

**D.H. LAWRENCE'S MYSTICISM: A STUDY OF
LAWRENCE'S METAPHYSICS IN WOMEN IN LOVE WITH
REFERENCE TO MAWALANA RUMI AND OTHER
PERSIAN SUFI MASTERS**

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Author's declaration

This thesis is carried out as per the guidelines and regulations of London Metropolitan University. I hereby declare that the materials contained in this thesis have not been previously submitted for a degree in any other university, including London Metropolitan University. I further affirm that this thesis is based on my own research and that appropriate credit has been given (directly or indirectly) where references have been made to the work of others.

Dolat Khan

**To my mother Bibi Zareefa,
whom I have never met,
but her loving spirit sustains me still.**

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to compare and contrast D. H. Lawrence's writings and Persian mystic poet and jurist Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi's poetry. Particular attention is given to the theme of love in Lawrence's writings and the degree to which his mystical views with regard to sexual love become evident in his novel, *Women in Love*.

Lawrence's use of mystical language and religious symbolism has been analysed in comparison with Rumi's mystical writings. In his writings Lawrence suggests a sacred dimension to erotic love and uses a mystical language to describe such experiences of human love and intimacy.

By comparing the salient features of Lawrence and Rumi's writing, this thesis explores mystical dimensions of Lawrence's novel *Women in Love* and asks why the theme of sexual love is shrouded with complexity of Lawrence's rhetoric. There are four prominent features of this discussion: the first feature is the exploration of the theme of love as a consummation and attaining a singular relationship with the other. The second feature is rapture or ecstasy as a condition of sexual attraction which transforms the quality of existence in relationship with the other. The third feature of the discussion consists of a critical view of the attainment of mystic conjunction in love proposed by Birkin to Ursula. The last feature of the discussion is an analysis of Lawrence's contrasting views on yielding or giving oneself away to the unknown in a love relationship and at the same time Lawrence insists on singleness, as the orbit image of star-equilibrium in *Women in Love* shows. How close this experience, which is amplified with Biblical symbolism, can be compared and contrasted with Rumi's ecstatic love and annihilation is a prominent theme of the thesis and the sole concern of the last section.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgment.....	3
Abstract.....	4
Introduction.....	6
Lawrence’s possible encounter to different mystical and semimystical ideas popular in his time.....	20
The concept of love as an antinomian gesture in Lawrence and Rumi's writings.....	34
Sufi mysticism and its concepts in Rumi’s poetry.....	43
Parallel Reading of Lawrence and Rumi	
THE CONCEPT OF LOVE: A CONSUMMATION AND THE REALIZATION OF OTHERNESS.....	52
ECSTASY AND PHYSICAL FULFILMENT	71
MYSTIC CONJUNCTION	81
ANNIHILATION (<i>FANA</i>) AND SUBSISTENCE (<i>BAQA</i>).....	93
Conclusion.....	108
Bibliography	114
PRIMARY TEXTS: D.H. LAWRENCE.....	114
PRIMARY TEXTS: SUFISM.....	115
GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY	115

Introduction

I The central Argument about Lawrence's mysticism

The early 20th century writer D.H. Lawrence writes in a particular metaphysical tradition within Western religious, philosophical, and literary conventions, which brings him recognisably close to earlier mysticisms. Mysticism, as a system dealing with human endeavour to grasp, understand or reach the essence of reality, presupposes a faith in an unknown realm beyond the phenomenal world. In this sense, a comparative literary analysis of Rumi, an established mystic, and Lawrence, hardly known as a mystic in the true sense of the word, is more of a study of variations in approaches towards the meaning of love and a mystical religious sensibility than similarities. Lawrence is not known as a mystic within the Christian tradition in the same way as Rumi is seen as a mystic within the Islamic tradition. However, many critics have suggested mystical themes in Lawrence's writings. For example, Michael Black (1991) in his commentary on Lawrence's philosophical essays often identifies a blurring mystical vision in his (Lawrence's) metaphorical shifts. Similarly, Emile Delavenay in his *D. H. Lawrence and Edward Carpenter: A Study in Edwardian Transition* finds mystical elements in Lawrence's writings comparable to English mystical writer Edward Carpenter (Delavenay, 1971). Furthermore, John Colmer (1985) in his essay on Lawrence and Blake notes the influence of Blakean mysticism on Lawrence, especially the theme of the 'redeeming power of sexual love' (Colmer, 1985, p. 5), a mystical theme common to earlier mystical and poetic traditions and Lawrence. Roberts W. French claims that American mystical poet Walt Whitman 'remained a major influence throughout Lawrence's life' (French, 1985, p. 91).

