notable images all have to do with breaking, breaking, or muffing—a falling off, or unbinding."

*** the late flower

Dent like a beast to lap the singular floods
In a land stripped by images. (P 30)

Anger and singular life cannot create a 'bouquet of roses' (P 30). The aetosic sense are left 'bellowing' (P 30). Her refusal and his anger are unfocused both on the physiological and poetic levels. Anger breeds no children. Her refusal, 'like a ball under water' (P 30) shall breed no poems in his mouth.

These speaks of the value of mystical love in the poem Death and Entanglement (P 117 - 119) published in 1941. The occasion of the poem is the fear of air attack, late in 1940. During the air raid when the planes 'voice' death for the Londoners.

One who is most unknown,
Your polestar neighbour, son of another street,
Will give up to his tears. (P 119)
He (an FA pilot) is a Christ-like figure dying for the life of others. His death is the triumph of love over death. He is the "polystar," a guide and comfort to the landmen as to the travellers. He'll bathe the raining blood in the male soul (CP 117). His blood will fertilize the sea. It is love that prompts the unknown stranger, the "one loved least," the sufferer who dies for others, "the last Simon of your sodain" (CP 133).

Levant (CP 174-75), published in 1931, is one of the last poems Thomas wrote before his death. Writing to Princess Gaetan on March 23, 1931, he said, "I have a poem nearly finished, which will be about 80 or 60 lines long and is coarse and violent." One critic sees it as an attempt to examine his inner experience — "those fears of castration and impotence that may have been buried like landmines in his earlier poems."

The poem discusses the question of freedom and marriage through the life-story of the "old man" from childhood to old age. The freedom enjoyed in a licentious career is a direct attack on conventional religion. The poet satirically draws his imagery from the chapel: "black spit of the chapel field," "black beast of the beetle's forge," "the black areas of the holy house." The imagery of sexual possession is given in terms of animals. landlord points out, "with this calf the zoo shows signs of overcrowding; for, besides calf, ram, and sheep, it holds owl, tit, donkey, beetle, bitch, a shoal of fish, and an unidentified black beast. It is about to open the gate to cat, mouse, bull, cow, dove, and hares. ... no poet since Lawrence has loved beasts more or watched more birds."
Unlimited sexual freedom cannot be enjoyed, nor can there be real freedom. Sexual freedom is compromised by its dependence on woman. The rake's life is an alienated life. It involves no loving human relationship. Moreover, the excessive use of sex brings, in course of time, physical exhaustion.

The protagonist's wild life brings about his 'downfall' in the form of physical exhaustion which is expressed in sexual imagery: 'a black sheep with a crumpled horn', 'limp time' (CP 175). When the flesh is weak, the soul, perhaps conscience, from its 'soul housemate' (CP 175) slinks out with displeasure.

And I gave my soul a blind, slashed eye,
Gritty and raw, and a rearer's life,
And I shoved it into the coal black sky
To find a woman's soul for a wife. (CP 175)

The soul's eye, blind and slashed, is an audacious image of the soul's matter. The soul is shoved into the coal black sky to find a woman's soul for a wife. It meets the need for relationship by an act of cosmic phallic aggression. Marriage means the end of the rearing, lively career, the surrender of freedom. Repentance comes, but not for past lives lived, but for the arrival of the 'limp time'. As he feels

Now I am a man no more no more
And a black reward for a roaring life. (CP 175)

Thomas seeks to reconcile marriage and freedom, but the conflict remains. He wants human relationship to overcome an alienated life. But to have human relationship in marriage is to be 'tidy and cursed
in my dove coed room (CP 175). So to be married is to be a man no more. He still unregenerately contrasts the married state with the previous roarer's life. Nevertheless, virtues have their grip on him. As he approaches death

Chastity prays for me, piety sings,
Innocence wetsons my last black breath,
Modesty hides my thighs in her wings,
And all the deadly virtues plague my death (CP 175)

Thomas hopes in his poems that the activity of sex will somehow lead to love in life. The sexual act between man and woman is invested with a grave significance.

