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REVISITED**

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**THE ‘MOONY’ CHAPTER OF *WOMEN IN LOVE*
REVISITED**

TERRY GIFFORD

Carrie Rohman has made a convincing case that *Women in Love* “holds out the salvific possibility of shaping one’s identity through relationship to human otherness by recuperating humanity’s own animality”.¹ Rohman demonstrates that, through encounters with animals in the novel, Lawrence indicates the capacity in his characters to recognise or resist their own animality. She charts the development in Ursula and Birkin of a sensitive awareness of their non-rational animal being that engages with their individual human otherness, just as it does with otherness in nature outside themselves. For Rohman this ultimately culminates in a loving connection beyond consciousness, rationality and language in sexual conjunctions “in which the unbreachable difference between them is acknowledged and honoured”.² Rohman recognises difference as essential to Lawrence at the very moment of connection: “Lawrence reasserts this necessary and mutual difference for the two: ‘she was to him what he was to her, the immemorial magnificence of mystic, palpable, real otherness’ (*WL* 320)”.³ Yet also contributing to this moment at the end of the ‘Excuse’ chapter is Ursula and Birkin’s sensitivity to the otherness of the living natural elements around them: “There were faint sounds from the wood, but no disturbance”, the night was “so magnificent, such an inheritance of a universe of dark reality” (*WL* 320). One ought to include in the recovery of their animality the role of the wider context of the natural world in the novel, represented in the earlier ‘Moony’ chapter, for example, by the corporality and “blood-consciousness” of moon, trees, flowers and birds. Further, one ought to consider the strongly gendered character of difference and connection in Lawrence’s mode of exploration in the novel. At this moment of ecstatic connection male

and female bodies seem to extend beyond themselves to the masculine and feminine in nature: "the body of mysterious night upon the body of mysterious night, the night masculine and feminine, never to be seen with the eye, or known with the mind, only known as a palpable revelation of living otherness" (WL 320). What might be revealed by examining in a single chapter the dynamics of male and female in human and non-human interaction as Lawrence feels his way through difference and connection in search of "a palpable revelation of living otherness"?

In a previous number of this journal, I offered a brief attempt to address Lawrence's gendered engagements with nature in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928).⁴ I argued that in this novel Lawrence challenged gender conventions by exploring "the possibility of tenderness exchanged between humans and nature, and between genders, in an experience of 'living in the very middle of creation' (LCL 241)".⁵ I will recuperate this argument here to discuss how in *Women in Love* the movement towards such a state is mostly at an earlier stage, in which Ursula and Birkin's differing perspectives on love are expressed through their differently gendered senses of the non-human natural world, as is evident in the drama and imagery of the 'Moony' chapter. The sense of a Magna Mater representing the natural world, that Birkin feels threatens his masculine individuality at the chapter's opening, is countered at its close by Ursula's openness to a decentred, posthuman sense of the universe: her selfhood is not threatened by the acknowledgment that small birds are "unknown forces" in "another world" beyond humans' inclination towards "painting the universe with their own image" (WL 264). Birkin thus begins from a position of what the ecofeminist philosopher Val Plumwood called "Othering the Other", that is the process of creating an "Other" in that he holds at arm's length both woman and the moon, the female and the feminine, lover and nature.⁶ But in similar ways to a modern ecofeminist, Lawrence, I shall argue, is as concerned to critique the reasons for Birkin's fear of the feminine Other as he is to challenge assumptions about an essentialist female connection with nature, since one cannot be undertaken

without the other. I shall argue that Lawrence provides a counter, in his characterisation of Ursula, to what Jeffrey McCarthy calls modernism's assumed "complicity in masculinist ideologies" by revealing, at the chapter's end, her brief embrace of the natural world that is not human-centred.⁷

In Plumwood's analysis such "masculinist ideologies" tend to associate culture and reason with maleness, and nature and empathy with the female, resulting in Western culture's assumption of its "mastery of nature", as in the title of her book *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993).⁸ In the 'Moony' chapter of *Women in Love* Lawrence explores the tensions at play around images of first the moon and then small birds, in relation to a debate about modes of passionate connectedness between the male and the female. Here Lawrence can be seen to be exploring a drama that challenges Plumwood's notion of the dualisms that underpin modernity's hubris of "the mastery of nature": "The reason/nature story has been the master story of western culture".⁹ What Plumwood calls "the great dialogues of the community of life" are conducted, with all their equivocations and contradictions, their gender anxieties and their otherness, precisely through powerful images and dramatic tensions such as those of the 'Moony' chapter.¹⁰

