

“The shimmer is inside really”. D. H. Lawrence’s Resurrection Myth and Wilfred’s Bion’s Transformations in “O”

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Abstract

I analyse D. H. Lawrence’s hostility to the application of Freudian theory to literature in his critical writings alongside the aesthetic theories he develops in his novels Sons and Lovers, Lady Chatterley’s Lover and The Man Who Died which are centred around the Christian mystery of the resurrection. Lawrence develops a life-affirming, reader-response theory of art with parallels to psychoanalysis and Christian theology. Employing the psychoanalytic theories of Melanie Klein and Wilfred Bion, specifically Klein’s writings on projective identification, the paranoid-schizoid and reparative positionalities and Bion’s epistemophilic concept of a transcendent position, “O”, I review second-wave feminist criticisms of Lawrence to posit that Lawrence develops gender epistemologically as a reparative model of communication. In response to Paul Ricœur’s notion of the hermeneutics of suspicion, I consider Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s Kleinian article on ‘paranoid reading’ to conclude that Lawrence aimed to represent a reparative relationship between art and criticism, reader and text. Freudian and feminist criticism often performs a “paranoid reading” of his works, an “error” Lawrence was sensitive to. Kleinian-Bionian psychoanalytic methodology aids in restoring Lawrence’s oeuvre to the spirit in which

he intended it to be read whilst exposing the psychopathological foundations of his enterprise.

Keywords: Lawrence, Klein, Bion, Ricoeur, Transformation

1. Introduction

Partly in response to Alfred Booth Kuttner's "'Sons and lovers', a Freudian appreciation", D. H. Lawrence published *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* and *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. Kuttner's review performs a compelling psychobiographical analysis of *Sons and Lovers* in terms of Freud's notion of the Oedipal complex, focusing on the protagonist Paul's neurosis before extending this analysis to the author. Kuttner's analysis invokes Freud's understanding of art as intrinsically psychopathological in nature, evoking Freud's "scientific" language of catharsis as repressed neurotic impulses are purged.

Lawrence, however, violently objected to such analyses that reduced his novels to personal psychopathology. "My poor book: it was, as art, a fairly complete truth, so they carve half a lie out of it, and say *Voilà*. Swine!"¹ he asseverated.

In contrast, Lawrence posited a "religious" attitude towards life reflected in his aesthetic theories, most significantly, the novel as "the one bright book of life" (Lawrence 1968: 185) and representations of the "Risen Lord" or resurrected Christ.

After a brief introduction to Lawrence's aesthetic theories, I shall demonstrate that a Kleinian-Bionian analysis is a more apposite frame for understanding Lawrence's oeuvre and his relationship to literary criticism by analysing Lawrence's novels, *Sons and Lovers*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and the novella *The Man Who Died*. Klein and Bion's theories clarify Lawrence's aesthetic ideas insofar as he develops gender

¹ F. R. Leavis famously praised Lawrence for being 'on the side of life', cited by Blake Morrison in Morris 2013.

epistemologically as he endeavours to develop the novel as both a sense organ for thinking and model of “reparative” communication characterised by joy and “truth”. This framework corrects the distortions Lawrence objected to in Freudian analyses and indeed, the “paranoid” mis-readings of second-wave feminists, whilst accounting for the sexual sadism and misogyny within his works.

2. Lawrence, Christianity and Romanticism

In “Why The Novel Matters”, Lawrence writes,

The whole is greater than the part... I am man alive... For this reason I am a novelist. And being a novelist, I consider myself superior to the saint, the scientist, the philosopher, and the poet, who are all great masters of different bits of man alive, but never get the whole hog. The novel is the one bright book of life (185).

In this sense, Lawrence can be placed in the tradition of Romantic vitalism² against disciplines that would seek to represent man as a part-object with isolatable faculties as well as the pessimism and fragmentation characteristic of high modernism.

Lawrence develops this aesthetic theory in *Sons and Lovers*. Paul explains of his art,

there is scarcely any shadow in it; it's more shimmery, as if I'd painted the shimmering protoplasm in the leaves and everywhere, and not the stiffness of the shape. That seems dead to me. Only this shimmeriness is the real living. The shape is

² Cited by Morrison in *Ib*.

a dead crust. The shimmer is inside really (Lawrence 1966: 189).

