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Ancient Art and Ritual and *The Rainbow*

Typically, when critics discuss the relationship between D. H. Lawrence's art and the theories of the Cambridge School of Classical Anthropology it is in the context of his thematic concern with dying and reborn gods and Sir. J. G. Frazer's observations upon vegetative rites and deities.¹ When Lawrence was at work on *The Rainbow*, his first great ritualistic novel, however, it was not *The Golden Bough* but Jane Ellen Harrison's *Ancient Art and Ritual* that was nearest at hand. In a letter written shortly after he had begun to revise the first draft of *The Rainbow*, he thanked a friend for sending him some books, amongst which he singled out Harrison's book as meriting special gratitude: "But the book on *Art and Ritual* pleases me most just now. I am just in the mood for it."² In contrast to Frazer, whose essential concern is with the alimentary aspects of ritual, Harrison's focus in this work is upon the originally religious character of mimesis and art, with the originally communalizing function of ritual, and with the relationship between the loss of religious faith and the beginnings of secular art.

My purpose in the following study, accordingly, is to explore the relationship between *Ancient Art and Ritual* and *The Rainbow* with a view towards suggesting that while Frazer may be useful in a discussion of the primitivistic aspects of Lawrence's general philosophy,³ it is by way of Harrison that we best come to understand the primitivistic dimensions of his aesthetic creed and practice. In turn, I also hope to suggest that Lawrence's "quarrel with Christianity," as it is called, is best approached not as an irresponsible expression of romantic "neo-paganism" but as a classical criticism of the anti-ritualistic character of Protestant theology, liturgy, and art.

Before turning directly to Harrison's study and *The Rainbow*, however, it is first profitable to consider the circumstances under which Lawrence encountered her work; for as he himself suggested, he came upon *Ancient Art and Ritual* when he was "just in the mood" for it. An analysis of the nature of that mood will help to explain the catalytic im-

pact of Harrison's study on Lawrence and why he ultimately came to disagree with certain of her conclusions.

Lawrence was in Italy during the period in question, in the small village of Fiascherino, and much that his Protestant and English background had failed to provide with respect to ritual and emotional religious response he was here given to witness at first hand. On one occasion, for example, he attended a peasant wedding, an all day type of wedding beginning with mass in the early morning and continuing through into the afternoon with an enormous feast and great festivity. He and Frieda were having an "awfully good time" when they were called away by the arrival of some of their English friends: "It was so queer," Lawrence recalls in his letters, "to leave the feast and descend into the thin atmosphere of a little group of cultured Englishmen The wine was running very red—then suddenly we must descend to these five English poets. It was like going into very rare air. One staggered and I quite lost my bearings" (*CL*, I, 249).

The one experience which seems most to have contributed to the mood which accounts for Lawrence's interest in theories of ritual, however, was his witnessing of the peasants' observation of Holy Week. "There is a great disturbance in the house today because the priest is coming on Sunday to bless the house," he explains in a letter to a friend (*CL*, 1, 270-72). On the one hand, as he sees it, "These people don't really *believe* any more, but they go on with the old performances." On the other hand, these performances are not merely formalities observed for the sake of traditional propriety; "the Church ritual is very real today." It is something which the peasant personally experiences and carries over into his daily life: "'Eh,' said Achille, on Good Friday morning (the Church makes Christ die on Thursday, to have time to perform their business by Easter Sunday, Felice says) [a curious piece either of accommodation or degeneration, if the peasants were not simply putting Lawrence on in the manner that initiates are wont to do]. 'Eh,' said Achille, when Elide went for the bread, 'we can sin as much as we like today—the *Signore* is dead, and he won't see us.' And they half mean it. Isn't it queer? In their heads, they don't believe a thing." The operative phrase, as far as Lawrence's puzzlement is concerned, is that the peasants' belief is not an intellectual faith, "in their heads," for here his own Protestant education comes into conflict with his intuitions as a religious artist. Religion, for these people, was not a matter of doctrine or Sunday school lessons, but something emotional and practically adhered to. The death of Christ was to them a reality, not an article of faith; it really happens, and if Christ is really dead, He then is not aware

of man's transgressions. Possibly Lawrence also intuitively recognized that Achille's explanation of the Good Friday amnesty is the correlative of the evocation of chaos which precedes the new creation or resurrection in pagan ritual.

For the moment, however, he was speculative and confused; "A man, Gamba, was saying to me yesterday that the Latin nature is fundamentally *geometrical*: its deepest aspiration is essential geometry—Form. He says that is the real meaning of the Renaissance—geometrical Form, in contrast to Mediaeval mysticism. In the Renaissance, he says, the Roman spirit appeared again, materialistic, mathematic, individualistic, and overthrew the Germanic mediaeval influence." Ultimately this was the attitude that Lawrence adopted with respect to the historical-cultural implications of the Renaissance, but as an explanation of the attraction to ritual on the part of the Catholic peasants the theory did not satisfy him: "I am trying to swallow it, to digest it. It doesn't go down very easily. Because if the nature of the Italian is rationalistic and materialistic, what of the procession I tell you of now?"

