SELF AND THE BEYOND

Of the two realms which the self can create or perceive or respond to, the one that lies ‘beyond’ the immediate, concrete reality of the self is more controversial than that of art. In the concluding chapter of *The Study of History*, Toynbee considers the historian’s vocation, an endeavour “to give us a vision of God’s creative activity on the move in a frame which, in our human experience of it, displays six dimensions.” “The physical cosmos” moves “centrifugally in a four-dimensional frame of Space-Time.” It is made five dimensional by “life on our planet.” And, “by a gift of the Spirit,” the human souls are raised to a sixth dimension. The souls, in this larger frame, move, “through a fateful exercise of their spiritual freedom, either towards their Creator or away from Him.” In his movement in a frame of six dimensions, the creative writer’s field of vision is the same as the historian’s, but there is a qualitative difference between his “angle of vision” and that of the historian. (2: 384). His is more complex by reason of the flights of fancy in which the artistic self launches itself. Naturally, the artist, equipped with a more complex set of tools and a more complex angle(s) of vision, should be capable of having the darshan (‘vision’) of God or the realities that lie beyond the self. This raises a few questions that are yet to be answered. What kind of darshan does Lawrence have when his profoundly intelligent creative mind exercises its freedom towards “the beyond”? What kinds of relationships does Lawrence perceive to exist between the self and God or the beyond?

The word ‘beyond’ is used by Lawrence in various senses. In *The Rainbow* itself, the word is first used to refer to the world of culture, education and social recognition that lies outside the Marsh Farm, the world represented by the rectory and
Hall. And, as the novel progresses, it refers to the unknown world and experiences symbolized by the recurring images of the rainbow, the door way and the arches. The "gleaming horizon" and the "rainbow like an archway" invite her to the untravelled world, but the complacent Anna decides to stand firmly on "the Pisgah mountain" and not venture into the new world. Ursula, who seeks adventure in the new world, is forced to choose a life with "no beyond" by the love experience that failed. However, with Ursula the word means much. It signifies more than the sensual experience symbolized by the image of the horses. In the image of the kernel of the acorn it suggests self-realization, and the gleam in the unicellular organism under the lens of the microscope suggests further dimensions of being, the knowledge of creation and existence. By and by, the word also leads to the question of the relationship between the self and the power or force that lies within or without, which may be termed Supreme Self or God or Super Consciousness.

Reason and Faith

There is an interesting episode in The Rainbow handling, in a quarrel between Anna and Will, the conflict in religion between reason and faith, fact and belief, and dogma and scepticism. The whole issue was about the story of Jesus’ miracle of turning the water to wine at the marriage at Cana in the Gospel of John. Anna, taking the sceptic’s position, questioned the belief of Will, who clung to the church, its beliefs and the written word of the Bible most passionately. He was in a rage as he felt she "jeered at his soul." The problem with Will was that his whole soul hated what "the clear eyes of the mind" informed him as false. "In his blood and bones, he wanted the scene, the wedding, the water brought forward from the firkins as red wine." Anna was angry as he defended himself with the written letter of the Bible and let his mind sleep. While he clung to "his own dark-souled desires," she clung to "the worship of human knowledge"
Lawrence here quite unbiasedly presents both sides of the case, without ever refuting the reason behind Anna's argument and without rejecting the relevance of Will's emotional attachment to the beliefs of his religion. Lawrence can appreciate the "unconscious poetry" in religion. But, at the same time, he cannot accept religion when "it has materialized in the fact, in the supposed fact," as Arnold puts it (260).

Ursula's developing consciousness was puzzled by the problem about the "sons of God" in the Biblical story:

1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them.

2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

4. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. (Genesis 6: 1, 2, 4)

Ursula wondered: "Was not Adam the only man created from God? Yet there were men not begotten by Adam. Who were these, and whence did they come? They too must derive from God. Had God many offspring, besides Adam and besides Jesus, children whose origin the children of Adam cannot recognize?" One of the views on the identity of the "sons of God" is that they were fallen angels. A potential problem with this view is that Matthew 22: 30 indicates that angels do not marry. And also "the Bible gives us no reason to believe that angels have a gender, or are able to reproduce" (Who were ...). Lawrence's concern here is not so much the theological question as the conflict in
Ursula between "the facts of daily life" and the facts of religion, which she considered as "eternal truths." "She believed more in her desire and its fulfilment than in the obvious facts of life." She wanted to be chosen as wife by one such as the Sons of God. As, in Lawrence's view, the Bible is a great "novel," it provides an imaginative experience in which one does not look for "the facts of daily life." As Sagar points out, "what the Christian calls grace, Lawrence calls fulfilment" (67).

Ursula expresses her implicit faith in God as a great power of Eternity, as she got reconciled to the fact of the end of her past relationship with Skrebensky:

Who was she to have a man according to her own desire? It was not for her to create, but to recognize a man created by God. The man should come from the Infinite and she should hail him. She was glad she could not create her man. She was glad she had nothing to do with his creation. She was glad that this lay within the scope of that vaster power in which she rested at last. The man would come out of Eternity to which she herself belonged." (494)

The author then adds: "In everything she saw she grasped and groped to find the creation of the living God, instead of the old, hard barren form of bygone living" (494-95). Coming as it does at the very close of the novel anticipating the formation of the rainbow, this hope and belief in God which Ursula affirms has great significance in understanding Lawrence's own beliefs.

**Lawrence and Religion**

Lawrence is religious, as most great writers are, if what is meant by that term is a sincere commitment to Truth and a profound love for humanity. Despite his upbringing by a devout Christian mother and his early, nostalgic attachment to the Bible, Lawrence does not shut himself in the exclusivity of any religion including
Christianity. As he writes to Lady Ottoline Morrell in February 1915, the ideal or the religion “must now be lived, practised.” He writes: “We will have no more churches. We will bring church and house and shop together” (The Letters . . . 224). What he wants is not any more religion, but the fulfilment of the religion that they already have. His words about the individual soul and its relation to the other souls in the same letter suggest a belief akin to pantheism: “He [the prospective member of the ideal community Rananim] shall come because he knows that his own soul is not the be-all and the end-all, but that all souls of all things do but compose the body of God, and that God indeed shall Be” (225).

In “The Spirit of Place,” Lawrence attaches the greatest importance to “the deepest whole self of man” and he expects all human beings to be “living people” and “obey” the voice of their deepest whole self. He says, “Men are not free when they are doing just what they like. . . . Men are only free when they are doing what the deepest self likes” (125-26). In Lawrence, the voice of the deepest self assumes almost the same religious significance as when Gandhi referred to his “inner voice” or “the still small voice that is always speaking within us” in challenging situations demanding momentous, infallible decisions (Fischer 239-40). But what his religiousness is depends on the meaning the words living, organic and wholeness have in the Lawrencean context.