Lawrence's commitment to revealing 'the shimmer within' as it breaks through constraining integuments becomes a theme that increasingly preoccupies Lawrence. It is indicative of a Lawrentian movement in consciousness (against static realism) and is intimately connected with the Christian mystery of the resurrection.

In "The Risen Lord", Lawrence argued,

to preach Christ Crucified is to preach half the truth [...] But the Churches insist on Christ Crucified, and rob us of the blossom and fruit of the year [...] Yet all this is really preparatory, these are the preparatory stages of the real living religion (Lawrence 1968: 553).

For Lawrence, the Christian myth of the resurrection neglects the Risen Christ which represents the culmination of human renewal (or psychological health) and the ultimate affirmation of life and truth. I shall argue that his resurrected Christ aims to depict the unification of transcendence (of psychopathology and egoism due to an epistemophilic truth-drive)³ with the immanence of the libidinal drives in an endeavour to depict a vision of health and truth "more complete" than the "half a lie" postulated by Church doctrine, Freudian theory and literary criticism.

However, Lawrence's depictions of the resurrection are often accompanied by instances of violent hostility towards women. As Kate Millett argued: "The scenes of his condescension are some of the

³ I shall develop this idea using the psychoanalytic theories of Melanie Klein and Wilfred Bion. Bion postulated a transcendent positionality and truth-drive.

most remarkable instances of sexual sadism disguised as masculine pedagogy which literature affords" (Millett 1985: 253). de Beauvoir echoes this complaint in *The Second Sex*⁴. I shall argue that Lawrence's novels betray deep anxieties about maternal containment and often result in an ideation of the phallus, manifesting as misogynistic sexual sadism and didactic masculine pedagogy. To explore the presence of this sexual sadism, I shall employ the psychoanalytic theories of Melanie Klein.

3. Post-Freudians, Klein and Bion

Through her work with children, Melanie Klein pioneered Object Relations Theory which placed less emphasis on biological drives and more importance on interpersonal relationships. For Klein, "The baby's first object of love and hate (his mother) is both desired and hated with all the intensity and strength that is characteristic of the early urges of the baby" (Klein 1998: 306). During the earliest stage of psychic development⁵ (what Klein designated as the paranoid-schizoid position) the mother is split into part objects, the good and bad breast, to compartmentalise the infant's ambivalent feelings of love and hate (life and death instincts) whilst maintaining the nascent ego. For Klein, objects can be both external (a physical person or body part) and internal, comprising emotional representations of these external objects. Klein emphasised that the successful introjection of a good breast is paramount for normal development and successive transition to the "depressive position", in which the splitting of persons into ideal and loved, persecuting and hated, is replaced by ambivalence and concerns for reparation.

⁴ Simone de Beauvoir criticises Lawrence for his phallic ideation, or "phallic pride" that demands a corresponding feminine subordination in de Beauvoir 1997: 254.

⁵ Occurring during the first three months of life.

Wilfred Bion worked with patients suffering from psychosis and soldiers traumatised during WWII. He developed Klein's innovations, particularly concerning projective identification, and emphasised the continuously vacillating relationship between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. Robert White importantly identifies that Bion's "His formulation of the 'container/contained' distinction transforms projective identification from a concept that describes a one-person fantasy to one that describes a two-person interaction and thus serves as a model for communication" (White 2011: 213–214). Deriving from Klein's concept of projective identification and Kantian epistemology⁶, Bion represented the dynamic relationship between container and contained as ♀♂. To become a psychic object, the projected element has to encounter a container, or a thinking function and becomes a sense-organ for thinking. The intrusive projected element is thereby associated with a masculine symbolism, and the containing receptive element with a feminine symbolism⁷.

When maternal containment fails, communication breaks down and the psychotic part of the psyche destroys links between all objects leading to the internalisation of an "ego-destructive super-ego", which attacks links of emotion and reason between objects – as if, love had died⁸. As outlined by Bion's descriptions of the dynamic relationship between container and contained as ♀♂, the healing process is intrinsically erotic and corresponds to Kant's synthetic activity of mind.

Both Klein and Bion were influenced by the Romantic poetry of John Keats. Bion derived the concept of "O" from Keats' notion of *negative*

⁶ Both Klein and Bion believed a portion of the early mind is psychotic.

⁷ "Container-Contained", Encyclopedia, accessed 26 November, 2020, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/psychology/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/container-contained>.