The procession which made Lawrence question the validity of the Gamba theory was the Good Friday ritual of the carrying of Jesus to his tomb. "It was a still night with a great moon, but the village deep in shadow, only the moonlight shining out to sea," he recalls; "And on all the window-sills were rows of candles trembling on the still air, long rows in the square, big windows, very golden in the blue dark shadow under a lighted sky." What was to be an objective piece of evidence in a debate concerning the nature of the Italian temperament has clearly turned into a evocation of the ritual which Lawrence witnessed and an attempt to generate a similar response in his correspondent. "Then the procession came out of the church, the lads running in front with wooden clappers, like those they scare birds with at home. Such a din of clappers." Feeling he is addressing someone not familiar with the symbols he explains, "And the noise means the grinding of the bones of Judas," but the explanation enhances rather than detracts from the accumulating evocation of emotional response. "Then came the procession—a white bier with drawn curtains, carried high on the shoulders of men dressed all in white, with white cloths on their heads—a weird chanting noise broken by the noise of the sea, and candles fluttering as the white figures moved, and two, great, gilt rococo lanterns carried above. Then, with all the clatter and the broken mournful chanting and the hoarse wash of the sea, they began to climb the steep staircase between the high, dark houses, a white ghostly winding procession, with the dark-dressed villagers crowding behind." After such a description,

one scarcely needs Lawrence's concluding comment: "It was gone in a minute. And it made a fearful impression on me." But his final observation is instructive: "It is the *mystery* that does it—it is Death itself, robbed of its horrors, and only Fear and Wonder going humbly behind. *You* must come to Italy. Soon all this will be gone—the Church is nearly dead." Here was a religion which worshipped the mysterious rather than attempted to explain it, a religion whose whole orientation was emotional rather than intellectual.

"I think in Italy one is interested in different things from in England," Lawrence wrote in a letter in which he criticized another writer, who had written on "Pan," for his "savant's" knowledge of the primitive (*CL*, 1, 250). What his sojourn in Italy provided, was a personal, probably his first contact with a ritualistic culture, the type of contact essential for an artist who realizes that his own culture has failed and who wants to formulate a new religious idiom. In Italy he was made to see that religion at its best and in its most primitive form was ritualistic rather than doctrinal, pagan rather than "Christian," and that in this emotional form alone did it satisfy man's "spiritual" yearnings. At the same time he was aware that rituals he witnessed were losing their authority and degenerating into rite and superstition, and that even in Italy the age of ritual was drawing to an end. Intuitively he understood the nature of ritual and its function, but he needed some kind of intellectual and theoretical explanation of the history of ritual in order to place this intuitive knowledge into a perspective that would enable him to use it as a basis for his art. And it is here that Jane Ellen Harrison came to his aid, for not only did she explain the nature of primitive ritual but she also established a direct relationship between ritual and art.

The central thesis of *Ancient Art and Ritual* is that art and ritual arise out of a common human impulse and that in the ancient world art was a function of ritual. A ritual, as Harrison defines it, is an imitation, and though part of the religious character of ritual derived from the fact that what was imitated was some aspect of the cycle of death and rebirth focused in the concept of the god Dionysius, ritual was also religious in the sense that it was based upon the belief in the power of imitation; an imitation could make what was imitated happen again. What distinguished ritual from simple spontaneous action or from the simple desire that something should happen was just this mimetic aspect, and it is this mimetic dimension of primitive ritual which constituted primitive art. So that *ab origine* art and ritual were coincidental. What also distinguished ritual was its collective nature, both in the sense that it was

performed by a group in the interests of the group, and also in the sense that the art existed only as it was performed and every man was a participant in the action. Art had no independent status, nor was it the thing imitated and hence distant from the individual; art, rather, was the thing done, or more precisely the doing.

Harrison's central conclusion is that art in the modern sense originated when the mimetic impulse became detached from its religious context and practical purpose. Occasioning this separation was the combined loss of faith in the efficacy of ritual and the influx of a historically-oriented culture, a "heroic" culture, as she calls it, because of its faith in the power of an individual rather than the collective energy of the group. The dissociated actions of ritual became the plot of the drama, with this plot as a vehicle for the presentation of the lives of heroes and heroic exploits; the verbal aspect of the ritual imitation similarly became detached from its organic context and became first mythological history and then theology.

From Italy, in December, 1913, Lawrence wrote that the books which fascinated him at the time were those concerned with "the raw material of Art I love travels and rather raw philosophy and when you can lend me books about Greek religions and rise of Greek Drama, or Egyptian influences—or things like that—I love them. I got a fearful lot out of a scrubby book *Art and Ritual*—one of the Universal Knowledge Shilling series. It is stupidly put, but it lets one in for an idea that helps one immensely" (*CL*, 1, 250).

To judge from the context, one of the ways Harrison helped Lawrence was in tracing the origin of art back to ritual and conversely demonstrating the artistic nature of ritual. For if art was inherently related to ritual, then through the agency of a particular kind of art, a new kind of ritual community could be established; if ritual were not purely a church function, then the decline of church ritual did not mean that one was to be forever deprived of experiencing a ritual response. Furthermore, the theory that art was originally a part of ritual and not the autonomous, aesthetic and impractical construct it is in the modern world provided a justification of his own evangelical attitude toward art and his belief that art should have a practical religious effect upon its audience, that it should be a living utterance.

Through Harrison, therefore, Lawrence found a way of getting away from art and back to ritual; ironically, however, his attitude in this respect is in some ways the opposite of Harrison's own, and it would seem to be in this respect that Lawrence found her good idea "stupidly put." Though she respects ancient ritual and emphasizes the necessity

of art for the well-being of the community, Harrison's outlook is essentially evolutionary: "Ritual must wane that art may wax," is her basic premise. The virtue of art lies in its detachment from life, and the history of art is the setting of "the spirit free for contemplation." For this reason, though she applauds the motive she is antagonistic to the Expressionist movement of the time: "The Expressionist is, then, triumphantly right in the stress he lays on emotion; but he is not right if he limits life to certain of its more elementary manifestations; and still less is he right, to our minds, in making life and art in any sense coextensive. Art, as we have seen, sustains and invigorates life, but only does it by withdrawal from these very same elementary forms of life, by inhibiting certain sensuous reactions." Accordingly, where Harrison finds the communal function of art best exemplified in the modern world is in the social novels of the nineteenth century—those of Galsworthy and Bennett—and in the epics of Tolstoy. These writers, she feels, rescued art from the personal and elitist thing it had become during the romantic period and restored it to the bourgeois; in their works she finds evidence that art is "beginning again to realize its social function, beginning to be impatient of mere individual emotion, beginning to aim at something bigger, more bound up with a feeling towards and for the common weal."⁴

Lawrence was in total agreement with her reaction against the egotistical basis of romantic writing, but as his critical comments on the writers in question and on the novel in general indicate he viewed the modern social novel as the final stage in the divorce of art from its ritual origins and the absolute death of art as a religious and communal mode:

This is the trouble with the Forsytes. They are human enough, since anything in humanity is human, just as anything in nature is natural. Yet not one of them seems to be a really vivid human being. They are social beings. And what do we mean by that? . . .