Lawrence’s affirmation of the essence of religion and the universality of religious experience could be seen in Ursula’s reflections on religions in general. It dawned upon her that each religion was only “a particular clothing to a human aspiration.” Only the aspiration mattered. The clothing changed according to national taste or need. “The Greeks had a naked Apollo, the Christians a white-robed Christ, the Buddhists a royal prince, the Egyptians their Osiris. Religions were local and religion
was universal. Christianity was a local branch. There was as yet no assimilation of local religions into universal religion” (342). Coming from a writer born in a traditional Christian community the thought of universality of religion is refreshingly new.

In “Books,” tracing the history of early Christianity, Lawrence points out how, when Rome fell and “the flood of barbarism rose and covered Europe from end to end,” the monks and the bishops of the Early Church, in the little monasteries, “defended themselves against howling invasions” and, in their ark preserved “young Christianity” for posterity. Those Christians were “an unpopular minority.” But the Christians now, says Lawrence, are “in a hopelessly popular majority, so it is their turn to fall” (733-34). He continues:

I know the greatness of Christianity: it is a past greatness. I know that, but for those early Christians, we should never have emerged from the chaos and hopeless disaster of the Dark Ages. If I had lived in the year 400, pray God, I should have been a true and passionate Christian. The adventurer.

But now I live in 1924, and the Christian venture is done. The adventure is gone out of Christianity. We must start on a venture towards God. (734)

Lawrence’s short novel The Man Who Died rejects all the sham values of religion that are against the life of the flesh, and celebrates the natural flowering of love from the living depths of the male and the female. The story begins with the resurrection of the Lord, which is to be given a new meaning which would shock any ‘pious’ Christian not exposed to such ‘heretic’ approaches to holy texts. Lawrence explains the new meaning in the essay “The Risen Lord,” which is very much related to this novel. He says, “Hitherto He had been a sacred child, a teacher, a messiah, but
never a full man. Now, risen from the Dead, He rises to be a man on earth, and live His life of the flesh, the great life, among other men” (574). “The man who died” tells Madeleine: “The teacher and the saviour are dead in me: now I can go about my business, into my own single life” (23). As Lawrence writes in “The Risen Lord,” “now comes the true life, man living his full life on earth, as flowers live their full life, without rhyme or reason except the magnificence of coming forth into fulness.” Leaving the peasant’s cock to have its kingdom and its females, he goes “deeper into the phenomenal world” of “entanglements and allurements” (37-38). And the full meaning of the resurrection emerges in the second part of the novel when, by the touch of the young priestess of Isis-in-Search, who discovers in him the lost Osiris, he feels “his power rise up in his loins” and cries: “I am risen!” (80). Through the passage of days and months their contact is “perfected and fulfilled,” and she is also blessed with the “peace of maternity” (82-83). And when pursued by the forces of the world, he escapes, but with a feeling of satisfaction: “I have sowed the seed of my life and my resurrection, and put my touch forever upon the choice woman of this day, and I carry her perfume in my flesh like essence of roses” (85).

As Graham Hough observes, moving from the leadership novels to Lady Chatterley and The Man Who Died, Lawrence shifts his attention from “the power-mode” to “a new tenderness,” “a fleshly tenderness” (105). And, in leaving the life of the saviour and accepting the warmth of the lady of Isis, “the man who died” rejects the “love-ideal” of Christianity, which exists now “simply as a function of the will,” and accepts the love leading to “carnal fruition,” the love of Isis and the sun (109). As Aldington says in his introduction to Apocalypse, “The Man Who Died is a rejection of Jesus the teacher, though not of Jesus the lover” (xxi). Lawrence himself says in Apocalypse how the Bible was “verbally trodden” into his consciousness and how he
disliked “the ‘parson’ voice” through and through his bones (5).

In The Boy in the Bush, when he describes Jack’s intimacy with the Bible, Lawrence, who is identified with Jack in the novel by Paul Eggert, recalls his own personal experience with the Scriptures: “The bible-language [sic] exerted a certain fascination over him, and in the background of his consciousness the bible images always hovered” (Introd. Xviii; 8). It was the Bible which “supplied his imagination with a chief stock of images, his ear with the greatest solemn pleasure of words, and his soul a queer heterogeneous ethic.” “He never really connected the bible with christianity proper, the christianity of aunts and clergymen. He had no use for christianity proper: just dismissed it. But the bible was perhaps the foundation of his consciousness. Do what seems good to you in the sight of the Lord. This was the moral he always drew from bible lore. [sic]” (141).

Lawrence never cared for the doctrinal aspect of religion, of Christianity. As he says in “Hymn in a Man’s Life,” what matters most is “the sense of wonder,” the “sixth sense” that helps man to appreciate the crescent at evening which “startles the soul with its delicate flashing,” the bean “as it starts to grow and pulls itself out of its jacket” and the ant “busily tugging at a straw.” According to Lawrence, this sense of wonder not spoilt by “knowledge” is “the natural religious sense.” On Crucifixion he says, “I never cared about the Crucifixion, one way or another. Yet the wonder of it penetrated very deep in me” (156-58, 163). Moore records in The Priest of Love Earl Brewster recalling that “towards the end of his life Lawrence no longer objected to the word God and said, ‘I intend to find god: I wish to realize my relation with Him’” (620).

**Religious Imagery**

Lawrence uses religious myth and imagery even in contexts that would be shunned as out-of-place or profane by other writers. In The Rainbow, on the wedding
night, after all the guests were gone, thinking of the immediate prospect of meeting his "foreign" and "unknown" wife in "the intimacy and nakedness of marriage," Tom Brangwen was tormented by his own heart and felt that "the time of his trial and his admittance, his great Gethsemane and his Triumphal Entry in one, had come now." By using, in connection with the coming together of a man and a woman in marriage, the profound religious imagery of Jesus going to the Garden of Gethsemane and Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, Lawrence does not belittle religion, but elevates an ideal man-woman relationship based on love to the level of piety. In the particular context, Lawrence has already prepared the reader for it. A little before the wedding, "when he looked at her, an over-much reverence and fear of the unknown changed the nature of his desire into a sort of worship, holding her aloof from his physical desire, self-thwarting" (57-59). After two years of married life, their coming together is exalted once again by means of religious terms, the holy sacraments: "It was the entry into another circle of existence, it was the baptism to another life, it was the complete confirmation" (95).