My purpose in this study, however, is not to claim a major influence of Rumi's mystical poetry on Lawrence. The aim of this study is a comparative literary analysis of the variations in the theme of love in Lawrence and Rumi. I have discussed the meaning of mysticism and the concept of love and divinity in Sufi mystic tradition to infer the suggestions embedded in Lawrence's imagery and to ask if there is a mystical or transcendental aim in Lawrence's exploration of love relationship. The purpose of such an approach is to use the writings of an established mystic poet to explore Lawrence's mystical attitude towards sexual love and erotic theme in his novel, *Women in Love*. However, I am mindful of the fact that Lawrence

writes within a Christian tradition which is prominent in his use of religious symbolism in *Women in Love*.

Christian theologians distinguish Christian love from Eros or sexual love. The Christian philosopher Anders Nygren differentiates between the love of God in the fashion of the Christian Agape and the tradition of the Hellenistic Eros. In his words, 'Agape is a love that loves to give, freely, selflessly; Eros is a love that loves to get, a highly refined form of self-interest and self-seeking' (Nygren, 1969, p. XXI). Nygren is referring to the idea of value judgement about love as a virtue in Christian tradition. Nygren, however, distinguishes Christian love as 'fellowship with God' which also includes fellowship with other human beings in the form of 'love thy neighbour as thyself' (Nygren, 1969, p. 67).

Lawrence's response to the distinction between Agape and Eros in this conventional sense is of absolutism and rejection. Lawrence sees or at least presents love both Agape and Eros combined as a creating and sustaining dual force, the 'systole and diastole of the Heart'. In his 'Foreword' to *Sons and Lovers*, he presents the sensual encounter at the centre of creation in a deeply biblical language, 'God the Father, the Inscrutable, the Unknowable, we know in the Flesh, in Woman. She is the door for our in-going and our out-going. In her we go back to the Father: but like the witnesses of the Transfiguration, blind and unconscious' (Eggert, 1995, p. 35). Lawrence, it seems, to be aware of the historical debate surrounding the concept of love in the Christian and Western tradition. He provokingly assigns the woman's body the sustaining, eternal and transcendent characteristics of a divine nature. A Christianity tradition, argued by Simon May in his *Love: A History* (2011), has gradually adopted the the idea of love as a supreme value, an abstract goodness. The concept of love in Christianity after Augustine to a large extent lacks a sensual reference as it appears to have this characteristic to some extent in the Old Testament such as in *The Song of Songs*. May's historical analysis of the evolution of the concept of love in Western world reveals that both Greek and Christian traditions have contributed into making love more and more abstracted and an ethical issue and characteristically has removed the idea of love from its everyday meaning. While delineating the theme of love Lawrence emphasises on bodily experience; instead of assigning love an ethical role Lawrence presents the theme of love as a common sexual experience. His presentation, however, is shrouded in mystical language and religious symbolism.

In the 'Foreword' to *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence uses 'love' and 'law' in opposition to each other in antinomian fashion, which remains a concern in later philosophical essays leading to his important novel *Women in Love*. In the light of the Christian theological discussion on themes of 'Eros and Agape' and the antinomian tradition within western religious and literary circles, I intend to offer a reading of *Women in Love* in comparison to the idea of love offered by thirteenth century Persian Sufi poet, Muslim jurist and mystical writer Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi.