It is because they seem to us to have lost caste as human beings, and to have sunk to the level of the social being, that peculiar creature that takes the place in our civilization of the slave in the old civilizations. The human individual is a queer animal, always changing. But the fatal change today is the collapse from the psychology of the free human individual into the psychology of the social being . . .

It seems to me that when the human being becomes too much divided between his subjective and objective consciousness, at last something splits in him and he becomes a social being. When he becomes too much aware of objective reality, and of his own isolation in the face of a universe of objective reality, the core of his identity splits, his nucleus collapses, his innocence or his naiveté perishes, and he becomes only a subjective-objective reality, a di-

vided thing hinged together but not strictly individual.

While a man remains a man, before he falls and becomes a social individual, he innocently feels himself altogether within the great continuum of the universe. He is not divided nor cut off. Men may be against him, the tide of affairs may be rising to sweep him away. But he is one with the living continuum of the universe. From this he cannot be swept away

But if man loses his mysterious naive assurance, which is his innocence; if he gives too much importance to the external objective reality and so collapses in his natural innocent pride, then he becomes obsessed with the idea of objectives or material assurance; he wants to insure himself, and perhaps everybody else: universal insurance. The impulse rests on fear. Once the individual loses his naive at-oneness with the living universe he falls into a state of fear and tries to insure himself with wealth. If he is an altruist he wants to insure everybody, and feels it is the tragedy of tragedies if this can't be done. . . .

When one reads Mr. Galsworthy's books it seems as if there were not on earth one single human individual. They are all these social beings, positive and negative.⁵

The social passion of writers such as Bennett and Galsworthy was to Lawrence, therefore, an utterly materialistic thing and confirmed social prejudices rather than dispelled them; their art promoted the idea of society rather than generating the sense of community, and what was needed to generate the sense of community was the evocation of emotional response, not social criticism or prescriptions. Thus whereas Harrison's theory of the original ritualistic character of art provided Lawrence with an ancient sanction for his own attitude toward art as a priestly and shamanistic function and though he agreed with her thesis that the history of modern art was the waning of ritual, he lamented this evolution and viewed her final conclusion concerning the positive direction of the contemporary social novel as very "stupidly put."

At this very point, however, Harrison first becomes valuable to us, and one of the central problems which *The Rainbow* poses begins to resolve itself; namely the apparent awkward and arbitrary shift from the mythic opening to the realistic and novelistic concluding chapters.⁶ The usual defence against the charge that this shift disunifies *The Rainbow* is that the theme of the novel is the decline of cultural cohesiveness and religious faith and that Lawrence is using respective narrative modes as indices to the progressive stages in this decline.⁷ By way of Harrison's theory of the development of art out of ritual and Lawrence's dissatisfaction with her attitude toward this process, we can not only provide such a defence with a surer footing but we also come to a better understanding of the nature of the shifts in narrative mode.

Tom Brangwen's courtship of Lydia Lensky is the subject of the first chapters of *The Rainbow*, but the focus is not upon marriage in the conventional social sense but rather in the mythological hierogamous sense, the mating of earth and sky.⁸ In the presence of Lydia, for example, Tom senses a gigantic force, "crushing him, as sometimes a heavy sky lies on the earth"; in winter, and when there is a distance between them, "Brangwen went about at his work, heavy, his heart heavy as the sodden earth."⁹ The object of the marriage ritual as of all primitive rituals is the regeneration of the cosmos, the new birth, and it is just such a reaction that Brangwen experiences from his contact with Lydia: "A swift change has taken place on the earth for him, as if a new creation were fulfilled, in which he had real existence. Things had all been stark, unreal, mere nullities before. Now they were actualities that he could handle" (p. 26). Thus the actions of this first section, the things done are presented in the language of ritual; the narrator is at one with the action, and the art of these opening chapters is a function of the ritual; the style of these first chapters, that is, is in itself a part of the ritual, the language is not a vehicle for the presentation of a ritual but perfectly united with the actions of the narrative. Hence it is not an omniscient narrator or spectator but a participant, as it were, who describes the consummation of the marriage: "And he let himself go from past and future, was reduced to the moment with her. In which he took her and was with her and there was nothing beyond, they were together in an elemental embrace beyond their superficial foreignness" (p. 54).

This opening section then is the most "religious" of all the sections of *The Rainbow*, and yet the subject of religious belief is never introduced—with the significant exception of the discussion of Lydia's background, who in terms of Harrison's explanation represents the influx of an alien culture which precipitates the end of the primitive synthesis (which also explains why Lawrence reverses the traditional allocations and has her represent the "sky" in contrast to Tom Brangwen's representation of the earth). This section is also the most artistic in the sense of high mimesis, yet there is no consciousness on the part of the characters nor any impression created by the narrative mode that their mimetic actions are artistic. Nor is it out of a sense of propriety that Tom adheres to the formalities of courtship; nor does marriage as a social contract play any role in their lives or does the courtship end with the marriage. Rather the emphasis is upon the necessity of the characters to act as they do and upon their perfect belief in the efficacy of the ritual.