In *Women in Love*, waking late in the morning in their London flat, Gerald was filled with a slight revulsion at the sight of Birkin's friends sitting and moving about the room stark naked. In his "heavy, slack, broken beauty, dark and firm" Halliday appeared "like a Christ in a Pieta" (85). Rarely does one find such an 'irreverent' use of religious imagery in fiction. As John Fowles says, "Lawrence asserted again and again that he was religious, indeed deeply respected Christ, at least symbolically, even if he couldn't accept much of what the church and theology had made of him" (95). Lawrence in a long letter to Gordon Campbell wrote: "The old symbols were each a word in a great attempt at formulating the whole history of the soul of Man." According to Lawrence, "the crucifix, and Christ, are only symbols [. . .] they must be seen in their
context” (Moore, *The Priest* . . . 271). In *Women in Love*, as he wanders off in the snow before he falls into the depths and dies, Gerald sees “something standing out of the snow.” It is “a half-buried crucifix, a little Christ under a little sloping hood at the top of a pole.” But he does not stop; he sheers away with the fear that “somebody is going to murder him.” In his dread of imagined murder he seems to utter the name of Jesus, but it does not lead to any escape from the death that follows or the saving of his soul. And, as he falls, something breaks “in his soul,” and immediately he goes to “sleep” (533).

Lawrence was very much interested in the crucifixes he once saw on “the imperial road to Italy from Munich across the Tyrol.” Those crucifixes, long forgotten and unnoticed by the passers-by, must have been planted there on the roads leading to the mountains by the old imperial processions blessed by the Pope (*Twilight* . . . 9). Probably it was one such crucifix that Gerald chanced to see on the Tyrolese mountains. Its appearance in that final most crucial and vulnerable moment of Gerald’s life cannot be without any significance. There have been similar moments dramatized in other great literary works in which the cross appears when the protagonist is faced with ‘damnation’ in one sense or the other. In Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, moments after his confession of his murder of the two old women, poor, innocent Sonia in deep sorrow offers Raskolnikov her cross saying, “We will go to suffer together, and together we will bear our cross!” (417-18). Though Raskolnikov draws back the hand he holds out for the cross, the incident is filled with much symbolic, emotional and moral (and religious, at least for Sonia) significance. And a similar scene involving the same religious symbol but having no emotional or moral significance is the one in Camus’ *The Stranger*, in which the magistrate, during the trial of the homicide Meursault, ‘brandishes’ the crucifix before the accused and asks him if he believes in God. Obviously the question has no meaning for the absurd / existentialist wreck of a
hero, who is to be awarded death sentence for a murder committed by force of circumstances, both physical and mental (84-86). However, in all three scenes, there is a murder thrusting itself into the foreground. In Gerald’s case, he did not know Gudrun would survive his strangling.

As Langham argues, “the drama” of *Women in Love*” is on the familiar theme of modern European novels: “the search for the vanished God or for surrogates of divinity.” Gerald’s invocation of “the disavowed saviour” is, “with its note of awe, its atavistic appeal, is immensely powerful, but its power is in irony.” It reflects “Gerald’s failure to find any sustaining belief: it is a surrender, not a prayer and not an affirmation” (83-84).

Ramon of *The Plumed Serpent* believed that the races of the earth differ from each other as the leaves of one tree differ from those of the other. Each race stands out like trees with their own roots and foliage, and any “commingling” is possible only between the flowers. And only “the Natural Aristocrats,” who are the flowers of every race, rise above national barriers and establish connections. “Only the Natural Aristocrats of the World can be international, or cosmopolitan, or cosmic.” All other people are no more capable of such mingling “than the leaves of the mango tree are capable of attaching themselves to the pine.” Ramon applies this to the religions of the races and says each race should go back to its own gods – the Teutonic to Thor, Wotan and Igdrasil, the Indians to Brahma and the Chinese to the dragons. And it was because he wanted the Mexicans “to speak with the tongues of their own blood” that he insisted on the worship of Quetzalcoatl (285).

**Man and the Universe**

In any man or woman the sense of the Beyond is usually preceded by an awareness of their own nonentity compared with the colossal force of life of which they
are a part. After an experience of “the immensity of passion” Clara and Paul realized “their own nothingness” in “the tremendous living flood which carried them always.” Paul became aware that “they were only grains in the tremendous heave that lifted every grass-blade its little height, and every tree, and living thing.” It is an awareness that came from their own realization of their life through their passionate sexual experience. And in this “belief in life” they felt “a sort of peace each in the other” (430-31). Again on the seaside, where Paul and Clara lived as man and wife in the spring like Sigmund and Helena in *The Trespasser*, Paul watched Clara moving at a distance “slowly across the vast sounding shore” and said to himself: “not much more than a big white pebble on the beach, not much more than a slot of foam being blown and rolled over the sand.” He was confronted with the question, “What is she?” when “he saw her the merest white speck moving against the white, muttering sea-edge” (435).

In Lawrence’s macrocosmic view of life, space and time, everything seems to be in a flux, and what matters is the relatedness. He says in “Art and Morality,” “The universe is like Father Ocean, a stream of all things slowly moving. We move, and the rock of ages moves. And since we move and move for ever, in no discernible direction, there is no centre to the movement, to us. To us, the centre shifts at every movement.” So, “there is nothing to do but to maintain a true relationship to the things we move with and amongst and against.” Every living and nonliving thing is said to be in “its own odd, intertwining flux” and “nothing is true, or good, or right, except in its own living relatedness to its own circumambient universe.” And for Lawrence, “design, in art, is a recognition of the relation between various things, various elements in the creative flux.” And he also defines morality in terms of relationship: “a new relationship between ourselves and the universe means a new morality” (525-26).

How much the self knows and does not know about its world is dealt with in
terms of the images of light and darkness in a significant passage in the penultimate chapter of *The Rainbow* through Ursula's consciousness. The world in which Ursula lived was “like a circle lighted by a lamp.” She had been thinking that this lighted area, “lit up by man’s completest consciousness,” was all the world. “Yet all the time, within the darkness she had been aware of points of light, like the eyes of wild-beasts, gleaming, penetrating, vanishing.” If people turned inward, from the outer world, their illuminating consciousness threw light on the world of sun, stars, the Creator and the System of Righteousness. What they ignored was “the vast darkness that wheeled round about, with half-revealed shapes lurking on the edge.” The shapes in the darkness were wild beasts as well as angels. Ursula’s complaint was that “no man dared even throw a firebrand into the darkness” (437-38). Ursula’s is the mind that has the eternal quest for knowledge, knowledge of what lies even beyond the periphery of human consciousness.