⁸ "Linking, Attacks On", Encyclopedia, accessed 26 November, 2020, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/psychology/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/linking-attacks>.

capability: “when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason” (Hebron 2020). For Bion, “O” is an apophatic, phenomenological concept designed to liberate the analyst from theory, memory and desire and to impart a mode of apprehension that is nonlinguistic (White 2011: 218). “O” is linked with transformation and the “truth” of the analytic encounter. Transformations in K (knowledge) can facilitate transformations in Being, “O”. However, O can only “be-ed”, not known.

For both Lawrence and Bion, psychic transformation is represented through illumination metaphors. For Bion, the analyst is tasked with catalysing meaningful transformations by shining “a shaft of piercing darkness” onto the alienated psychic content and sensitively discerning the faint glimmerings of an emerging restoration towards relationship and linking (Therapy Summit 2020). I read Bion’s paradoxical “shaft of piercing darkness” as a 🌀 probe to intensify the apprehension 🌀 of communication from the patient - performing a suspension, or epoché, of interpretation and containment to prevent the corruption of the patient’s “Truth”. Thus, “O” can only be-ed, and not known – it is transcendent and emergent in relationship. For Lawrence, it is the artist’s task to reveal, 🌀, “the shimmer within”, contained 🌀 within the novel; the “one bright book of life” (Lawrence 1968: 185 [“Why The Novel Matters”]). Employing Klein and Bion’s theories, I shall argue that Lawrence explores how the novel can function as a reparative container, analysing Lawrence’s depiction of reparation and gradual evolution towards “O” in *Sons and Lovers*, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and *The Man Who Died*. Developing this Kleinian-Bionian reading by employing Sedgwick’s notion of “paranoid reading”, I shall argue that Lawrence’s gender politics betray psychopathological underpinnings. Much criticism on Lawrence focuses on exposing the texts’ psychopathology however, such criticism falls prey to Sedgwick’s notion of “paranoid

reading" – a complaint Lawrence echoed – and fails to account for how Lawrence develops gender epistemologically as he endeavours to develop the novel as both a sense organ for thinking and communicative vessel itself, re-establishing erotic links towards an emerging sense of "truth". Employing Bion's notion of epistemophilic "O" demonstrates consonance with Lawrence's depictions of truth in the resurrection myth however, as "O" can only be-ed and not known, Lawrence's attempt to represent this transcendent positionality demonstrates that art is "more complete" than the hermeneutic act of "reparative" criticism.

4. *Sons and Lovers* (1913)

In *Sons and Lovers*, Paul says to his lover, Miriam: "you love me so much, you want to put me in your pocket. And I should *die* there smothered. (my italics)" (Lawrence 1966: 506). This statement betrays deep anxieties about feminine containment that Paul perceives to be engulfing and annihilating. Paul's mother echoes this objection, protesting: "She is one of those who will want to suck a man's soul out till he has none of his own left" (199). The sucking and smothering imagery employed by Paul and Gertrude evoke Klein's depictions of the unconscious phantasies of greed that occur as a part of the splitting defences of the paranoid-schizoid position. The search for an ideal object⁹ from which the infant can derive emotional nourishment is often desperate, aggressive and results in excessive greed to ward off anxieties of loss and envy. Such cycles of greed empty the idealised object of all its goodness and cause even greater levels of persecutory fear as the bad breast is perceived to respond with corresponding retribution. Klein argues, "The child's early attachment to his mother's breast and to her milk is the foundation of all love relations in life" (Klein 1998:

⁹ (Failing the successful introjection of a good breast).

325). However, Klein adds that, “[The] process of displacing love is of the greatest importance for the development of the personality and of human relationships; indeed, one may say, for the development of culture and civilization as a whole” (326).

Gertrude, however, continuously frustrates this process. It is the symbiotically devouring relationship between mother and son that prevents Paul from displacing his primary attachment to his mother onto a substitute like Miriam, accounting for the hostility from Gertrude and as she transfers her own displaced projections onto Miriam, effectively maintaining the idealised relationship between mother and son. That Gertrude accuses Miriam of preventing Paul from becoming a man reveals the deeply Oedipal conflicts underpinning his relationships with Gertrude and Miriam. Paul in turn, displaces his own murderous hatred and rage he harbours towards his mother onto Miriam, responding to his feelings of persecutory containment with retributive aggression: “his blood began to boil with her... Once he threw the pencil in her face” (Lawrence 1966: 186).