The most telling example here is Lawrence's presentation of Tom Brangwen's decision to ask Lydia to marry him. The stimulus is provided by the natural world: "As he worked alone on the land, or sat up with his ewes at lambing time, the facts and material of his daily life fell away, leaving the kernel of his purpose clean. And then it came upon him that he would marry her and she would be his life" (p. 35). Notice he does not conceive the idea of asking her; he is not speculating on the possibility that they will marry; he knows they will and for this reason her personal wishes as well as his do not enter the picture. What follows seems at first to contradict this interpretation: "She might refuse him"; but the passage continues, "And besides, he was afraid of her." Brangwen wishes there were the possibility that she might refuse, but he knows if he asks her she will not, and he knows he must: "So he sat small and submissive to the greater ordering." Similarly, when his mood changes to one of anticipation and desire over the thought of their marriage we seem to have a standard case of wish fulfillment: "And if it should be so, that she should come to him!"; but again the passage continues, "It should be so—it was ordained so." Brangwen's hesitancy over the idea of asking her, finally, seems at first indicative of his uncertainty, but ultimately stems from his perfect belief in the efficacy of the courtship ritual: "He was a long time resolving definitively to ask her to marry him. And he knew, if he asked her, she must really acquiesce. She must, it could not be otherwise." The outcome of his absolutely stark proposal confirms his belief, and the effect of the antiphonal proposal is one of their many hierogamous consummations: "Aerial and light everything was, new as a morning, fresh and newly-begun" (p. 41).

The actual marriage ceremony for Brangwen in turn becomes a rite of initiation. At the wedding table he sits with his wife: "His heart was tormented within him, he did not try to smile. The time of his trial and his admittance, his Gethsemane and his Triumphal Entry in one, had come now" (p. 53). In reversing the biblical order of the two events and in making them simultaneous, Lawrence is attempting to suggest the coincidence of the beginning and the end which characterizes primitive religious sense and distinguishes it from the sequential and eschatological character of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Similarly, in using this image from the "myth of the *single hero*" and applying it to the concept of *union with another*, Lawrence is attempting to suggest the non-individual character of primitive ritual just as in uniting this sacred language with the concept of sex he is attempting to suggest that Brangwen responds to marriage as an initiation not into the social community but an initiation into the mysteries of life, which to the primitive

are sexual mysteries rather than "spiritual" ones. The initiation, furthermore, is not concluded on the wedding night, but rather continues throughout his life, just as the marriage of Tom and Lydia is never presented as a legal contract into which they entered at a certain time but rather as a relationship which they must perpetually renew in their sexual encounters.

Ritual and the religious atmosphere associated with it, therefore, permeate the first section of *The Rainbow* and make this section evocative of the primitive phase in the history of the development of art. There is a formulaic quality about both the language and the actions of the characters but no formality or formalism; the experiences of Tom and Lydia are extremely simple and repetitive, but they are simple in the sense of elemental and they are repetitive not of each other but of the eternal creative formula. Because of the fusion of the narrative and the plot and because the mode of life of these characters is inherently ritualistic, finally, there is a noticeable absence of such artistic devices as symbolism, metaphor, or analogy. If art in primitive ritual consists in the thing done—the ritual actions and words—then art here consists in the narration of the actions of the characters; because these characters are ritualistic in their actions one does not need to make them ritualistic through allusion of whatever variety. There is in this first section, in short, a perfect fusion between narrative and plot, between narrator (spectator) and characters (participants), between art and ritual.

If ritualistic best describes the narrative style of the Tom-Lydia sections, dramatic best defines the narrative mode of the Will-Anna sections. Not only is marital strife the focus of this second section but the plot quite literally progresses toward a specific climax, "Anna Victrix." In contrast to Tom and Lydia, also, Will and Anna have rather definite personalities; at the same time, paradoxically, whereas Tom and Lydia were not called upon to be anything more than their unindividualized selves, Will and Anna are made to represent opposing cultural temperaments and historical forces. Thus the *plot* of this section is the same as the first one but the interest is no longer centered upon the plot itself and its ritualistic effects. Rather the marriage plot has become the vehicle for the expression of various ideas—specifically conflicting ideas concerning art and religion.

Similarly, whereas in the first section the narrator was coincident with the narrative action, here the narrator stands aside and functions as a stage director or chorus rather than as a participant. For example there is the opening of the chapter in which Anna and Will consummate their marriage: "Will Brangwen had some weeks of holiday after his mar-

riage, so the two took their honeymoon in full hands, alone in their cottage together" the narrator observes objectively (p. 140); this commentator returns again to maintain the continuity between that "act" and the one on religion which is to follow: "On Sunday they went to church. They made a line of footprints across the garden, he left a flat snowprint on the wall as he vaulted over, they traced the snow across the churchyard. For three days they had been immune in a perfect love" (p. 153). The juxtaposition here effected by the narrator between the "religious" scene of their passion and their passionate quarrel over religion is also another typical dramatic technique of this section.

Religious expression in art is, as we have seen, one of the central subjects of the second generation couple, and Will Brangwen's passionate response to the religious symbols does contain a residue of the ritual function of art. Also Will is an artist, and his attitude toward his art, particularly his attempted carving of the "Creation of Eve", is ritualistic. The panel is something Will had always wanted to do, and he begins work on it immediately after he and Anna have confessed their love for each other. Through Lawrence's description of his work we see that the carving functions both as his anticipation of and preparation for his marriage to Anna; the subject of his carving is the creation of Eve and in creating this scene Will is not only imitating the creation story but also imitating the Creator Himself: "Now, Will Brangwen was working at the Eve. She was a thin, a keen, unripe thing. With trembling passion, fine as a breath of air, he sent the chisel over her belly, her hard, unripe, small belly. She was a stiff little figure, with sharp lines, in the throes and torture and ecstasy of her creation. But he trembled as he touched her . . . He trembled with passion, at last able to create the new, sharp body of his Eve" (p. 116). If ritual is the imitating of what has been done in the interests of having it happen again, then Will's creative impulses are ritualistic.