In *Kangaroo*, rejecting Hardy’s fatalistic view that “the Fates lead on the willing man, the unwilling man they drag,” Lawrence seeks to find an answer to the question “What is man?” through a series of negations, (like the process of arriving at one’s real self, which is called “Neti neti” –‘Not this, not this’– in ancient Indian texts) “Man is not a creature of circumstance, neither is he the result of cause-and-effect throughout the ages, neither is he a product of evolution, neither is he a living Mind, part of the Universal Mind. Neither is he a complicated make-up of forces and chemicals and organs. Neither is he a term of love. Neither is he the mere instrument of God’s will. None of that.” According to Lawrence men become fatalists because they persist in some idea of themselves in their mental consciousness. When they follow a new, living idea, Fate leads them onwards. When they follow a dead idea, Fate destroys them. But what Lawrence expects is that each man put off the conscious conceit and listen to his own soul (291-92).
And in relationships, “it is all Call and Answer”; it is only the communion between the dark gods. Somers says it is “the dark god” in Harriet that answers “the dark god” in him. The Call and Answer can be “between the dark God and the incarnate man: between the dark soul of woman, and the opposite dark soul of man: and finally, between the souls of man and man, strangers to one another, but answerers” (295-96). Man, in his supreme being, is “alone, isolate, nakedly himself, in contact only with the unknown God.” And this is, as Lawrence says, “our own way of expressing Nirvana.” Again, man becomes perfected in his individual being only “by his groping, pulsing unison with mankind” “just as a tree is only perfect in blossom because it has groping roots.” (332).

Life and Death

The story “Odour of Chrysanthemums” does not merely present the picture of a collier home in crisis, but it also deals seriously with the question of life and death. Death has its own way and cruelly breaks relationships. For the mother of the dead man, it is “a lie” given to her womb; for the wife Elizabeth, it is “utter isolation” caused to her soul and the child in her womb is “a weight apart from her” (283). Elizabeth wonders whether either the dead man or she herself has anything to do with the children. She feels that both she and her husband are “only channels through which life has flowed to issue in the children.” “The children have come, for some mysterious reason, out of both of them.” However, between death and life, she chooses life; she submits to it as “her immediate master.” But, as held out by the last line, death is “her ultimate master,” from whom she winces “with fear and shame” (285).

In The White Peacock, in a spinney, George and Lettie saw a dying old elm tree, which “was putting out all its strength and loading its bough with the last fruit.” Lettie said, “Trees know how to die, you see – we don’t” (242). The message given by nature
is the acceptance of death when it comes, without any struggle or whimper and living life to the full till the very end. One may here recall the ancient Sanskrit text of Hindu prayer, the Maha Mrityunjay Mantra ("Om Triyambakam Yajamahe..."), which appeals to God to liberate the individual from death for the sake of immortality just as the ripe cucumber easily separates itself from the binding stock (Maha Shivratri).

In The Trespasser, as Siegmund and Helena are awaiting the coming of the moon, a large star "seemed to him a lantern hung at the gate to light someone home. He imagined himself following the thread of the star-track. What was behind the gate?" (105). The gate which seems to presage the impending death of Siegmund, evokes thoughts of what lies beyond death. Like Macbeth speaking of life as a tale told by an idiot signifying nothing, Siegmund, faced with failure in life, questions the significance of life: "For what is a life but a flame that bursts off the surface of darkness, and tapers into darkness again?" (136).

The untimely death of William Morel by disease in the first part of Sons and Lovers is only what Lawrence draws from the story of his own life, from which he does not deviate much. Lawrence’s brother William Earnest, who was “a successful and patronising London clerk,” suddenly “developed pneumonia complicated by erysipelas and died before his mother’s eyes in the little bedroom of his London lodging-house” (Aldington, Portrait... 22). However, the plot which had so far run on the double-lines of the two sons as lovers, achieves more concentration with the narrowing of the interest to the single hero Paul Morel after the death of William.

Mrs Morel had not only passionately loved William but also had “hoped in him so much.” “Almost she lived by him” (73). “Almost, he was like her knight who wore her favour in the battle” (101). But all her fond hopes were brought to naught with William’s death. He died “in a dreadful paroxysm” in his London lodging without even
recognizing his mother, who was nursing him praying for him. As the coffin was brought into the house borne by six men, Mrs Morel cried softly “Oh, my son – my son.” They buried him in the little cemetery on the hillside. Thrown into deep sorrow and despair, “Mrs Morel could not be persuaded, after this, to talk and take her old bright interest in life. She remained shut off.” For months she brooded on her dead son, who “had been let to die so cruelly,” and it was only when Paul had a dangerous attack of pneumonia she was brought back to everyday life. Then she told herself, “I should have watched the living, not the dead” (175). William’s death is a terrible blow and an emotional disaster for Mrs Morel, but it does not have the larger, tragic dimension of Gerald’s death in *Women in Love*.

Gerald Crich’s untimely, unnatural, icy death in the lap of the Tyrolean mountains at the end of *Women in Love* is the inevitable conclusion of the plot. The human drama enacted in more than five hundred pages reaches its climax in Gerald’s death and leaves a sense of ‘tragic waste’ as in a major Shakespearean tragedy. Death as a mysterious process of life is handled by Lawrence at numerous other levels too. Sometimes, at the symbolic level, it becomes a synonym for ‘ecstasy’ in sexual fulfilment or other extreme passion or culmination of passion in the individual’s experience.

Often death by itself is not significant. It is what it does to the living that hurts. In *Women in Love*, on the fear of Diana Criche being dead, Birkin says, “I don’t mind about the dead once they are dead. The worst of it is, they cling on to the living, and won’t let go!” This is what happens in “Odour of the Chrysanthemums.” In Birkin’s words death has at once a literal and a metaphorical significance: “There is life which belongs to death, and there is life which isn’t death. One is tired of the life that belongs to death – our kind of life” (207-08).
The whole of a Sunday evening Ursula was occupied with reflections of death. “Death is a great consummation, a consummating experience. It is a development from life.” “One can never see beyond the consummation.” But one should not baulk the issue; one should be ready “to go on into the unknown of death.” Ursula then goes on to think of body-spirit relationship. She knows, “with the clarity of ultimate knowledge, that the body is only one of the manifestations of the spirit, the transmutation of the integral spirit is the transmutation of the physical body as well.” Ursula seems to believe in a Supreme Soul, which she calls “the pure unknown.” “To die is to move on to the invisible. To die is also a joy, a joy of submitting to that which is greater than the known, namely, the pure unknown” (214-16).