That Lawrence notes that Paul “was often cruelly ashamed” suggests that Miriam in no way deserves Paul’s violent outbursts and is the scapegoated victim of his Oedipal aggressions. Later in the novel, Gertrude develops cancer and Paul, feeling she is prolonging her death, covertly euthanises his mother against her will. In bringing about Gertrude’s death, Paul is able to effectively discharge his repressed anger towards his mother who, with her devouring love, stifled his psychic maturity by frustrating his independent love life, forcing Paul into constant rivalry with his father whilst never fully satisfying his Oedipal desires.

In the concluding chapter, “Derelict”, Paul is confronted with his overwhelming fears of loss and lostness due to his “over-strong attachment” to his mother. He risks a break-down, but he emerges freed and transformed. Paul boldly asserts: “He would not take that direction, to

the darkness, to follow her". His quick steps "towards the faintly humming, glowing town" (511) signify the transference of his love to new sources as he recovers the self that had been submerged under her oppressive influence. Lawrence's descriptions of "the city's gold phosphorescence" are indicative of the glimmerings of hope as the effervescent city restores his connection to life, a new, *vital* container that will nourish his emotional and artistic growth.

Paul achieves his freedom with this open ending¹⁰ epitomising Lawrence's modernist experimentation and breaking away from the traditional comedic endings that came to characterise the English novel. The new city appears to embrace him, and Lawrence foregrounds Paul's artistic potentiality as opposed to that of his romantic life¹¹. Lawrence is indicating that art and culture represent a mature displacement and source of containment.

5. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928)

Lawrence betrays similar anxieties about feminine containment in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, captured in Mellors' diatribes against "Lesbian women"; "I tell you the old rampers have beaks between their legs, and they tear at you with it till you're sick" (Lawrence 1972: 177). Similarly present is the impulse to respond with murderous rage: "I could kill them. When I'm with a woman who's really Lesbian, I fairly howl in my soul, wanting to kill her" (*Ib.*). The "Lesbian" women's tearing, "beaked" vaginas represent not only the "bad father's genital" that threatens to castrate the infant boy, but his own anxieties about the

¹⁰ Much like Ursula Brangwen, protagonist of *The Rainbow* (1915) when she beholds a rainbow representing a vision of a new dawn for humanity after she fails to find fulfilment with her love interest, Skrebensky.

¹¹ Here, *Sons and Lovers* differs from a novel like Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* (1850) where protagonist David's artistic success comes secondary and supplementary to his romantic endeavours. Instead, the ending of *Sons and Lovers* resembles the open ending of James Joyce's modernist text *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916).

capacity of his penis's destructive aggression and inability to fulfil the mother in his unconscious phantasies (Klein 1998: 395 ["Oedipus Complex"]). These tearing beaks refuse to receive Mellors and signify instances of feminine containment that are experienced as persecutory. Resolving these Oedipal anxieties is part of the transition towards the depressive position, signifying a shift from paranoid-schizoid splitting to concerns for reparation. According to Klein, "Reparative phantasies represent... the obverse of sadistic phantasies, and to the feeling of sadistic omnipotence corresponds the feeling of reparative omnipotence" (410). I argue that Lawrence dramatizes tensions between sadistic phantasies and "reparative omnipotence" manifesting in a grandiose ideation of the phallus as a creative organ of reparation. As Mellors displaces his love and libidinal desires onto Constance, he develops as an increasingly didactic and prophetic figure. When he first meets Constance, Mellors objects vehemently to her presence:

Here was a trespass on his privacy, and a dangerous one!... He had reached the point where all he wanted on earth was to be alone... Especially he did not want to come into contact with a woman again. He feared it; for he had a big old wound from old contacts. He felt if he could not be alone, and if he could not be left alone, he would die (Lawrence 1972: 74-75).

After this point, the novel becomes preoccupied with healing the psychic wounds of love and war, marking a shift in orientation from isolation towards reparation. Significantly, Lawrence writes that: "the novel, properly handled, can reveal the most secret places of life: for it is in the *passional* secret places of life, above all, that the tide of sensitive awareness needs to ebb and flow, cleansing and freshening" (86).