The chapter opens with Ursula's discovery of Birkin's return from his self-imposed exile from the clutches of Hermione. Ursula observes Birkin stoning the moon's reflection in the mill pond and intervenes to protest. She expresses her doubts about Birkin's ability to love her. Birkin remembers a particular "African fetish" (*WL* 252–3) that was an evocation of mysterious sensual African knowledge. Reflecting upon his attraction to Ursula's sensuality, he resolves to marry her. The "fiasco" of Birkin's marriage proposal results in Ursula's refusal to be bullied into a response by her father and Birkin's withdrawal into himself, whilst Ursula's observation of small birds leads her to embrace the idea of a more-than-human world (*WL* 264). The chapter concludes with her demand for male abandonment and surrender in love. The chapter is a debate about gendered power – about love as surrender of the will, or about what

remains of individual will in a love relationship. But as an ecofeminist reader I would also ask how Lawrence's references to nature complicate and differentiate individual male and female characters and their relationships. For example, in this chapter Lawrence seems to be asking whether the will to power – "Wille zur Macht"¹¹ – is also part of the order of nature. Birkin has earlier defended this principle in his male cat (in the 'Mino' chapter), but now appears to associate it with the feminine influence of the moon that reforms its image after each throw of a stone as he curses a Magna Mater.

Birkin attacks the image of the moon as earth mother, crying "Cybele—curse her! The accursed Syria Dea!" (WL 246). Lawrence had recently been reading Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* in which Frazer refers to Cybele as "the Great Mother Goddess".¹² But the term "Dea Syria" – or as Lawrence has it "Syria Dea" – is not one that Frazer uses.¹³ As usual, the story of influences and sources is a little more complex because Lawrence is simplifying for his own purposes and emphasis. In fact, in *Women in Love* he is simplifying and dramatising a cultural figure that led him, in its first draft, to a realisation that had great significance for his earlier image of "the complete, almost perfect relations between the men and the women" with which he was concerned at this time (2L 489).

On the first typescript of this chapter, in what was published by Cambridge University Press in 1998 as *The First 'Women in Love'*,¹⁴ this brief curse against Cybele was a handwritten replacement for a longer deleted passage of the typescript: "Artemis—Tanit—Mylitta—Aphrodite—be damned to her. She's really supreme now— —if you should begrudge it her—damn her. All is two, all is not one. That's the point. That's the secret of secrets. You've got to build a new world on that, if you build one at all" (FWL 486). It seems that Lawrence not only wanted to reduce Frazer's bewildering duplication of names for the Magna Mater to Cybele, but to have Birkin "begrudge" her current supremacy. The notion of supremacy is not an emphasis that Frazer makes. Lawrence seeks to have Birkin make the case for a balancing of both male and female, the earlier

deleted typescript concluding: “And creation is two, the Whole is two, it is not one. There you’ve got it” (FWL 486). So it is the perceived “supremacy” of the Magna Mater that Birkin is attacking in stoning the moon and his reluctant sense that he must nevertheless engage with her, for “What else is there—?” (WL 246). The feminine in nature, the mysterious forces of the cycles of fertility also require male involvement to be viable. In the later *Women in Love* typescript, after “Does one begrudge it her?”, Lawrence had overwritten “Something else as well.—The other half—what about that—?” (FWL 227). Birkin himself is the other half, making the whole with a woman, although Lawrence must have decided that this was perhaps too pleading or too explicit as he wrote above by hand the more open question, “What else is there—?” (WL 246).