In the novel the words ‘disintegration’ and ‘dissolution’ that are normally used with a negative force, are also used, as Colin Clarke points out, in a positive or positive-negative sense. The process of dissolution may be life-enhancing. As Ursula reflects, “to die is to move on with the invisible,” “but to live mechanized and cut off within the motion of the will,” is “shameful and ignominious.” She believes that “the soul is a prisoner within this sordid vast edifice of life, and there is no escape, save in death” (216). As Clarke explains, “the truly integral spirit then preserves its integrity both by its resistance to dissolution and by its aptness to dissolve; and true individuality is a matter of belonging” (“Living ... 221).

According to Birkin, there are two processes of dissolution and death. One is African and the other belongs to the Arctic north, the white races. While “the West Africans, controlled by the burning death-abstraction of the Sahara, had been fulfilled in sun-destruction,” “the white races, having the Arctic north behind them, the vast abstraction of ice and snow, would fulfil a mystery of ice-destructive knowledge.” Forebodingly, Birkin thinks of Gerald as “one of these strange white wonderful demons
from the north” and associates him with “death by perfect cold.” But Birkin has “another way, the way of freedom,” in which the individual soul achieves “a lonely state of free proud singleness, which accepts the obligation of the permanent connexion with others, and with the other, submits to the yoke and leash of love, but never forfeits its own proud individual singleness, even while it loves and yields” (287).

Going over the snow-slopes and seeing the great shallow among the precipices where Gerald had died, Birkin thinks of the might-have-beens and of the death-mystery. “Whatever the mystery which has brought forth man and the universe, it is a non-human mystery, it has its own great ends, man is not the criterion.” Recalling the saying in French, “God cannot do without man,” Birkin says to himself that God can do without man, just as he could do without the ichthyosauri and the mastodon. “These monsters failed creatively to develop, so God, the creative mystery, dispensed with them.” “In the same way the mystery could dispense with man,” and “replace him with a finer created being,” just as it has replaced the mastodon with the horse, if he “fails creatively to change and develop” (538).

In St. Mawr, Lou Witt reflects on what an individual should do when evil is “rolling in great waves over the earth,” when people direct “all their subtle will against any positive living thing.” Creation and destruction are natural processes. “Creation destroys as it goes, throws down one tree for the rise of another.” “Man must destroy as he goes, as trees fall for trees to rise. The accumulation of life and things means rottenness. Life must destroy life, in the unfolding of creation” (78-79). So, what should the individual do in the face of evil? The author here expresses his own thoughts through Lou’s mind, which sound like moral principles.

The individual can but depart from the mass, and try to cleanse himself. Try to hold fast to the living thing, which destroys as it goes, but remains
sweet. And in his soul fight, fight, fight to preserve that which is life in him from the ghastly kisses and poison-bites of the myriad evil ones. Retreat to the desert, and fight. But in his soul adhere to that which is life itself, creatively destroying as it goes: destroying the stiff old thing to let the new bud come through. (78-79)

**Centres of Primal Consciousness**

Lawrence perceives in the human body, with the help of books from Yoga and Plato down to Frazer, Freud and Frobenius and his own “living experience” and “sure intuition,” four centres of pre-mental, primal consciousness: (i) the solar plexus, “the greatest and most important centre of our dynamic consciousness,” situated behind the stomach, (ii) the lumbar ganglion, which is in the lumbar region, (iii) the cardiac plexus, which is “in the centre of the breast” and (iv) the thoracic ganglion, which is “near the spine, by the wall of the shoulders” (*Fantasia* 34-37).

Of these, the first two centres are below the diaphragm and the other two are above. The solar plexus is the seat of the dynamic knowledge “that *I am I.*” The lumbar ganglion is also the seat of the knowledge that *I am I,* but it is “in distinction from a whole universe.” “It is my distinction from all the rest of things which makes me myself” (34-35). “It is from the great sympathetic centre of the solar plexus that the child rejoices in the mother and in its own blissful centrality, its unison with the as yet unknown universe.” “And it is from the great voluntary centre of the lumbar ganglion that the child asserts its distinction from the mother, the single identity of its own existence and its power over its surroundings” (36). It is at the cardiac plexus one knows the other, the one outside himself or herself. “Here I know the delightful revelation that you are you.” It is from the cardiac plexus the child “wonderingly seeks its mother. It opens its small hands and spreads its small fingers to touch her.” The
thoracic ganglion is “a ganglion of power.” It is from this the child turns to look at the mother scrutinizingly. “The mother is suddenly set apart, as an object of curiosity” (38-40). Lawrence says in “Education of the People,” “At these great centres, primarily, we live and move and have our being.” According to him, the “life-circuit established internally between the four poles [centres], and established also externally between the primal affective centres in two different beings or creatures, this complex life-circuit or system of circuits constitutes in itself our profound primal consciousness, and contains all our radical knowledge, knowledge non-ideal, non-mental, yet still knowledge, primary cognition, individual and potent” (159).

In the theory of the plexuses Lawrence is probably influenced by the Indian Yogic conception of six centres of consciousness in the human body:

1) *Muladhara*, which is at the base of the vertebra, in the region of the organ of evacuation.

2) *Svadhisthana*, which is in the region of the organ of generation.

3) *Manipura*, which is at the navel.

4) *Anahata*, which is in the region of the heart.

5) *Visuddha*, which is in the throat.

6) *Ajna*, which is between the eyebrows.

Ramakrishna finds “much similarity” between the six centres of Yoga and the seven “planes” described in the Vedanta. After passing the six centres the spiritual aspirant arrives at the seventh plane, in which “the mind merges in Brahman” (245). The centres of consciousness are called ‘lotuses’ in Yogic literature, because each centre is said to appear in the form of a lotus to those whose spiritual vision enables them to see them. Vivekananda suggests that “we may think of them as corresponding to the various plexuses of Western physiology” (Prabhavananda and Isherwood 116-17). *Kundalini*,
the Primordial Energy, is "like a sleeping snake coiled up," "having the Muladhara for Her Abode" (Ramakrishna 362-63). The Kundalini, when awakened, passes through the three lower centres and comes to the Anahata, which is said to have a lotus with twelve petals. Kundalini then passes through the upper centres and reaches "the thousand petalled lotus known as Sahasrara," and the aspirant goes into Samadhi, a state in which Kundalini emerges with Siva which is known as "the union of Siva [Supreme Self], and Sakthi [Primal Energy]" (499-500).