For Lawrence, this healing process is intrinsically erotic. To Mellors' phallic potency, Constance Chatterley is the idealised receptacle of femininity and by extension, Lawrence's model of the ideal reader. Paul Dawson in "Fictional Minds and Female Sexuality: The Consciousness Scene from *Pamela* to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*", argues that a key innovation of the novel is the representation of the gradual emergence of the inner recesses of consciousness becoming conscious. Pertinently, this "becoming conscious" is gendered. He connects this feminisation of the exposure of consciousness to "The emerging genre of the novel and the contemporary proliferation of conduct books for women in the eighteenth-century" (Dawson 2019: 163). For Dawson,

Two key elements of prescribed Christian practice – discovering the secrets of one's soul, and regularly examining one's conduct – become gendered in this conduct book through its address to a young lady, and eventually become secularized in the generic structure of the novel (166).

In this sense, Connie's consciousness and the figure of the reader conflate in an eroticised feminisation of the reader as passive receptacle of the novelist's insights. Probed and preached at, Mellors needs Connie to both contain and fertilise his disseminations as Lawrence needs his reader¹². Midway through the novel, Connie experiences a painful epiphany:

¹² Much like the passive, impressionable Aaron's relationship to the didactic, Lawrentian Lilly of *Aarons' Rod*. Kate Millet cites that Simone de Beauvoir 'shrewdly observed that Lawrence spent his life writing guidebooks for women.' Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics*, 239. However, I aim to demonstrate that this analysis is too literal; Lawrence's feminisation of 'becoming conscious' and the phallic didacticism of Mellors and the third person narrator is part of a larger aesthetic project of eroticising the components of consciousness and communication.

the England of today, as Connie had realised since she had come to live in it... was producing a new race of mankind, over-conscious in the money and social and political side, on the spontaneous, intuitive side dead, but dead, half-corpses, all of them [...] it was dead... There was only apartness and hopelessness (Lawrence 1972: 133).

Here, Lawrence demonstrates Dawson's notions of the feminisation of becoming conscious as Constance becomes aware of the uncanny "doom" the other characters manage to evade; as Lawrence, third-person narrator, observes: "Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically" (1). However, it is Mellors (and by extension Lawrence, the author) that possess the phallic spark of vital regeneration.

Unlike the culminating violence of *Sons and Lovers*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* holds the tensions between sadism and reparation in careful balance. Despite declaring, "she was a doomed woman [...] I could wish the Clifford and Berthas all dead [...] Their souls are awful inside them... And I ought to be allowed to shoot them" (248).

Mellors refrains from any acts of physical violence. Clifford and Bertha instead represent key psychological antagonists; bullying "love" and abstract egoism.

Destruction in the novel is discharged through Mellors' scorn towards these psychic dispositions and Bertha and Clifford become the novel's sacrificial figures that need to be crucified to allow the flow of transformative regeneration in the novel. According to Marina Ragachewskaya,

[An] important feature characterizing the practice of post-war artists, in their effort to address the ordeal of WWI, is the preoccupation with feelings which might replace traumatic

memories. Bion observes: "love had died. Love for anyone and anything" (Ragachewskaya 2015: 7).

Lawrence writes that Clifford's "capacity for suffering had to some extent left him [...] he had been so much hurt that something inside him had perished, some of his feelings had gone. There was a blank of insentience" (Lawrence 1972: 2). Implicit in Clifford's impotence is that his capacity for love has been impaired. Like Bertha, Clifford develops an increasingly dominating spirit; in these relationships, love has become a battlefield. These dispositions – including Mellors' "complete" recoil from life after the wounds he received in both love and war – represent a defence against psychic pain as identified by Bion; a numbing inertia Lawrence juxtaposes with the courage to love with "tenderness"¹³.

Lady Chatterley's Lover opens with the details of Constance's marriage to Sir Clifford:

They had a month's honeymoon. Then he went back to Flanders: to be shipped over to England again six months later, more or less in bits [...] His hold on life was marvellous. He didn't die, and the bits seemed to grow together again. For two years he remained in the doctor's hands. Then he was pronounced a cure, and could return to life again, with the lower half of his body, from the hips down, paralysed forever (Lawrence 1972: 1).