For an understanding of Rumi's concept of mystical love within the Sufi traditions in the early and later Middle Ages, I have relied on many scholars on Sufism in general and Rumi experts in particular. Prominent among many such studies are recently published research works on the development of mystical and antinomian elements in Sufi tradition before and during Rumi's time. Research, such as Lloyd Ridgeon's 'Mysticism in Medieval Sufism', Leonard Lewisohn's 'Sufism's Religion of Love, from Rabia' to Ibn 'Arabi' and A. Karamustafa's 'Antinomian Sufism' (all published in *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism*, 2015) and Christopher Melchert's 'The Transition from Asceticism to Mysticism at the Middle of the Ninth Century', published in *Studia Islamica* (1996), show the true value of Sufism both as a cultural and literary revolution in the Middle Ages in that part of the world, and as a religious and philosophical propensity within the Muslim tradition. It is interesting to note that some of the ideas promoted and celebrated in Sufi literature can be compared and also understood alongside a modern English novelist. For instance, the image of the erotic body and sexual undertones in the description of the earthly beloved which is used as analogous to divine love in the Sufi discourse. Lawrence in the strictly religious sense does not recognise the conception of God as such. However, there are suggestion of transcendent meaning to love and erotic experience in his writings.

II D. H. Lawrence and his religious sensibility

Born in the coal mining town of Eastwood, Nottinghamshire in 1885, David Herbert Lawrence was an English novelist, poet and essayist, described as 'the greatest imaginative novelist of our generation' by E. M. Forster (Letter to *The Nation and Atheneum*, 29 March 1930). The influential critic F. R. Leavis in his ground-breaking work, *D.H. Lawrence, Novelist* (1955) in defence of Lawrence's art, places him within the canonical 'great tradition' of the English novel. He is considered a prophetic writer, a relentless critic of his age and he also writes in a spiritual vein similar to many mystical writings of the past. For this last

statement I will argue in my opening chapters that, like Blake before him, Lawrence struggles to conform to doctrinal faith, but remains fascinated with religious truth in his own mystic way. By 'religious truth', Lawrence means that one needs to be attentive to the mystery of creation. He regards human life as an expression of hidden cosmic realities, that is why he insists throughout his life on establishing a cosmic connection rather than what he considered the isolated individualism of modern life. In his essay on education he notes 'by religious faculty we mean the inward worship of the creative life – mystery: the implicit knowledge that life is unfathomable and unsearchable in its motives' (Herbert, 1988, p.108). Nonetheless, for him being religious, or having a religious sensibility does not mean doctrinal faith, as he warns of adhering to any dogmatic interpretation of the mystery of creation, 'We shall have the courage to refrain from dogma. Dogma is the translation of the religious impulse into an intellectual term' and that 'our God is the Unnamed, the Veiled' (Herbert, 1988, p.108). Indeed, Lawrence's religious sensibility is rooted in English Puritanical traditions and his own Nonconformist Church, as George A. Punichas observes, 'the puritan spirit, in its original and intrinsic nature, renounced orthodox authoritarianism in favour of an individual conscience and an immediate religious faith and response. It was this that once prompted Edward Dowden to conclude that the 'unwavering central element' of Puritanism, in its undefiled essentiality, was the emphasis on the fact that 'the relation between the invisible spirit of man and the invisible God was immediate rather than mediate' ' (Punichas, 1964, p. 50). However, Lawrence's rejection of the legalistic and moral emphasis of the Puritan spirit makes things complicated. Different from the 'inheritance of English puritan religious feeling' of the earlier English novelists, for Black Lawrence 'was articulating another religious impulse' (Black, 1991, p. 49). Black identifies the mystery of organic life and evolution as Lawrence's naturalistic religious instinct. I would argue for a more traditional mystic susceptibility in Lawrence's writing.