It is this sense of the perceived female dominance in nature that Birkin has sought to get away from, except that, as he has just tellingly admitted, “There *is* no away” (WL 246). In the subtle complexity of the drama Lawrence creates here Ursula is an improbable Magna Mater: she is uncertain of herself and what she wants, dialectically working it out as she goes along in dialogue with Birkin. In a similar uncertainty Birkin follows up his curses of the Syria Dea with “Does one begrudge it her?”. But “begrudge” what exactly? So far he has been throwing dried flower husks upon the water where the moon holds dominance. We are told that Birkin is talking “disconnectedly to himself”. Although the dialectic conducted throughout *Women in Love* makes it a seminal modernist novel, and at no point more so than in the ‘Moony’ chapter, Birkin’s “disconnected” thought here is far from being a disconnected mode of thought in the positive modernist style.¹⁵ Birkin is struggling with a deeper disconnection. What exactly is so disconnected that it leads him to stone the moon? I would argue that Lawrence suggests four contexts for Birkin’s disconnection and that for each of them Ursula offers the reader alternative positions, summarised as follows. Firstly, an apparently natural “Wille zur Macht”, as manifested in different ways in different characters; secondly, Gerald’s capitalist form of masculinism that exploits the Other; thirdly, the attraction of

a primitivism that suggests an innate understanding of nature; and finally an unease in relating to the complex and confusing "brindled" qualities of the Other in nature. For Birkin each of these is a dimension of his disconnection from the feminine with which he also knows he needs to find a way of engaging as "The other half" (*FWL* 227). He needs, he says to Ursula, "that golden light which is you" (*WL* 249), but is at the same time afraid that the power of her ego might turn out to be like Hermione's self-conscious desire for possession.

Lawrence's reading of Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and *Totem and Exogamy* had confirmed his sense of an unconscious "blood-consciousness" in all living things – "even plants, have a blood-being" (*2L* 470). For humans "blood knowledge comes either through the mother or through the sex" (*2L* 470–1). In the 'Moony' chapter the human capacity for "blood knowledge" is directly related to the ability to perceive it in all living things, as Lawrence saw that it was in "primitive" cultures. To take seriously the "Ethnology" Lawrence said that he had in his head during the writing of this novel (*2L* 591), one has to consider the gender implications of a book that Ottoline Morell sent to him that was, in Lawrence's view, "better than *The Golden Bough*, I think" (*2L* 630). This was the distinguished anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Tylor's *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom* (1871). There is much in Tylor about moon worship, although usually in relation to dualism (sun/moon, light/dark, good/evil deities) and on moon myths.¹⁶ Although there are some exceptions, in most of Tylor's examples the moon is gendered female, as, indeed, it must be for Birkin in Western culture.

From Lawrence's interest in totems and "Fetish Worship" at this time (*2L* 511), it is easy to see how he came to have Birkin associate the moon with an earth goddess as a focus for his anxiety about female domination over him. Another letter to Morell (the model for Hermione) seems to anticipate Birkin's experiences in the chapter preceding 'Moony', when he wrote, "That which we call passion is a very one-sided thing, based chiefly on hatred and Wille zur Macht"

(2L 489). Actually, anxiety about “Wille zur Macht” has been expressed by each gender in relation to the other before the ‘Moony’ chapter. It is Hermione who has been demonstrated to be the female will to power in relation to Birkin. Of Hermione’s confronting a stag in her park, Lawrence writes, “He was male, so she must exert some kind of power over him” (WL 88). But she hates Birkin for “his power to escape, to exist, other than she did, because he was not consistent, not a man, less than a man” (WL 92). Because Birkin does not conform to the mode of masculinity that Hermione is able to control she makes a physical attack on him, which is an attempt to destroy this otherness that she cannot dominate. All this demonstrates the way in which Lawrence had been building a tension in Birkin between the power of a totem of femininity and a fear of female domination represented first by Hermione and later projected on to Ursula.

In a similar manner of processing his prior reading and thinking, Lawrence used the notion of “Wille zur Macht” to reveal the growing differentiation earlier in the novel between Gudrun and Ursula. Lawrence uses their responses to nature to place Gudrun on the side of the destructive will-power of a culture in dissolution. Her response to Gerald’s forcing his will upon his frightened mare contrasts with Ursula’s “he’s bullied a sensitive creature, ten times as sensitive as himself” (WL 113). Gudrun “hated” Ursula “for being outside herself” in her spontaneous “naked” outcry and comes to focus upon “the blond man clenching the palpitating body of the mare into pure control” (WL 111, 113). That the horse is an Arab mare doubles its otherness under Gerald’s “bearing down into the living body of the horse” in what is a sexualised domination in Gudrun’s eyes. And a few pages later, whilst Ursula watches “unconscious” butterflies, Gudrun sketches the water plants growing in the mud of decay. When Gerald rows into Gudrun’s vision she immediately sees that “he started out of the mud” and she “was aware of his body, stretching and surging like marsh fire” (WL 120). As he rowed away “Henceforward, she knew, she had her power over him” (WL 122).