Baruch Hochman, who also believes in the borrowings of "Lawrence's psychological system" from "Yoga psychology," points out that in the Yogin, through each of "the chakras [the centres of consciousness]" "the somatic psyche communicates with the cosmic body" to which the chakra corresponds (69). While in the Yogic scheme, the central focus is spirituality, in Lawrence's scheme, as Hochman points out, "sexuality" retains its "centrality." And, "the blood is the chief seat of psychosomatic activity" even as "the immediate sexual engagement of individuals with each other is mediated through the other great centers of somatic consciousness" (71).

The Dark God and the Religion of Blood

Lawrence in his disbelief in the power of the mind-intellect complex to represent or to handle the fullness of being and its vital connections with the universe, turns to the consciousness of the blood, which is the seat of the powerful, positive impulses including sex, and considers all relations established in this to be 'sacred'. He becomes a messiah of the dark god who is said to be the origin of all sexual, sensual passion and who is to be felt in the blood consciousness, which is more vital and deeper than the unconscious discovered by Freud. He denounces the human being listening to the 'head' without seeking the "reality of our blood being" ("Books" 732).

Lawrence writes in one of his letters: "My religion is a belief in the blood, the
flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true. [. . .] All I want is to answer to my blood, direct, without fribblng intervention of mind, or moral, or what-not” (qtd. in Sagar 41).

In *The Rainbow*, Ursula rejected her lover Skrebensky despite the fact that “his body was beautiful, his movements intent and quick, [and] she admired and appreciated him without reserve.” The problem was that “he seemed completed”; he did not arouse any “fruitful fecundity” in her. He would not give her any experience of “the unknown,” the experience the moon gave her the glimpse of. With him she felt “none of the dreadful wonder, none of the rich fear, the connexion with the unknown, or the reverence of love” (473-74). She could not get from him the experience of the “fecund darkness” in the blood beyond their first week in London.

In *Women in Love*, Birkin says we can have “the great dark knowledge” “in the blood when the mind and the known world is drowned in darkness.” Then the whole being is “in a palpable body of darkness” (46-47). As Hochman explains, in Lawrence’s conception there is, besides life, “a species of divinity” of “the dark gods” in “the darkness below consciousness,” in the body. “The dark gods transform one into a demon lover,” the demonic quality being “a manifestation of creative life” and not “a diabolic phenomenon” (24).

In his own times Lawrence came under severe attack for his dark gods, his belief in blood consciousness and his notion of centres of consciousness situated in the body. Conrad Aiken attacked *Studies in Classic American Literature* for its “amazing farrago of quackeries, occultisms, ganglia, and devil-women.” He wrote: “His book swarms with gods (of the ‘soul’); greater or lesser; he attaches a tremendous importance to something he calls the Holy Ghost!, and to complicate the situation, he is all the time
ferociously aware of the 'blood' and the 'ganglia’” (Andrews 30).

In Kangaroo Sommer tells Kangaroo about the “great God who enters from below,” “from the lower self, the dark self, the phallic self” (150). Eugene Goodheart, while arguing about Lawrence’s belief in “the greater life of the body,” draws attention to what Lawrence says in “Study of Thomas Hardy” about the opposition between the Christian and the Jewish ideas concerning body and spirit (93-94). Lawrence says the words of Christ, ‘in the body ye must die, even as I died, on the cross,’ are “a real contradiction of the Old Law, which says, ‘In the life of the body we are one with the Father’ (467). Sommer refers to this opposition between “body” and “spirit” and says:

“Now it is time for the spirit to leave us again; it is time for the Son of Man to depart, and leave us dark, in front of the unspoken God: who is just beyond the dark threshold of the lower self, my lower self.” But Kangaroo rejects Somers’ belief and says there is some “demon” inside Somers which makes him perverse (151-52). However, Somers accepts the dark god as his Lord and Master and submits to the dark majesty that “enters us from below, the lower doors” (196). Somers views the dark god as “the God from whom the dark, sensual passion of love emanates, not only the spiritual love of Christ.” Sommer wants man to submit to the ithyphallic God of “the first dark religions” (224).

As Bertrand Russell observes, considerable elements of phallic worship existed in all the pagan religions of antiquity, and traces of it survived throughout the Middle Ages, “and only Protestantism was finally successful in extirpating all vestiges of it.” According to Russell, customs such as phallic worship and sacred prostitution in temples “probably arose out of the attempt to secure the fertility of women through the favour of the gods, or the fertility of the crops by sympathetic magic.” Russell quotes Briffault describing how St. Foutin’s phallus was rescued from the ruins when his shrine was destroyed by the Huguenots, and worshipped with “abundant libations of
P. Thomas in *Incredible India* traces the prevalence of the worship of the male and the female organs in all primitive religions. "The mystery and the awe the phenomenon of birth inspired led to the deification of those mysterious parts of a woman's anatomy that brought forth living beings into the world." And when the fact of paternity was established, the male organ assumed "a new meaning and a tremendous significance" (76).

Thomas traces the origins of the phallic cult to Mesopotamia, where "the cities vied with one another in erecting huge towers as representations of the phallus." According to him, Egypt and India must have received phallic worship from Syria. In ancient Egypt the phallic cult was inextricably linked with the idea of resurrection. Goddess Isis, finding the genitals of her murdered husband Osiris missing when she went in search of the mutilated body, instituted the worship of a wooden phallus among her people (77-78). In the short novel *The Man Who Died*, "the Risen Lord" has the experience of tender love with the priestess of the temple dedicated to the goddess Isis-in-Search. The goddess, who "was looking for the fragments of the dead Osiris," "found him bit by bit, heart and head and limbs and body," "and yet she had not found the last reality, the final clue to him, that alone could bring him really back to her." By "the last reality" Lawrence means the phallus, which he glorifies as the "other inward sun that streams its rays from the loins of the male Osiris" for which "the subtle lotus," the womb of Isis, is waiting (47).