That Clifford's shattered body only *seemed* to grow together whilst his lower half remains paralysed symbolises the impotence of Clifford's

¹³ Lawrence considered the alternative title: "Tenderness" for this second version of the novel. The word "tender" appears 58 times in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and is one of the novel's most important themes.

vital connection to life. He is dominated by an abstract egoism, in part an indictment against the tyranny of a “ruling” class and the trauma of war itself. *John Thomas and Lady Jane* (Lawrence 1972) contains the added detail that Clifford was wounded on Christmas Day, an inversion of the traditional Christian calendar on which day the messiah was born. Lawrence is keen to emphasise that Connie and Mellors achieve healing through their sexual salvation.

During the trial of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* in 1960¹⁴, key defence “witness”, the Bishop of Woolwich argued:

I think Lawrence tried to portray this relation [between Connie and Mellors] as in a real sense something sacred, as in a real sense an act of holy communion. For him flesh was completely sacramental of spirit (Rolph and Robertson 1961: 71).

Indeed, Lawrence’s depictions of the sexual intercourse between Constance and Mellors are laden with allusions to Christian theology:

With quiet fingers he threaded a few forget-me-not flowers in the fine brown fleece of the mound of Venus [...] “That’s Moses in the bull-rushes” [...] And she felt his hand warmly and softly closing over her tail again, over her secret places, like a benediction (Lawrence 1972: 235).

In the Bishop of Woolwich’s sense, in eluding to “Moses in the bull-rushes”, Lawrence is signaling that the birth of erotic desire is the “strictly relative Commandment” (Watson 1985: 2) for salvation; sanctified by Mellors’ caress of “benediction”; ordained by narrator as

¹⁴ Penguin were taken to court for attempting to publish *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* in violation of the Obscene Publications Act in 1960. They were charged with the crime of publishing obscene material.

"priest of love". In doing so, Lawrence establishes a phallic Christianity; an ethic based on "tender" erotic communication, a model extended to the reparative relationship between novel and reader.

6. *The Man who Died* (1929)

Lawrence develops these themes more explicitly in a novella published the following year. *The Man who Died* reimagines the resurrection of Christ in corporeal form and contains staunch indictments against Christ's continence and abstract *agapē*. Lawrence merges his resurrected Christ with the mythic Osiris whom, having been murdered by his usurping brother Seth, has his scattered remains magically sewn back together by his queen, Isis. The novella develops Klein's notion of reparation – like Clifford's shattered body, the wounds of Christ-Osiris compromise his potency: "in the soft socket above the hip. It was here that his blood had left him, and his essential seed" (Lawrence 1982: 167). However, Lawrence is keen to emphasise that it is only through erotic intercourse with a Priestess of Isis that Christ-Osiris achieves healing and rebirth.

Lawrence criticises the resurrection myth on two counts pertinent to the psychoanalytic themes discussed so far. Firstly, Christ as a potent symbol of truth, is criticised for his insistence on the spoken Word over the corporeality of the body. Secondly, reparative healing is achieved through erotic, not *agapē* love.

On emerging from his tomb, Christ-Osiris finds his way to a temple of Isis:

It was Isis; but not Isis, Mother of Horus. It was Isis Bereaved, Isis in Search... She was looking for the fragments of the dead Osiris, dead and scattered asunder, dead, torn apart, and thrown in fragments over the wide world... she must gather him together and fold her arms round the re-

assembled body till it became warm again, and roused to life, and could embrace her, and could fecundate her womb (149).

Lawrence makes explicit that "Isis in Search" is an intrinsically reparative woman. Restoring the lost phallus of Osiris is key to regenerating the truncated narrative by conceiving Horus, or new Messiah as in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. She heals his wounds and repairs his vital connection with life. At first "all his flesh was still woven with pain and the wild commandment: *Noli me tangere!* Touch me not! Oh, don't touch me!" (157) yet through their relationship, "There dawned on him the reality of the soft, warm love which is in touch, and which is full of delight" (166–167). In contrast to Madeleine, who's "little soul was hard...and grasping, her body had its little greed" (139) in a manner reminiscent of Paul's relationship to Miriam, the Priestess signifies a reparative, non-persecutory containment. The experience of her love *contains* the trauma of Christ's crucifixion as she heals his wounds, most significantly, the persecutory "spear-thrust through his bowels" (138).