But Will Brangwen never does finish his carving. Immediately after their semi-satisfactory consummation he thinks of returning to it with renewed fervor: "He loved to go over the carving in his mind, dwelling on every stroke, every line. How he loved it now! When he went back to his Creation panel again, he would finish his Eve, tender and sparkling. It did not satisfy him yet. The Lord should labour over her in a silent passion of Creation, and Adam should be tense as if in a dream of immortality, and Eve should take form glimmeringly, shadowily, as if the Lord must wrestle with His own soul for her, yet she was a radiance" (p. 145). The ostensible reason why Brangwen does not finish the carving is his wife's ridicule of the relative proportions of the various figures as a

symptom of male impudence: "She jeered at the Eve, saying, 'She is like a little marionette. Why is she so small? You've made Adam as big as God, and Eve like a doll' " (p. 171). Anna views art as egotistical expression, wish-fulfillment, and personal vindictiveness (see her interpretation also of the meaning of the gargoyles, pp. 201-02).

There is an element of truth in Anna's criticism of Will, but it is also important to realize that she herself represents a new attitude toward art, and one that is antagonistic to its ritual dimensions. Furthermore, it is profitable to consider the role that Will's *subject* plays in the episode and the implications of his unfinished art to his relation to Anna. To put it simply, Will is preparing for a hierogamous union with Anna through his imitation of a non-hierogamous version of creation; his subject is a theological rather than a mythical or a ritualistic one. The creation, in Judaeo-Christian terms, is a subject which by definition cannot be imitated in the belief that it will happen again. This is the real reason why Will can not finish his panel, and because the ritual expression is abortive his passionate desires remain unsatisfied.

Thus Will Brangwen is really presented very sympathetically in *The Rainbow*; what is criticized is not his desire to imitate the past but the nature of the material available to him for imitation. Of course the solution to the situation in which he finds himself is to discover new material, but Will Brangwen is a character in *The Rainbow* not its author, and as a character his function is to dramatize the dilemma of an artist who yearns for ritual but knows that the religion of his culture has degenerated into rite and historical moulds, and is aware as well that the religious symbols of his culture no longer command any emotional response or authority.¹⁰

Frequently the following key passage is quoted as evidence of Will Brangwen's attachment to the outer formalities of religion rather than to its living spirit: "It was the church *building* he cared for." But cared for means attended to, not loved or desired, as Lawrence's next statement makes clear: "and yet his soul was passionate for something." Similarly, that Brangwen wanted "to have the intimate sacred building utterly in his own hands, and to make the form of the service complete," indicates his feeling that ritual requires flesh and blood, human participants, to be a ritual, and his desire to force the church into some relationship to him. So that finally it is not Will who betrays the real meaning of religion but the church who has betrayed him: "He was like a lover who knows he is betrayed, but who still loves, whose love is only the more intense." It is not Will who is false or unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices of ego: "The church was false, but he served it the more atten-

tively" (pp. 205-06). Will is attempting out of his own emotions to compensate for the infidelity of the church's promise to satisfy man's religious yearnings. As such he is a pathetic example of the plight of the artist when ritual yields to drama, and religion to history and theology.

The style of the last or Ursula section of *The Rainbow* has so generally been recognized as in the best tradition of the novel of social criticism that no evidence in this respect is required. The style of this section is prosaic, realistic, and analytical; the narrative proceeds in chronological fashion and focuses upon the development of the individual into a mature social being, in the case of Ursula upon her achievement of independence and at the same time upon her search for a suitable marriage partner. Like the first section of *The Rainbow*, this last is formulaic, but the formulae here seem to be those of the conventional novel.

This final section, however, is also characterized by Ursula's frustrated desire to experience religion in a ritualistic manner, and her pragmatic rejection of Christianity coincides with her decision to become a citizen and contributor to society.¹¹ Thus as Lawrence presents it in this last section of *The Rainbow*, social consciousness is the secular correlative of the loss of ritual and negative evidence of the absolute need of the individual for ritual; in contrast to Harrison, Lawrence sees social consciousness not as the evidence of a rejuvenation of the primitive communal spirit but rather as indicative of the ultimate consequence of the divorce of religion and art.

Lawrence's emphasis upon the mechanism of modern life is directly related to his criticism of industrialism, but mechanistic action and artificiality are also used as metaphors to suggest the correspondence between the degeneration of life and art. The long passage in which Ursula ridicules civic deportment, after her bitter discovery that university education was not an initiation into the mysteries, for example, is structured upon the idea of society as a stage and social roles as parts of a performance: "all their talk and all their behaviour was sham, they were dressed-up creatures" who "assume selves as they assume suits of clothing"; "Her soul mocked at all this pretence. Herself, she kept on pretending. She dressed herself and made herself fine, she attended her lectures and scribbled her notes. But all in a mood of superficial, mocking facility" (p. 448). Similarly, when Skrebensky is not in his own social setting, he can assume the role of spectator and laugh at the performance: "So many performing puppets, all wood and rag for the performance." Moreover although neither they nor he understand the play, what is being performed is the drama of Oedipus: "He watched the

citizen, the pillar of society, a model, saw the stiff goat's legs, which have become almost stiffened to wood in the desire to make them puppet in their action, he saw the trousers formed to the puppet-action: man's legs become rigid and deformed, ugly and mechanical" (p. 449). The formulaic actions which ensured life in the primitive world have become the mechanical actions which destroy life in the modern world.