Whilst unease about "Wille zur Macht" has been expressed by each gender in relation to the other before the 'Moony' chapter, domination has been more associated with women: Pussum, Hermione and Gudrun, who seeks power over Gerald. It is what Birkin seeks to avoid in his notion of the ideal male-female relationship as "a star balanced with another star" (WL 152), or later in the novel as "star-equilibrium" (WL 319). Yet, as Birkin has defended, against Ursula's objections, "Wille zur Macht" over the female in his male cat as the natural order of things, there is a lingering sense in which it might have a place in nature, which he explains as "the desire to bring this female cat into a pure stable equilibrium, a transcendent and abiding *rapport* with the single male" (WL 150).¹⁷ This is despite the anxiety he later expresses about the Magna Mater he sees in Hermione and that he tries to see in Ursula in "the inverse":

She too was the awful, arrogant queen of life, as if she were a queen bee on whom all the rest depended ... It was intolerable, this possession at the hands of a woman. Always a man must be considered as the broken-off fragment of a woman, and the sex was the still aching scar of the laceration. (WL 200)

This is more a product of Birkin's anxiety than a characterisation of the Ursula Lawrence has so far shown us, since Ursula offers an alternative uncertainty, and at the end of the chapter humility, in opposition to female dominance. What Lawrence is showing us here then is an anxiety about female domination that will help us understand the drama of the stoning of the moon in the 'Moony' chapter. Birkin's defensive, oppositional sense of self might be seen as representing what Plumwood calls "egoistic accounts of the self as without essential connection to others and to nature".¹⁸ But Birkin does feel a need for a connection and his desire for balance is surely better than Gerald's notion of "conquest" of the Other that ultimately leads to his self-destruction (WL 228).

Indeed, “Wille zur Macht” is the very mode of Gerald’s capitalist and imperialist form of masculinity. Gerald is a representative of the self-destructiveness of human will against nature, for whom “the will of mankind was perfectly enacted; for was not mankind mystically contradistinguished against inanimate Matter, was not the history of mankind just the history of the conquest of the one by the other?” (WL 228). The problem with the Magna Mater’s power is that it appears to be derived from an order that is nature itself. Gerald, like Lawrence, “liked to read books about the primitive man, books of anthropology, and also works of speculative philosophy” (WL 232). Perhaps this is where the word “mystically” has appeared from to underpin his otherwise mechanistic belief in human power over nature. Whether Lawrence is being ironical here, or attempting to complicate Gerald’s character, or simply contradictory, is unclear. However, Gerald represents the opposite of a capacity to accept the almost mystical idea that was explicit in the first version of the novel that Lawrence typed himself: “And creation is two, the Whole is two, it is not one. There you’ve got it” (FWL 486).

Lawrence is not here endorsing dualism, but rather interrelatedness. In her attempt to define “the ecological self” Plumwood attacks dualism and insists upon “difference”: “the failure to affirm difference is characteristic of the colonising self which denies the other through the attempt to incorporate it into the empire of the self, and which is unable to experience sameness without erasing difference”.¹⁹ The mine owner Gerald, with his “conquest” of “inanimate Matter” (WL 228), exemplifies Plumwood’s “colonising self”. But Plumwood’s insistence upon difference is the basis for her objection to “the expanded self” in which dualism is simply dissolved as two become one and difference is absorbed into wholeness. It is this very fear of the loss of difference and individuality that leads Birkin to his theory of “star-equilibrium” (WL 319). So Lawrence’s original notion that “the Whole is two” (FWL 486) is another attempt to find an image that respects difference in the coming together of lovers, as in the ecological relationship between species.