In India the worship took the form of the cult of 'lingam', the most popular form in which Shiva, the most important god of the Hindu pantheon, is worshipped. In this form, Shiva, the god of destruction, is "endowed with the functions of regeneration as well" (Thomas 81). The most common form of lingam consists of a rounded
perpendicular stone representing the phallus rising out of a round saucer-shaped pedestal symbolizing the ‘yoni’ or the female organ. “The Yoni or Argha receives the consecrated water poured over the Lingam at the time of worship, which flows out through a spout provided for the purpose in the Yoni.” However, in the Linga worship, “the deity adored is the male and not the female nor even the union of the two” and sometimes the Lingams are carved without the Yoni (85). But it should be noted that in Indian philosophy “the Purusha or the male is conceived as passive and Prakriti, the female, as dynamic” (80). In the cave temple at Amarnath in the Himalayan Mountain Ranges, there is an ice lingam, to have darshan of which pilgrims trek the rocky terrains for several days in the summer months. In “The Woman Who Rode Away,” in the high mountain ranges of Mexico, Lawrence describes a “column of ice” hanging “marvellously arrested” from the front of “a great wall of hollow rock.” The icicle is a phallic symbol, and when the sun strikes through it, the most controversial human sacrifice in Lawrence’s fiction is to take place (539-40).

Lawrence’s fascination for the dark gods and blood-consciousness drifts into the cult of blood-sacrifice with the later leadership novels. In Kangaroo itself, the man who seeks “to understand most sensitively the dark flicker of animal life about him, even in a bat, even in the writhing of a maggot in a dead rabbit,” takes a strange interest in “the mystery of blood-sacrifice,” in the pre-Christian world, the sacrifice of one’s victim, in which the blood must have run “beyond the gorse upon the old grey granite” of Cornwall (263). Somers wants “to take up in his veins again the savage vibrations that still lingered around the secret rocks, the place of the pre-Christian human sacrifice” (264). According to Lawrence, “the ideal God is a proposition of the mental consciousness, all-too-limitedly human.” As he believed “in the inward soul, in the profound consciousness,” Lawrence sought his God in the unconscious, in the blood.
Lawrence expects man “to cut himself finally clear from the last encircling arm of the octopus humanity” and “to turn to the old dark gods,” who have “waited so long in the outer dark” (294).

In *The Plumed Serpent*, Lawrence is imagining “a revival of the ancient Mexican religion” and the whole thing is presented through “the dramatized consciousness” of a white woman called Kate Leslie, who is to be persuaded to “a belief in the possibility of restoring the old Gods and reviving the old ithyphallic religion” (Leavis 69-70). The two principal ancient gods of the Mexicans introduced in the novel are Quetzalcoatl and Huitzilopochtli. Quetzalcoatl was the plumed serpent (‘quetzal’ = a bird that lived high up in the mists of tropical mountains; ‘coatl’ = a serpent). Quetzalcoatl was “originally the personification of the trade winds, hence the bringer of spring rains and fertility,” and later he became the god of learning, civilization and priesthood – and in some myths, the creator of mankind.” When a trick was played on him by an evil wizard, Quetzalcoatl, the god incarnate, went away from his people promising to return one day and through self-immolation became the star Venus. Huitzilopochtli was the god of war, who saved his mother the earth goddess from his jealous siblings. While Quetzalcoatl was opposed to the practice of human sacrifice, such sacrifices were made to the war-god (Walker 488-89). It was believed that the gods had once lived in the lake of Sayula, and they would emerge from it.

Like the *kundalini* of Indian yogic thought rising up from the lowest centre in the human body, Quetzalcoatl was conceived as a snake rearing up in the body “reaching beyond the bright day, to the sun of darkness beyond, where is your home at last.” The relationship between Quetzalcoatl and the dark god, “the Master Sun,” was like that between Jesus and the Heavenly Father. “The weeping Mother brought her Son who was dead on the Cross to Mexico, to live in the temples.” But now the Father was
taking back into him womb Mary and Jesus, who was now a dead god; and the old gods like Quetzalcoatl were coming back (157-59).

After a long “mindless” meditation and prayer, Ramon went to the smithy, where he posed for the sculpture of his head “throwing out the dark aura of power, in the spell of which the artist worked” (205-08). The symbol of Ramon’s religion was a snake with its tail in his mouth and a blue eagle with its feet upon the snake, within the loop. Surprisingly the symbol of the Ramakrishna order of monks in India is a snake with its tail almost near its mouth and a swan and a lotus floating on the waters with the sun high above, all within the loop. He said Quetzalcoatl was coming “with a new body, like a star, from the shadows of death” (235-37). However, neither Ramon’s wife Dona Carlota nor his sons believed in the “Quetzalcoatl nonsense”; they questioned his “silly talk about old gods coming back” (247-48).

The written hymns of Quetzalcoatl, which, as Leavis says, “Lawrence must have written very easily, and so with pleasure,” narrated how “the feathered snake” Quetzalcoatl put on the sandals of Jesus and came back to Mexico, while Jesus went back to heaven and Mary to the moon (261-66). Ramon believed that the Christian Church did not possess “the key-word to the Mexican soul,” and the appropriate “clue-word” to their souls was “Quetzalcoatl.” As the priests began to denounce Ramon from the pulpits as “an ambitious Anti-Christ,” Ramon and Cipriano met the Bishop and explained to him what he meant by a Catholic Church. He said, “A Catholic Church is a church of all the religions, a home on earth for all the prophets and the Christs.” The Bishop was shocked to hear Ramon saying that he would remove the holy images from the church with reverence and put the image of Quetzalcoatl in their place (300-02).

As planned by Ramon, amidst the beating of the drums, the images of Christ, the Virgin and the saints were removed from the church at the Sayula, taken out in a
procession and cremated in a little island in the lake. The church was reopened and Ramon sat on a throne near the statue of Quetzalcoatl and Cipriano assumed the living Huitzilopochtli. They got the President Montes declare Quetzalcoatl the official religion of Mexico. Kate, after some initial hesitation, accepted her role as Malintzi, an Aztec fertility goddess. On a ceremonial night, the necks of two conspirators were broken and of the four peons who had come to kill Ramon, one was pardoned by the goddess and the other three were stabbed to death, and their blood, which was brought in a stone bowl, was sprinkled on the fire by Ramon. Kate was shocked by the execution but felt that Ramon and Cipriano were probably right in what they did.

In the ithyphallic cult of blood-consciousness man was considered “a column of blood” and woman “a valley of blood” (The Plumed Serpent 454). Lawrence repeats this in “A Propos of Lady Chatterley’s Lover” and describes marriage as “a correspondence of blood.” Marriage is truly marriage “only when the conjunction is of the blood.” According to him, “the blood is the substance of the soul, and of the deepest consciousness,” and wholeness is to be felt in the blood: “In the blood, knowing and being, or feeling, are one and undivided: no serpent and no apple has caused a split” (324).