In the character of Ursula's "Uncle Tom," Lawrence also uses the motif of spectatorship to portray the modern aesthetic and cynical spirit. Like Winifred Inger, he is "superior to the Zolaesque tragedy," and calmly explains the plight of one of his servants: " 'Her husband was John Smith, loader. We reckoned him as a loader, he reckoned himself as a loader, and so she knew he represented his job. Marriage and home is a little side-show. The women know it right enough, and take it for what it's worth. One man or another, it doesn't matter all the world. The pit matters. Round the pit there will always be the side-shows, plenty of 'em.' " Ursula reacts with horror to his explanation and also to the "ghoulish satisfaction" which her uncle and Winifred seem to take in observing the spectacle: "Ursula looked out of the window and saw the proud, demon-like colliery with her wheels twinkling in the heavens, the formless, squalid mass of the town lying aside. It was the squalid heap of side-shows. The pit was the main show, the *raison d'être* of all" (p. 348). But Tom Brangwen needs this drama of the pit, for "he was the eternal audience, the chorus, the spectator at the drama; in his own life he would have no drama" (p. 330).

Finally, one should notice that Tom Brangwen's worship of the machine is presented in exactly the same terms as Will Brangwen's attachment to the dead formulae of church ritual. Though Tom and Winifred have no attachment to industry or anything at all, they "remained there among the horde, cynically reviling the monstrous state and yet adhering to it, like a man who reviles his mistress, yet who is in love with her. She knew her Uncle Tom perceived what was going on. But she knew moreover that in spite of his criticism and condemnation, he still wanted the great machine. His only happy moments, his only moments of pure freedom were when he was serving the machine. Then and then only, when the machine caught him up, was he free from the hatred of himself, could he act wholly, without cynicism and unreality" (p. 349). Like Will, Tom Brangwen is in some ways really a pathetic character, for his love and service of the machine are an index to the absolute need of the human being to unite with some non-human principle of life and to coordinate one's actions with some eternal system. Winifred is the same: "There, in the monstrous mechanism that held all

matter, living or dead, in its service, did she achieve her consummation and her perfect unison, her immortality" (p. 349). Man cannot live without religion and ritual, and if the religion of one's culture is unable to provide the means of satisfying these needs then the need only expresses itself in these perverted shapes.

To emphasize this point Lawrence makes this description of the new cult of "Moloch" follow from Winifred Inger's scientific reduction of religion to a matter of self-projection and wish fulfillment, and in the process seems to be striking an oblique blow at Freud's theory of the origin of religion in particular and at such post-Kantian interpretations of mythology as Ernst Cassirer's, in general. For Ursula's benefit, Winifred took "religion and rid it of its dogmas, its falsehoods," by demonstrating through comparative mythology that all religions expressed the same ideas. But instead of seeing in this situation evidence of the importance of religion, Winifred views it as destructive of the awe and faith which religious practices command: "Winifred humanized it all." Furthermore, according to Winifred, whereas the old motives behind religion were fear and love, because of our knowledge that religion is a purely human matter, modern religion dispenses with the motive of fear and directs the motive of love into socially beneficial channels: "There is really nothing to fear. The motive of fear in religion is base, and must be left to the ancient worshippers of power, worship of Moloch. We do not worship power, in our enlightened souls" (p. 341).

As Lawrence presents it, however, it is this very reduction of religion to a theory of human psychology that has generated the worship of the machine. Winifred and Tom Brangwen do not believe in anything beyond themselves, and because they do not they spend their entire lives futilely trying to escape from this prison of their own making. Their influence inoculates Ursula and it is an inoculation of "Poisonous despair": "It was the terrible core of all her suffering, that she was always herself. Never could she escape that: She could not put off being herself" (p. 342). To the primitive, individuality is a punishment or at least an evil and one of the purposes of ritual is to enable the participant to escape from self-consciousness and become part of the collective whole; Ursula is all too aware of the evil but does not have any such solution.

The alien force which precipitated the change from ritual to drama according to Jane Ellen Harrison was a rootless culture whose literature consequently glorified the heroic exploits of individuals; in Athens this alien literature consisted in what is generally called the Homeric material. If we couple this observation with the accepted theory that the

Odyssey signals the birth of the novel, and remember that Lawrence's attitude toward the modern novel and the movement from ritual to art was negative, we begin to see one reason for his introduction of the *Odyssey* in the paradigmatic opening chapter of *The Rainbow* (p. 5). His central concern in that chapter is to dramatize the change from the pagan ethos of the Brangwen men to the vicar-oriented world of the Brangwen women, from a world in which the cycle of the seasons and the marriage of earth and sky are the patterns which are imitated and desired to a world in which it is the exploits of Odysseus and Penelope which are enacted and applauded by the aspiring Brangwen women. Lawrence introduces the *Odyssey* in short in the interests of suggesting the relationship between religious values and artistic modes, and this example thus becomes a directive to his practice throughout *The Rainbow*. The style of *The Rainbow* changes from the ritualistic first section to the dramatic second and finally to the novelistic last for the purpose of organically demonstrating the inherent relationship between art and religious belief and the consequence of a divorce between them.

If Harrison's theory of the emergence of art out of ritual provides us with the theory needed for a justification of the change in narrative modes in *The Rainbow*, her definition of the nature and function of ritual also best enables us to understand the dimensions of Lawrence's criticism of Christianity in the novel. A ritual, as she explains, is a mimetic action; it is an imitation of something that has been done, and in this sense it is re-presentational. But the purpose of ritual is not commemorative; rather its object is the generation of the emotion which was originally associated with the event which is imitated and the ritual is performed in the belief that the re-enactment will cause the original event to recur. In this sense, then, ritual is pre-presentational. If we turn now to Lawrence's long polemic on the Resurrection we discover that his central complaint is the loss of ritual so defined.