When Lawrence goes on in his first draft to type "I wonder what the priscillianists really made of it?" there is doubt in that "really" concerning the conventional dualist understanding of the Priscillianists. As the editors of *The First 'Women in Love'* explain: "The Priscillianists were followers of Priscillian ... who was supposed to have taught the Manichean dualistic theology which made Satan co-eternal with God" (FWL 486). Lawrence seems to suggest the possibility that this Manichean theology might not have been based upon the continuous opposition of Manichean dualism but upon an interrelated sense of wholeness in the eternal presences of Satan and God. Overwritten by hand and then crossed out above the typed sentence "You've got to build a new world on that, if you build one at all" is "God can build a new world on that". For a moment Lawrence played with the idea that it would be God building a new world upon this "secret of secrets" that "the Whole is two". Yet Lawrence saw that the "theory of two" should be dramatised by the novel since he added by hand, after "So they parted ...", a yearning for the wholeness of the two: "Yet in his innermost heart he was acutely unhappy at having failed with her again" (FWL 233).

When Lawrence uses the construction "the Whole" the capitalisation indicates that he is thinking of the whole of nature that includes the human species just as it includes both male and female. Sometimes critics who come close to being able to speak in such inclusive terms veer off into making less subtle points. Carol Siegel touches upon Lawrence's critique of conventional gender roles as disconnecting his characters from nature. Her discussion of nature and gender in her readings of male leadership in *Kangaroo* (1923) and *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), leads to the claim that they are "novels whose main concern is how man can break woman and himself free from society and enter a communion with wild nature".²⁰ It is clear that Siegel's *Lawrence Among the Women* is neither an ecocritical nor an ecofeminist study but rather that of the dynamic dialogue in Lawrence's fiction between men and women. Siegel's discussion of a Magna Mater figure in Lawrence's novels avoids the figure's connection with nature and focuses upon "the male-defined

Mater” – an idealised “She-who-was-Cynthia” of *The Virgin and the Gypsy*.²¹ Siegel admires the way that some female novelists (she cites Eudora Welty) appear to rebuff Lawrence’s “intrusion”, as she sees it, upon a women’s literary tradition in the writing of *Women in Love*, “by reminding us that nature is not a fairy-godmother (or latent Great Mother) waiting to free us from a culture that problematizes women’s desire”.²² But Birkin’s anxiety about “the male-defined Mater” is precisely what Lawrence is showing the reader in this chapter. And real nature is at the centre of the drama, although it cannot escape its cultural significance, its anthropocentric meaning. There is also a reflection of a material moon acting (unlike a fairy-godmother), at the same time, as a cultural symbol of the force of the female in nature. Birkin, in his current state of mind, perceives the “problematiz[ation] of women’s desire” in the moon’s persistently reforming itself on the surface of the pond as a threat to his individuality.

In his study of *The Moon’s Dominion*, Gavriel Ben-Ephraim treats the moon in a solely symbolic way and thus limits his discussion to Birkin and Ursula’s direct relationship with each other rather than through the Other in nature. Building his analysis upon Colin Clarke’s *River of Dissolution*,²³ Ben-Ephraim carefully charts the oscillations of the dynamics of this chapter between fear of and demands for dissolution, and between fear of and demands for integration, noting how “Ursula plays a duel and contrasting role for Birkin. Through her he can reach peace and self-achievement; simultaneously she is associated in his imagination with the incapacitating Great Mother”.²⁴ From an ecofeminist perspective the limitation of both Siegel’s and Ben-Ephraim’s accounts of the chapter is that their focus upon understanding Birkin’s motivations for stoning the moon as cultural and psychological tends to displace a consideration of Ursula and Birkin’s differentiated relations with nature.

In the dialogue that follows Birkin’s moon-stoning “Ursula is allowed”, as Mark Kinkead-Weekes shrewdly observes, “to disturb and probe him (and perhaps his author) more deeply than before” –