In Salam of the Long-legged Hilt (CP 149-157) the poet uses the metaphor of a fishing voyage of a man who uses a woman for bait. The fish he intends to catch is experience. This sexual experience is essential for the development of personality. As it happens in the game of love, the rapacity of the deliciously flavoured flesh of the girl subdues the man. She uses herself to catch him. She may be taken to be the poet's muse. Being overpowered by her the poet creates, and through poetic creation he discovers himself. W.T. McNamara says, 'We find it a symbolic description of courtship, marriage, pregnancy, and parenthood. In the essence we find it a modern variation of the Samson story — a man daringly marries the woman he most desires and is brought by the deed into servile captivity; he becomes a sacrifice in "the furious ex-killing house of love."'
The erotic adventure is conveyed through sexual images. The fisherman has 'A girl alive with his hooks through her lips' and 'All the fishes were rayed in blood' (CP 149). The fisherman hears his 'bait beck in the wake/And muzzle in a shoal of loves' (CP 150).

She longs among horses and angels,
The rainbow-fish bend in her joy,
Floted the last cathedral
Chimes of the rooked byways. (CP 150)

'The anchor rolls like a gull'. 'A squall of birds belovved and fell' (CP 150). The fisherman sees 'the storm smok out to kill/With fuming bow and sea of ice/Fire on starlight, rake Jem's strand' (CP 150). Sexual experience is described in the following lines:

The whirled boat in the burn of his blood
Is crying from nets to knives,
Oh the cheerwater birds and their boatedized brood
Oh the bulls of Biscay and their calves

And making under the green, laid well
The long-legged beautiful bait their wives. (CP 151)

'Huge weddings in the waves' (CP 151) signal conception. The fisherman has laid 'the long, laid minute's bride' (CP 152). He is sexually satiated. He conquer his lust.

On all the wanting flesh his enemy
Thrown to the sea in the shell of a girl. (CP 153)
The fisherman has 'no more desire than a ghost' (CP 154). The
of the womb. Light triumphs over darkness: 'White springs in the dark' (CP 153).

As the fisherman winds his reel, the 'gold gut' drags from under 'mountains and galleries to the crest' (CP 154).

His decks are drenched with mirraces.

Oh miracle of fishes! The long dead bite! (CP 154)

New life comes 'out of the urn' (CP 154) of the womb. 'The dead leads the past' (CP 156). Life is rooted in the past.

The centuries throw back their hair. (CP 156)

The long line of ancestors are born in the child. The old men sing from newborn lips:

Time is bearing another son.

Kill Time! She turns in her pain!

The oak is felled in the acorn.

And the hawk in the egg kills the wren. (CP 156)

Through sex Time is born. Time loses all its significance without creation. It is time that brings forth the child. The birth of new life sounds the death of the living. The anchor which once 'rode like a gull' now 'dives through the floors of a church' (CP 157). The licentious fisherman ends his voyage in a house of love, in domestic, married love. He is 'lost on the land':

He stands alone at the door of his home,

with his long-legged heart in his hand. (CP 157)

Eliot Olson thinks that the poem "has as its bare theme the notion
that salvation must be won through mortification of the flesh ... the process of purification becomes the strange voyage of a lone fisherman; ... since sin will restore all that has been lost." It is not actually the mortification of the flesh with which Thomas is concerned in the poem. The poem rather describes the qualitative change that comes in the nature of love through experience.

REFERENCES


2. Derek Stanford points out that in I & 10 poems, "Thomas depersonalises the acts and circumstances of sex. The lovers in 10 poems are not two human personalities, but rather two polarized genital organs — two articulates progressive and reproductive regions. In other words, in his first book of poems, Thomas severs sexuality from the rest of the issues of individual love." (Dylan Thomas, London 1954, p. 34).


6. "The bad blood of spring" is an image which "refers both to the regeneration which the spring season brings — 'bad' because it inherits original sin even at its creation — and to the misery of the poet's own adolescence, with its religious and sexual frustration and fear". (John Akersman, Dylan Thomas : His Life and Work, J.J.P. 1964, p. 49).