What has occasioned the loss of ritual, as Lawrence presents it, is the Christian attitude toward life and its spiritualization of the concept of the Resurrection. What is imitated in primitive ritual is the cycle of creation—death and rebirth. One desires the experience of death as a stimulus to the desire for life; the emotion which is the object of ritual is "the hope and the fulfillment," here and now, but it is the death of this emotion which is the object of Christian practices. Ritual consists in the desire to really experience that which one imitates; but how, as Lawrence puts it, can one fulfill this desire when the ritual of rebirth ends with the death of the "body"; ritual is totemic and its purpose is to unite the participants with that which is being imitated, but how can one

become one with a god whose concluding words are *noli me tangere*: "Then how could the hands rejoice, or the heart be glad, seeing themselves repulsed." Primitive ritual, as we have observed, is both representational and pre-presentational; Christianity, because of its eschatological premises, has no room for the pre-presentational aspect, and consequently the representational aspect of its rituals becomes commemorative. "But why the memory of the wounds and death? . . . Surely the passage of the cross and the tomb was forgotten? But no—always the memory of the wounds, always the smell of grave-clothes?" One goes through the ritual of the passion and death, then, not in the interests of being reborn but in the interests of remembering what Christ did; the whole purpose of Christian ritual is to prevent one from forgetting, whereas the whole purpose of primitive ritual is to abolish time by having what happened before happen again.

Throughout his lament on the nature of Christianity Lawrence persistently uses the word "drama" with respect to church rituals. For example, "it was becoming a mechanical action now, this drama: birth at Christmas for death at Good Friday. On Easter Sunday the life-drama was as good as finished," or "Alas, that so soon the drama is over" (p. 279). The repetition of the word and the context in which it appears indicate that he is not using the term loosely nor in its conventional adjectival sense. Thus on the one hand he seems to be emphasizing the origin of Christian practices in primitive rituals and that it is this pagan residue that is of value; on the other hand he associates the rise of Christianity with the factors which occasioned the rise of the drama; namely, the decline of faith in the efficacy of ritual and the influx of an alien spirit which resulted in the historicization of the mythic formulae.

It has been said of *The Rainbow* that "Religion in this book is stripped from any relation to the life of the community . . . Religion is not the basis for a moral scheme; the emphasis throughout is put on the subjectivity of the experience . . . And as a result, religion does not serve . . . as a means of establishing a relationship with their fellow beings."¹² The observation is both right and wrong, for there is not one but three types of religious expression in *The Rainbow*. There is first the religion which is nothing more than the basis for a moral scheme and social duty, religion in the orthodox sense, and ironically as Lawrence presents it it is this religion which has no collective function and accounts for the second or subjective type. Because religion has become detached from life it no longer functions as a socially cohesive force, and because it has become a matter of art and theology it is a dis severing force for Anna and Will and the cause of Ursula's schizophrenia. Thus

the subjective religion of the characters is not presented as the ideal but rather the consequence and index to the decline of the original collective nature and function of religion. There is, however, a third type of religious expression in *The Rainbow*—ritual—and this type does promote collective unity.

In discussing the relationship between totemism and ritual Harrison explained that what the totemic dancer expressed in his actions "was not *mimesis*, but 'participation,' unity, and community. Later, when a man begins to distinguish between himself and his strange fellow-tribesmen, to realize that he is *not* a kangaroo like other kangaroos, he will try to revive his old faith, his old sense of participation and oneness by conscious imitation."¹³ Lawrence's presentation of the actions of Anna and Will immediately following their argument concerning the nature of Christian symbolism is best understood as such a totemic ritual. Anna loves the intense and far look of Will's eyes at the same time that she wants him to focus on her. But he continues to see beyond her; his eyes "remained intent, and far, and proud, like a hawk's, naive and inhuman as a hawk's. So she loved him and caressed him and roused him like a hawk, till he was keen and instant, but without tenderness. He came to her fierce and hard, like a hawk striking and taking her. He was no mystic any more, she was his aim and object, his prey." In imitating the nature and actions of the bird and its prey the couple come to experience the emotions of the hawk; in Lawrence's terms they become linked to the bird through blood-consciousness.

"Then immediately she began to retaliate on him. She too was a hawk." Because of the effectiveness of the ritual, because they really have become at one with that which they imitate, Lawrence no longer uses the simile, as this device suggests similarities but not total identification. "If she imitated the pathetic plover running plaintive to him, that was part of the game. When he, satisfied, moved with a proud, insolent slouch of the body and a half-contemptuous drop of the head . . . her soul roused, its pinions became like steel, and she struck at him. When he sat on his perch glancing sharply round with solitary pride, pride eminent and fierce, she dashed at him and threw him from his station savagely . . ." (p. 159). The community to which Anna and Will become united through this ritual is not the human community, but the idea that the human community is the only kind is in itself a symptom of the degeneration of the primitive religious spirit. It is *mana* not man which constitutes kinship.

There are numerous other ritual scenes in *The Rainbow* but the role of ritual as a collective cohesive can be better suggested, perhaps,

through a consideration of the way the major ones have been handled than in this instance by turning to the scenes themselves. The typical procedure in handling the scene of Anna and Will in the cornfield, for example, is to notice the mythological background of the harvest festival, to observe that the motions of the couple as they put up the sheaves constitute a dance whose object is the bringing of them together in the "birthpain of love." But after exhausting every detail of its symbolic significance (and frequently this takes pages), almost invariably there follows an apology for not having done justice to the scene, whereupon the practice is to quote the lengthy passage and usually in its entirety.¹⁴ What such a practice suggests, I believe, is not that the scene is so highly symbolic that it cannot be adequately analyzed but that it is the emotion generated by the scene which makes it unanalyzable. The scene, that is, is not merely the description of a ritual; it *is* a ritual. We can explain the emotion which the scene is designed to generate for Anna and Will but we cannot explain the emotion generated in ourselves by reading the passage. Aside from others, one of the big differences between ritual and drama is that in drama there is a distinction between spectator and actor whereas in ritual there are only participators. The usual situation in reading fiction is the dramatic situation; Lawrence's whole effort in scenes such as this is to make the situation the ritualistic one, to make the reader a participator. The measure of our difficulty in analyzing the effectiveness of such scenes is consequently the measure of Lawrence's success.