that is than in *The First 'Women in Love'*.²⁵ This establishes a pattern that was followed in *Kangaroo*, *The Boy in the Bush* and in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in which the female, who is closely in tune with nature – its presences, forces, and cycles – dialectically challenges the man of new ideas who must make his own accommodation with nature that is also alive with relationships between feminine and masculine elements.²⁶ But, as much as through drama and dialogue, this process is enacted through imagery. Ursula identifies with the moon, even though she can admit that its presence is disturbing (“yes, it was horrible, really”), just as the “glittering tormented ... flakes of light” produced by the stoning daze her (“her mind was all gone”) and require her, like the moon’s image on the pond, to be “re-united ... whole and composed, at peace” (*WL* 248).²⁷ But the conversation that ensues about service and possession, which ends in a kiss in the 1920 version, ends in the 1916 novel with Birkin walking her “quickly, in silence, through the moon-brindled wood” until he is “free of her, out in the open night. She shut off his freedom of living, he liked to be alone with the open sky” (*FWL* 232–3). Birkin’s final preference for isolation in this first version is expressed as an alienation from the complications and compromises of negotiating the ambiguities of a “moon-brindled wood”, for example.²⁸ What is dramatised here is Birkin’s ultimate fear of allowing himself to let go his selfhood enough to engage in a sensual relationship with the female, and this sense of his disconsolate disconnectedness remains in the later version as he goes up the road from the house (*WL* 261).

In the abstract, Birkin had admired the sensual knowledge that he had perceived in Halliday’s African statuette. Lawrence, having realised that he needed to dramatisise his exploration of “the Whole is two” and having overwritten this explicit articulation in the typescript, then wrote by hand the long insertion in the final typescript for the 1920 novel of Birkin’s memory of this statuette. Early in the novel, Birkin had said of an African carving of a woman in labour: “There are centuries and hundreds of centuries of development in a straight line, behind that carving; it is an awful pitch of culture, of a definite sort” (*WL* 79). Behind Gerald’s question

“Why is it art?” is not so much scepticism about the power of a totem, but about worshipping the mystery of the feminine in the moment of painful and ecstatic creation of life. So this carving is used to define Gerald’s distance from understanding African culture, as explained by Birkin. But it is also an opportunity to expose the difference between Birkin’s attraction to the idea of sensual knowledge in order later to reveal his ultimate reluctance to accept it in a relationship with Ursula. In this handwritten insertion Lawrence draws upon his reading in April 1918 of Leo Frobenius’s *The Voice of Africa* (1913) where the notion of a decline in human civilisation from the height of “primitive” culture is argued. So, Birkin recognises that “that which was imminent in himself must have taken place in these Africans: the goodness, the holiness, the desire for creation and productive happiness must have lapsed, leaving the single impulse for knowledge in one sort, mindless progressive knowledge through the senses” (WL 253).

Birkin’s pleading with Ursula, for a knowledge beyond the physical is revealed as purely theoretical. His disgust at the beetle-worshipping Egyptians,²⁹ evoked by the face of this wood carving in the ‘Moony’ chapter, is derived from an inability to accept the place of decay and dissolution in nature (and, indeed, physical pain) that sustains new life – the very force that intellectually he believes is necessary for reform of the current state of civilisation. The confusion and contradictions in his “length of speculation” are hardly reconciled by Birkin’s choosing “another way, the way of freedom” of “pure, single being” which “never forfeits its own proud individual singleness, even while it loves and yields” (WL 254). It is the sensual that convinces him that he must ask Ursula to marry him: “how sensitive and delicate she really was, her skin so over-fine, as if one skin were wanting” (WL 254). Clearly, Birkin’s idealised notion of the “Paradisal entry into pure, single being” has yet to be reconciled to the physical attractions of the feminine Other in nature, in culture or in Ursula.

There is a revealing moment at the end of the chapter when Ursula catches herself out in the act of anthropomorphism.³⁰ Her

characterisation of the apparent self-importance of a robin as “a little Lloyd George of the air” is challenged by the appearance of some yellowhammers, “so uncanny and inhuman, like flaring yellow barbs shooting through the air on some weird, living errand” (WL 264). The way in which the difference between the robin and the yellowhammers leads Ursula away from immediate cliché to the apprehension of living mystery is the result of her attention to particularity. Plumwood argues that environmental ethics are based on particularity: “Special relationships, care for or empathy with particular aspects of nature as experienced, rather than with nature as abstraction, are essential to provide a depth of concern”.³¹ This distinction “between particularity and generality” in favour of the former can be illustrated by the contrast between this moment at the end of the chapter and Ursula’s generalised feeling for animals at its opening where “She loved the horses and cows in the field. Each was single and to itself, magical” (WL 244).³² This statement is intended to signify Ursula’s feeling of disconnection from humanity at the opening of the chapter: “she despised and detested people”. The particularity of the yellowhammers leads Ursula to a deeper realisation that is more positive in its inclusiveness.