9. "Man, who is merely the candle of the waxen corpse set alight, grows less when each knock of the blood is a push of the spade that digs his grave, and when time brings children into the world as inevitably as bruises to a smashed thumb." (Olson, op.cit., p. 94).
10. D. H. Lawrence says, "The thought of actual sex connection is usually repulsive. There is an aversion from the normal condition of things. The craving to feel to see, to taste, to know, mentally or in the head, this is insatiable. Anything, so that the sensation and experience shall come through the upper classes. This is the secret of our introversion and our power of today. Anything rather than spontaneous direct action from the sexual self. Anything rather than the merely sexual passion... This is our vice, our dirt, our disease." Further Lawrence points out that when the lower sexual centres are aroused they find no sympathy, no connexion, no response from outside, no expression. They are dynamically polarized by the upper centres within the individual. That is, the whole of the sexual or deeper sexual self goes up or in the individual, to his own upper from his own lower centre. The upper centres hold the lower in positive polarity. The lower goes up or inwards. There must be some reaction, and in you get, first and foremost, self-consciousness, in intense consciousness in the upper self of the lower self. This is the first disaster. Then you get the upper body obscuring the lower body. You get the hands obscuring the sexual body, in feeling, in feeling, and in sensation. You get a pornographic longing with regard to the self. By upper centres Lawrence means the 'spiritual centres, the centres of the breast and throat' which we call the centre of dynamic opposition in contrast to the centres of sexual expression below the diaphragm." (op. cit., pp. 120, 129, 137).

11. "The perception of death as the very union and joy in the act of love, in the pose, "they live the handful grave", unites both sexual love and the love of the world-impossible if the poet advocates depth of either sex, instead, love of death itself for his divinification." (John Malcolm Brinnin, op. cit., A Farewell to Dylan Thomas, New York 1949, p. 52).

12. "... love which truly conserves and unifies and light which honestly shows things as they are." (Woodford, op. cit., pp. 106).


17. John Adairson says, "The implication at the close is, of course, that the fox will say love, that the fish does endure a kind of inconstancy. The belief in the inconstancy evolved by the biological process of returning life is characteristic of Thomas. To choose him fox as a symbol of love is a particularly powerful vindication of faith in love." (op. cit., p. 127). This assertion of faith in spiritual love
is a new element in his work: conventional attitudes to death and religion are dismissed in favour of the idea of a metamorphosis in the natural process of creation, and of a belief in love as the supreme spiritual force. (Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work, G. U. P., 1964, p. 82)


21. Tindall, op. cit., p. 239.


24. Thomas writes about the poem in a letter to Hannah Whigham on 1st February 1928.

The poem is, in the first place, supposed to be a document or narrative, of all the emotional events between the coming and going, the creation and dissolution, of January, January born from pride and killed by pride, between the absence and the return of the crucial character (or heroine) of the narrative, between the war of her absence and the accounting of her presence. The "I", the hero, begins his narrative at the departure of the heroine (Stanza one) at the time he feels that her pride in him and in their proud sexual world has been disturbed.

(Stanza Three) All that keen pride come, to him, to have vanished, dawn back, perhaps, to the third month from which it came. (Stanza Three) he sees her as a worm made of contrition, innocent in guilt and guilt in innocence, mangled in virginity, (Stanza Four) virgin in revulsion, and a worm without a worm altogether, reduced to nothing the great sexual strength. (Stanza Five) heart and pride of the world, dying his visitant shall he make her upon her absence, attacks and kills her about her heart, takes him, himself, into him as the result of that murder of love. He falls into the grave (Stanza Six) in his arms he lies, empty of visions and legends: he feels indeed love at his heart. The surrounding dead in the grave describe to him the burden of death and resurrection (Stanza Seven) the worm, the origin of love, for the child born to the dark grave, dips it in dust, then broke it back into light again.

(Stanza Eight) And once in the light, the resurrected hero sees the world with penetrating, altered eyes: the world that was wild is now mild to him, revenge has changed into pardon. (Stanza Nine) He sees his love walk in the world, bearing none of the
sordorous wounds he gave her. Forgiven by her, he ends his narrative forgiveness — but he sees and knows that all that has happened will happen again tomorrow and tomorrow.


23. ibid., op. cit., p. 70.
28. Thomas wrote to Jennifer on January 8, 1942, "Today the pigs hurny, and shilling in a raincoat, have been standing all day with a trap run 14.4. We could see so much, while I've been sitting down trying to write a page about a man who fished with a woman for bait and caught a terrible collection." (Selected Letters, p. 300.)
29. ibid., op. cit., p. 930.
30. ibid., op. cit., p. 33.