"It just fascinates me to see art coming out of religious yearning," Lawrence explained in his attempt to suggest his attraction to *Ancient Art and Ritual*; "—one's presentation of what one wants to feel again, deeply." (*CL*, I, 234). What Lawrence wants and wants his readers to feel again is the power of ritual, so in accordance with the theory that ritual is an imitation of what one wants to happen his method is to present a ritual. Since, as he here suggests, he realizes that the object of ritual is the generation of emotion, collective emotion, his ritual is successful if it has succeeded in making us emotionally respond. Thus there are two related but different levels of ritual in *The Rainbow*: there is first the rituals in which the characters participate in their desire to satisfy their emotional and religious yearnings and then there is the ritual of our participation in their ritual. The necessity of understanding these two dimensions resides in the fact that we can be emotionally satisfied even when the characters fail to achieve satisfaction, as for example in Ursula's actions on the downs. Because his theme is the decline of ritual Lawrence cannot grant characters the emotional satisfaction which

ritual generates, but in making his narrative of their yearnings a ritualistic one he can provide us with this response. The more he can make us respond to Ursula's plight as a modern alienated individual, ironically, the more he has rescued us from our own isolation and alienation and reunited us with the emotional community.

Hence, in the final analysis, and in accordance with Harrison's argument that originally art was ritual, where the genuinely religious element in *The Rainbow* is to be found is in the art of the novel itself, just as it is via the emotions Lawrence arouses in his readers that a sense of community is effected. In turn, a fitting way to conclude this essay is to observe Lawrence's assessment of the purpose of his art, long after he had found himself through Harrison: "I hate the actor-and-the-audience business. An author should be in among the crowd, kicking their shins or cheering them on to some mischief or merriment. That rather cheap seat in the gods where one sits with fellows like Anatole France and benignly looks down on the foibles, follies, and frenzies of so-called fellow-men just annoys me. After all the world is *not* a stage—not to me: nor a theatre: nor a show-house of any sort. And art, especially novels, are not little theatres where the reader sits aloft and watches . . . and sighs, and commiserates, condones and smiles" (*CL*, II, 827).

NOTES

1. See for example, James C. Cowan, *D. H. Lawrence's American Journey: A Study in Literature and Myth* (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve, 1970); or John Vickery, *The Literary Impact of the Golden Bough* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973). For a study which on the one hand continues this trend but at the same time points in the direction I am emphasizing, see Charles L. Ross, "D.H. Lawrence's Use of Greek Tragedy: Euripides and Ritual," *DHLR*, X (Spring, 1977), 1-19.
2. Lawrence, *The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, edited with an Introduction by Harry T. Moore. 2 vols. (New York: Viking Press, 1962), I, 234. All subsequent quotations from Lawrence's letters will be from this edition and will be identified within the text as *CL* with the appropriate page number.
3. How really helpful Frazer is, in the sense of the extent to which he was a "source" for Lawrence, is also debatable. For Lawrence's theories of totemism, for example, seem less to have been shaped by Frazer than by his own intuitive sympathy with the primitive mentality which Frazer attempts to analyze. Thus in a letter in which Lawrence mentions he has been reading *The Golden Bough*, he goes on: "Now I am convinced of what I believed when I was about twenty," and accordingly goes on to formulate his theory of blood-consciousness, concluding with the explanation, "And this is the origin of totem: and for this reason some tribes no doubt really were kangaroos: they contained the blood-knowledge of the kangaroo" (*CL*, I, 393-94). What Frazer provided Lawrence with, in other words, was the scientific justification not the inspiration—or if inspiration, essentially via the examples which Frazer provided of primitive rituals rather than his explanation of these rituals itself.
4. Jane Ellen Harrison, *Ancient Art and Ritual* (New York, 1913), pp. 236, 246.
5. Lawrence, *Phoenix, The Posthumous Papers*, Edited and with an Introduction by Edward D. McDonald (New York: Viking Press, 1968), pp. 540-42.

6. For the argument that this shift constitutes a serious flaw in the novel, see S.L. Goldberg, "The Rainbow: Fiddle-Bow and Sand," *EIC*, XI (October, 1961), 418-34, or John E. Stoll, *The Novels of D.H. Lawrence: A Search for Integration* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1971), pp. 106-07.
7. One of the best discussions of the relation of style in *The Rainbow* to the theme of decline still is that provided by Semour Lainoff, "The Rainbow: The Shaping of Modern Man," *MFS*, I (November, 1955).
8. For an extensive consideration of the concept of "hierogamy" and its role in *The Rainbow* see my essay, "Hierogamy versus Wedlock: Types of Marriage Plots and their Relationship to Genres of Prose Fiction," *PMLA*, XCI (October, 1976), 900-13.
9. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, with an Introduction by Richard Aldington (New York, 1961), pp. 60, 68. Henceforth all quotations will be from this Compass Edition and will be identified in parentheses within the text.
10. For a far-ranging discussion of this issue as it applies to Melville's art, in particular, but also to the art of the primitivistic artist, in general, see James Baird, *Ishmael: A Study of the Symbolic Mode in Primitivism* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960).
11. In "The Rainbow: Ursula's 'Liberation'," *ConL*, XVII (Winter, 1976), 24-43, I explore Ursula's problem, in this respect, at greater depth.
12. Eliseo Vivas, *D. H. Lawrence: The Failure and the Triumph of Art* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), pp. 214-15.
13. Harrison, p. 126.
14. A doubly good example is Langdon Elsbree, "D.H. Lawrence, Homo Ludens, and The Dance," *DHLR*, I (Spring, 1968), 1-30, because of the sociological character of his attempt to analyze "ritual" as "play."