Corporeally, Lawrence dramatizes Bion's notion of maternal reverie. The physical and psychic trauma (β -elements – the raw material of thinking but not thinking itself) experienced by Clifford and Christ-Osiris are so unbearable and threatening that they are perceived as synonymous with a bad breast and consequently evacuated. The capacity to forge links with others is severed. However, Lawrence dramatizes through the Priestess's tenderness the process of maternal reverie; a good breast that subjects the β -elements to alpha function¹⁵ increasing the patient's capacity to not only bear psychic pain, but

¹⁵ For Bion, consciousness requires a "sense-organ for the perception of psychic qualities". Bion diverges from Freud's descriptions of "impressions of objects" as a form of thought by emphasising the need for an external recipient to subject β -elements to alpha function to develop an apparatus to contain and make sense of these β -elements in a way that is tolerable to a nascent ego through "maternal reverie".

experience joy and transformation. She heals Christ-Osiris' wound restoring his erotic orientation to life, corporeally *and* epistemologically; something that Clifford is unable to do. Lawrence is emphasizing that rebirth and truth emerge in relationship and by extension, the relationship between reader and text, artist and critic.

Christ-Osiris is in touch with not only "the Holy Ghost [of] the self" but the libidinal drives, signifying the unification of *res cogitans* and *res extensa* and gradual evolution towards "O": "It doesn't need understanding" says the man who died.

Lawrence's allegorical overtones indicate that he is attempting to explicate a transcendent positionality. In this sense, the novella differs from the realism of *Sons and Lovers* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and demonstrates significant resonances with Bion's "truth-drive" to gradually evolve "O". As Grotstein identifies, "Ultimately, it would seem that Bion's legacy of truth aims at integrating finite man with infinite man" (Grotstein 2004: 1081). Indeed, when the man who died first emerges from the tomb, Lawrence writes,

He was risen, but not as man; as pure God, who should not be touched by flesh, and who should be rapt away into Heaven. It was the most glorious and most ghostly of the miracles (Lawrence 1982: 138).

The drama of the novella is the integration of Christ's infinite resurrected being in corporeal form. He first emerges "neither of this world nor of the next" (129), yet Lawrence inverts the Christian myth as "he touched her [the Priestess] with the poignancy of wonder, and the marvellous piercing transcendence of desire" (169). In his reworking of the resurrection, Lawrence's use of Christ dramatizes his insistence of the importance of the "religious faculty" (Lawrence 2007: 216) for

conceiving the unconscious; the culmination of his aesthetic theory to reveal "the shimmer within".

The priestess dramatises, like Constance's awakening and the analyst's interpretive epoché, an epistemophilic drive sensible to the light of the internal world; "invisible suns" – kindling her own flourishing as his return penetration fertilises her teleological development as Isis, Mother of Horus. As her unfolding bud contains the return "violet-dark" light, Lawrence portrays a dynamic model of container and contained. In dramatizing these tertiary positionalities, psychopathology informs and is transmuted in the novel as Lawrence searches for an evolving container of "truth"¹⁶.

7. Lawrence's Eroticised Hermeneutic.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading", invokes Paul Ricoeur's concept "the hermeneutics of suspicion" to delineate between paranoid and reparative readings. She criticises the "de-mystifying" theory of "exposure" that came to characterise criticism post Marx, Freud and Nietzsche: the three "masters of suspicion", arguing:

it is only paranoid knowledge that has so thorough a practice of disavowing its affective motive and force and masquerading as the very stuff of truth. In the paranoid Freudian epistemology, it is...inconceivable to imagine joy as a guarantor of truth.

¹⁶ As Christ was bridegroom to the Church which, in "The Risen Lord," Lawrence argued corrupted the 'truth' of the resurrected Christ, the feminised church doctrine represents sterile concepts that correspond with Bion's descriptions of a failure of maternal containment and consequent paranoid-schizoid functioning. Stagnant concepts are thus perceived as persecutory integuments that need to be reconceived for rebirth and renewal. However, for Lawrence, the containing function of the reparative novel is vital to facilitate this process.

Sedgwick's criticisms of "paranoid" readings echo Lawrence's complaints that his critics: "carve half a lie out of (my italics)" his novel. Kuttner's language of sickness and purgation corresponds with Sedgwick's notion of "paranoid reading" as he endeavours to expose the sickness underpinning "the mystery of artistic creation". Lawrence's essays on the novel demonstrate hostility to such paranoid mis-readings as Kuttner and later, Millet's analyses¹⁷ and cohere with Sedgwick's insistence on the importance of reparative reading as he endeavours to depict relationships characterised by joy and "truth".