The Supreme Self, the Unknown

In The Trespasser, as they lay side by side on the shore, Helena and Siegmund were like “two grains of life in the vast movement,” “amidst the journeying of oceans and clouds and the circling flight of heavy spheres, lost to sight in the sky” (46). Helena wondered as she laid her head on Siegmund’s breast and listened to his heartbeats: “Had the world a heart? Was there also deep in the world a great God thudding out waves of life, like a great heart, unconscious?” (48). Again, when she stood looking at the sea, “she felt herself confronting God at home in His white incandescence, His fire settling
on her like the Holy Spirit. Her lips were parted in a woman’s joy of adoration” (114).

Lawrence here comes very close to accepting the Great Power that works, immanent in
the creations of the universe, but he does not commit himself to any particular belief.

Huxley in his introduction to *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence* refers to Lawrence’s
“extraordinary sensitiveness to what Wordsworth called ‘unknown modes of being’.”
Lawrence could never forget “the dark presence of the otherness that lies beyond the
boundaries of man’s conscious mind” (Huxley xi-xii).

In *Sons and Lovers*, in the complex individual that Paul is, there is also
something of a mystic, which Miriam is afraid of. Among the pine-trees, lying with his
head on the ground, on the dead pine-needles, listening to the sharp hiss of the rain,
Paul feels “as if his living were smeared away into the beyond” and his mind strangely
but gently reaches out to death. “To him now, life seemed a shadow, day a white
shadow; night, and death, and stillness, and inaction, this seemed like *being*. To be
alive, to be urgent and insistent – that was *not-to-be*. The highest of all was to melt out
into the darkness and sway there, identify with the great Being” (350-51).

In *Women in Love*, during his train journey with Gerald, Birkin looks out at the
“beautiful evening with the luminous land and trees” and thinks, “After all, what is
mankind but just one expression of the incomprehensible.” But he also feels that
humanity has become “a dead letter.” It “doesn’t embody the utterance of the
incomprehensible any more” (65). The incomprehensible seems to be Lawrence’s term
for the Supreme Being that lies beyond the comprehension of the human being.

In his essay “Democracy”, Lawrence devotes some time to Whitman’s concept
of the One Identity of all beings as “emanations from the Supreme Being.” This old
Vedantic concept of the Supreme Self is something that Whitman shares with his
contemporaries Emerson and Thoreau. The Over-Soul, which Emerson speaks of, is
“the Unity,” “within which every man’s particular being is contained and made one
with all other” (84). But Lawrence turns away from this concept because he is interested
not in infinity but in coming back to “the old self,” the “little sort of identity” (706). The
soul in Andrew Marvell’s “The Garden,”

[... ] into the boughs does gied,
There like a bird it sits, and sings,
Then whets, and combs its silver wings;
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light. (52-56)

But Lawrence wants the soul to come back from its extended flight and settle in the
individual self: “[... ] and you are only you: and your spirit is only a bird in your tree,
that flies, and then settles, whistles, and then is silent” (706). He wants to ignore all talk
about a Supreme Being, an Anima Mundi, an Over-Soul, an Infinite, all of which he
considers “just human invention” and to “come down to actuality.” However, he
expresses belief in “the identity of the living self” in living creatures. “If we look for
God, let us look in the bush where he sings,” he says (708).

And in Fantasia of the Unconscious there is a clear affirmation of the creator of
the universe along with the soul in the created being. Just as there is a “most exact
central control” to run a machine, in the human body, which is “a very delicate and
complex machine,” there is “a central god,” the soul. Lawrence gives an interesting
analogy for the difficulty of defining “the little soul of the homo sapiens.” The bicycle
would not be able to define the young damsel riding it. Yet it needs the rider; it
“wouldn’t be spinning from Streatham to Croydon by itself.” Lawrence extends this
analogy that proves the existence of the individual soul, to the sun and the innumerable
planets that would not spin without “a rider,” “a rider of the many-wheeled universe”
(55-56). But it begs the question: who is the rider of the rider of the universe? Perhaps, in matters relating to God, thought and logic do not take one far. Perhaps God is to be 'known' and not to be reasoned out.

Don Ramon in *The Plumed Serpent* considers each individual being as a distinct flower (a hibiscus, a yucca flower, a wild daffodil, a white pansy etc. etc.) of the Tree of Life, and the connections between the souls are established only in "the final blossoming," when "we share one mystery with all blossoms, beyond the knowledge of any leaves and stems and roots: something transcendent" (286). At the same time, Ramon also clearly recognizes "the quick" of one's soul in which one is not bound to anybody. It is in this aloneness one has his vital connection with God. Ramon feels that his way is to take his way "alone" to the Star where at last he will have his "wholeness, holiness." He says, "For surely my soul is craving for her consummation, and I am weary of the thing men call life. Living, I want to depart to where I am" (291). Lawrence here seems to have come very close to the connection made between the human self and the Supreme Self in the Hindu religion. The leaf and tree image is also commonly used in the eastern religion to show "the living unity of all creation" (Sarma 113-14).

It is in his essay "Life" we find the most affirmative statements of Lawrence about the unknown and man's relationship with it. According to him, man is "midmost between the beginning and the end"; he has on one hand the primal unknown from which all creation issues; on the other hand, the whole created universe, even the world of finite spirits." He believes that "when he comes into his own, man has being beyond life and beyond death." He is fully aware that man "cannot create himself"; he is "not self-contained or self-accomplished"; he can only "submit to the creator." He conceives man's life as "a flame which burns balanced upon a wick," "between fecund darkness
of the first unknown and the final darkness of the after life, wherein is all that is created and finished” (695-96). Lawrence compares the human position between birth and death to a seed. He says, “like a seed which unknowing receives the sun and is made whole, I open into the great invisible warmth of primal creativity and begin to be fulfilled” (696).

About the beginnings of human life, Lawrence asks vital questions and tries to answer them. On the fact of the “arrival in us from the unknown” he asks: “Did we call for this arrival, did we summon the new being, did we command the new creation of ourselves, the new fulfilment? We did not, it is not of us. We are not created of ourselves. But from the unknown, from the great darkness of the outside that which is strange and new arrives on our threshold, enters and takes place in us.” Like Tagore, Lawrence seeks to capture the unknown with concrete poetic images. He says, as in “a small house on the edge of the forest” one has to keep the windows open and wait for “the spirit of creation” coming towards him (696-98). Tagore says in Gitanjali: “From dawn till dusk I sit here before my door, and I know that of a sudden the happy moment will arrive when I shall see.” (verse 44). And Lawrence adds: “I must watch and wait. Like a blind man looking for the sun, I must lift my face to the unknown darkness of space and wait until the sun lights on me (698).