Ursula joyfully recognises the Other: she decentres but does not exclude the human and is able to celebrate her recognition that “The universe is non-human, thank God” (WL 264). She rejects anthropomorphism and humans’ stance of “painting the universe with their own image” that she sees as “destructive of all true life”. But the tone of this moment of perception is one of enlargement rather than the rejection of the human altogether that Birkin fantasises in recurrent utopian images (WL 59, 128). Indeed, it is from this insight that she is able to clarify the nature of the kind of love she wants with Birkin: “She was not at all sure that it was this mutual unison in separateness that she wanted”. On the contrary, it is mutual physical and spiritual abandonment that she wants rather than Birkin’s intellectual notion of a self in equilibrium: “She believed that love was *everything*” (WL 265). Whilst Lawrence is unwilling to allow this to be the end of the dialectic, leaving us with

a sense of passionate naivety in Ursula's conclusion to this chapter, it is clear she is closer here to perceiving a wholeness in nature that includes the Other – the universe that is non-human – than Birkin has so far been able to articulate.

In making a modest claim for Ursula's recognition of the non-human here in comparison with Birkin's abstract sense of the "Paradisaal" (*WL* 254) and his continuing struggle with feminine nature at the end of this chapter, the depth of her connectedness should not be exaggerated. It is possible to characterise her self-important robin and the "weird, living errand" of the yellowhammers (*WL* 264) as both culpable in characterising what Lawrence was, at the end of his life, to call "our petty little love of nature" against "living with the cosmos, and being honoured by the cosmos" (*A* 76). The bird-inhabited non-human universe to which Ursula refers is hardly the cosmic life force recognised in Lawrence's late writings as "a vast living body, of which we are still parts" (*A* 77). Nevertheless, Ursula's evocation of a universe that is non-human is precisely the kind of "disruption" that Plumwood demanded from imaginative writing that is to challenge the alienated dualities underpinning a "mastery of nature".³³

The chapter which began as a debate about gendered power – about love as surrender, or about retaining individuality in human relationships – develops into a test of responses to gender issues that is calibrated by Birkin and Ursula's ability to relate to the Other in the non-human world as well as the human world. Birkin's disconnectedness at the chapter's opening has been associated with four contexts for his unease: an apparently natural "Wille zur Macht", as manifested in different ways in different characters; Gerald's capitalist form of masculinism that exploits the Other; the attraction of a primitivism that suggests an innate understanding of nature; and an unease in relating to the complex and confusing "brindled" qualities of the Other in nature. If Birkin has been able to talk his way past three of the four contexts for his early disconnectedness, it remains doubtful whether he has been able to decentre himself sufficiently to overcome his fourth mode of

disconnectedness, that is, to celebrate, as Ursula does, that the universe which they inhabit is largely non-human. The humility required to acknowledge the complexity of such an ecological relationship, embodied by the moon, by small birds, or by "the moon-brindled wood" of the first version of the novel (*FWL* 232), still appears to elude him, as it does not in Ursula's case here. When Lawrence says that "She believed that love was *everything*" (*WL* 265) the italics perhaps suggest her sense that "creation is two, the Whole is two" (*FWL* 486), as she goes on to demand a love of mutual surrender and mutual service. This is the way of being in the natural cycles of dissolution and fecundity, of vulnerability and generosity, that Rohman calls "recuperating humanity's own animality".³⁴ But for Ursula and Birkin, her demand for this kind of love is not without its problems, as perhaps its exposure as the last lines of the chapter indicate. At this point in the novel it remains an open question as to whether they can actually achieve the kinds of relationship that they variously claim to desire and that Rohman believes they ultimately achieve in a mutual honouring of otherness. However, in this chapter the reader has been offered powerful, if inconclusive, evidence of the problems and potential in the achievement of wholeness in a creation that is two.

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¹ Carrie Rohman, *Stalking the Subject: Modernism and the Animal* (New York: Columbia UP, 2009), 123.

² *Ibid.*, 121.

³ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁴ Terry Gifford, 'Flowers as "Other", then "other"', in *The White Peacock and Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *JDHLS* 3.3 (2014), 71–85.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 82–3.

⁶ Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (London: Routledge, 2002), 117. Plumwood adopts the common

distinction between the social construct of the “feminine”, as in the case of the moon in Western culture, and the biologically determined “female”.

⁷ Jeffrey Mathes McCarthy, *Green Modernism: Nature and the English Novel, 1900 to 1930* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 3.

⁸ Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Usually translated as “will to power” this phrase is from Nietzsche’s *Thus Spake Zarathustra* which Lawrence was re-reading in 1916 (2L 546). The use of this phrase in the novel will be discussed below.

¹² James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1922), 354.

¹³ Since neither form is found in *The Golden Bough* Lawrence’s source remains a mystery. “Atargatis is a Goddess of Syrian origin whose worship spread to Greece and Rome (and further) ... a Great Mother and Fertility Goddess of the Earth and Water, considered the main Goddess worshipped in Syria”: <<http://www.thaliatook.com/OGOD/atargatis.html>>

¹⁴ *Women in Love* was written in an intense burst in April–June 1916, then revised in Lawrence’s own typing of its first half in July–November 1916. This book was not published until 1998 by Cambridge UP as *The First ‘Women in Love’*. When *Women in Love* was first published in 1920 it had been twice rewritten. I refer to its Cambridge UP edition of 1987, but also *The First ‘Women in Love’* and its drafts in the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

¹⁵ Although thanks to Stefania Michelucci for pointing out this possibility.

¹⁶ Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art and Custom*, 2 vols (London: John Murray, 1871), vol. II 320 and vol. I 288 ff.

¹⁷ As David Ellis points out, the violence with which the male cat achieves this “stable equilibrium” does not make for the strongest argument in its favour: ‘Introduction’, *D. H. Lawrence’s ‘Women in Love’: A Casebook*, ed. David Ellis (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006), 11.

¹⁸ Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 179.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 174.

²⁰ Carol Siegel, *Lawrence Among the Women: Wavering Boundaries in Women’s Literary Traditions* (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1991), 186.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 180.

²² Ibid., 184.

²³ Colin Clarke, *River of Dissolution: D. H. Lawrence and English Romanticism* (London: Routledge, 1969).

²⁴ Gavriel Ben-Ephraim, *The Moon's Dominion: Narrative Dichotomy and Female Dominance in Lawrence's Earlier Novels* (London: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1981), 225.

²⁵ Mark Kinkead-Weekes, *D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile, 1912–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 393.

²⁶ See Terry Gifford, 'A Playful Novel of Reprise: An Ecofeminist Reading of *Kangaroo*', *JDHLS* 3.2 (2013), 109–19; Izabel Brandão and Terry Gifford, 'The Boy in the Bush: Lawrence, Land and Gender in Australia', *Études Lawrenciennes* 32 (2005), 147–79; and note 5 above.

²⁷ The Cambridge editors suggest that the moon here is somehow "clarified" (*WL* 559) by reference to the strongly female moon in *Twilight in Italy*. But the moon's role there is in contrast to the male sun in order to ask where in mankind is "the meeting point: where in mankind is the ecstasy of light and dark together?" (*WL* 113).

²⁸ There is a study to be made, partially undertaken by various critics, of the parallels to be found in the poems of *Look! We Have Come Through!* which were being revised during the writing of the first version of the novel. See, for example, the poem 'Manifesto' (*Poems* 215) for fear of hunger for the woman and final male "detachment".

²⁹ A recent visit to the temples and tombs of Ancient Egypt has led me to believe that Lawrence appears to have misunderstood the significance of the scarab for the Ancient Egyptians for whom its behaviour of rolling its eggs inside a ball of dung to be opened by the sun was taken as a symbol of sun-worship, fertility and the daily renewal of the sun being rolled above the horizon.

³⁰ "Anthropomorphism is a bore. Too much anthropos makes the world a dull hole" (*RDP* 315).

³¹ Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 187.

³² Ibid., 186.

³³ Val Plumwood, 'Journey to the heart of stone', in *Culture, creativity and environment: new environmentalist criticism*, eds Fiona Beckett and Terry Gifford (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 17–36, 18.

³⁴ Rohman, *Stalking the Subject*, 123.