Lawrence's dramatization of the transition between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positionalities is made possible by the reparative, containing function of the novel. His sexual sadism emanates from intense anxieties about feminine containment that consequently result in a preoccupation with reparative omnipotence, manifesting itself in the didactic third person narrator and diatribes of Oliver Mellors to direct and "enlighten" the reader. Thus, for Lawrence, the task of the novel is not merely to contain but to *reveal* and penetrate into the inner recesses of the reader's psyche – coaxing or seducing them into "enlightenment". To reveal "the shimmer within" in this way emulates the divine revelations of God. This is gendered ♂ and is *a priori*. To contain such revelations within the novel, "the bright book of life" and to allow

¹⁷ Millet's analysis rests upon seeing Lawrence as employing a Freudian view of female sexuality in Freud's sense that anatomy is destiny and that women as castrated men. Millet argued 'The scenes of sexual intercourse in the novel [*Lady Chatterley's Lover*] are written according to the "female is passive, male is active" directions laid down by Sigmund Freud. The phallus is all; Connie is "cunt," the thing acted upon, gratefully accepting each manifestation of the will of her master.' Millet, *Sexual Politics*, 240. However, in employing Bion's epistemological theories, I attempt to demonstrate that Lawrence eroticises the faculties of becoming conscious – ♂ sense data and ♀ concepts - as developed from Kant's epistemology whereby Millet's notion of Connie as "cunt" corresponds to the Kantian "concept". Bion's notion of maternal reverie demonstrates that ♀ containment has an *active* shaping role in the construction of consciousness. Thus, Millet's is a mis-reading. Millet takes pains to expose the Freudian errors in Lawrence's corpus that he himself disavowed. As discussed above, Lawrence is protesting against very such 'paranoid' analyses of excessive exposure and suspicion.

“the shimmer within” to be made conscious assumes Bion’s notion of a femininised sense-organ of perception and is *a posteriori*. That Lawrence’s model of containment is skewed with an inherently masculine function depicts a model of communication reminiscent of projective identification. Mimicking this primitive form of communication compels the reader to contain ♀ the novelist’s insights by identifying with protagonist Constance’s plights, thus participating in Lawrence’s dramatization of the process of becoming conscious through her erotic awakening. Bion argued,

It would be a valid observation to say that psychoanalysis cannot “contain” the mental domain because it is not a “container” but a “probe”; the formulation that I have tried to further by using the symbols ♀ and ♂ minimizes this difficulty by leaving ♀ and ♂ as unknowns whose value is to be determined (Bion 2020: 127).

As outlined by Bion’s descriptions of the dynamic relationship between container and contained as ♀ ♂ the novel becomes both a sense organ for thinking and communicative vessel itself – establishing erotic links towards an emerging sense of truth.

However, where the psychoanalyst seeks to interpret, the novelist represents. Gary Watson cites Lawrence’s famous dictum: “Never”, Lawrence actually wrote, “trust the artist. Trust the tale”. This may or may not be describable as “a cardinal principle of modern hermeneutics” (Watson 1985: 2).

This novelistic representation is hermeneutically prior to the analyst’s explication of this process and Lawrence is concerned to emphasise that it is more complete, thus claiming a truth value, relative and contextualised beyond the Freudian preoccupation with health. In

endeavouring to demonstrate the consonance between Lawrence's treatment of the resurrection and Bion's descriptions of "O", I conclude that Lawrence's aesthetic theory culminates in a desire to depict that this "truth" – "the shimmering protoplasm" (Lawrence 1966: 189) – is corporeal, eroticised, emergent within relationship and prior to "knowledge" or the "word".

Kleinian-Bionian theory clarifies Lawrence's gender politics insofar as he develops gender epistemologically to evolve the novel as a "sense-organ" for thinking and therefore healing, which can only occur within a reparative, containing relationship. Lawrence saw critical theory as deduced from the novel as a container of insight – a feminine sense organ of perception with masculine didactic features: a model for communication. In this sense, art and theory, religion and science can be conceived of as cross-fertilising disciplines. The theoretical act of clarification functions as a masculine probe to the novel's feminine organ of containment, however, Lawrence is key to emphasise the reparative, "trusting" nature of this relationship in distinction from a "paranoid" penetration of text.

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