Lawrence's stress on experience-based religious sensibility, his personal sense of wonder and mystery, may be traced back to his Nonconformist background. But his struggle as well as his fascination with the concept of divinity and love – two basic mystic concerns – make him seek something beyond the relatively free spirit of his own Church. Lawrence's poetic atheology is characteristic of his age, as many mystical and agnostic ideas were influencing young writers and intellectuals of his time. For instance, Lawrence was introduced to agnostic and mystical poetry of Khayyam; similarly he was later introduced to Nietzsche's philosophy. His encounters to such ideas in philosophy and literature is well documented

(Kinkead-Weekes, 2001). But as we learn from Jessie Chambers' (1980) records of his early life, he was seeking for answers to satisfy his soul. For Lawrence, rejection of a doctrine, or an idea is one thing and seeking an authentic experience of one's existence is another thing. His search for such experiences and connection with cosmic realities beyond appearances makes him different from many of his generation.

For instance, he develops a fascination with theme of love as a sacred bond, a companionship, a theme which he pursues in his fictions. However, Lawrence's fictional world is subtly metaphysical and not very stable, as in Michael Bell's words, Lawrence's fiction 'presents the constant jostling of fundamentally different sensibilities' (Bell, 1991, p. 3). This constant shift in his vision is probably due to his rejection of any fundamental conventions and his adherence to a creative relation with the mystery of being.

Kinkead-Weekes maintains that, though Lawrence 'broke with the nonconformist morality he had been taught, he never ceased to believe that both good life and good art were essentially moral, in a different but not less puritan way' (Kinkead-Weekes, 2001, p. 831). It seems that after rejecting Christian morality, Lawrence holds on to a religious conviction. Some outlines of his convictions can be seen in his essays and those outlines become more integrated and imaginative in the novels under discussion. His belief in shimmering life, the flow and active participation in life, and also the confusion and wonder and mystery of creation, can be seen in 'The Crown' and the *Study of Thomas Hardy* essays. Similarly, his belief in a cosmic reality beyond the ordinary world, beyond ebb and flow, as he shows in 'The Crown', can be seen in the dark stillness of 'The Reality of Peace'. In 'The Reality of Peace', he seems to take strength and confidence in the great impersonal, the dark reality.

In *The Rainbow*, Lawrence presents both the changing landscape, a familiar theme since the English Romantics, and his vision of the body and the erotic relationship as something sacred. *The Rainbow* is both an affirmation and a critique of Romantic pantheism, Hardy's naturalism and Christian traditions of the Church. Lawrence shows nature as alive and responds to the human body and soul in the Romantic tradition. Biblical imagery shows the religious nature of the novel. In *The Rainbow*, Lawrence combines both twentieth century Romanticism and his vision of the erotic body. The erotic body in the novel is a departure from the Church's teaching, which is also his argument against the concept of sin and celibacy from the 'Foreword' to *Sons and Lovers* onward. The characters find their essential-selves through sexual contact and also through their contact with nature. The beginning of the

novel prepares the reader for a journey through the sacred sources of life and mystery in which the aroused body is key. In a way Lawrence rejects the 'word' or abstract vision of the divine and makes the body the abode of the divine knowledge.

Kinkead-Weekes discerns in Lawrence's religious sensibility two aspects that play an essential role in *The Rainbow*; the idea of the immanence of the divine in the natural world and the elevation of the body. The Brangwen men fulfil themselves both from their proximity with nature and from their sexual relations with their women. Women bodies are shown as the unknown source of life and energy. Woman's body transmits a knowledge which is both mysterious and superior to other forms of knowledge. As one critic has said *The Rainbow* is 'in a sense Lawrence's sacred book' (Moynahan, 1969, p. 147). The body of the women in the novel and key religious symbols direct us towards the transcendent. By bringing together the sensual body and religious images, Lawrence gives a very important signal of his departure from Christianity which in Kinkead-Weekes' words reduces religion and reduces God. He expands the meaning of religious symbols in a manner which includes mythic and mystical understanding. By bringing back the erotic body into the realm of sacred discourse, Lawrence wants to accomplish both the task of the artist and the prophet.

In his philosophical essays, for example, the 'Foreword' to *Sons and Lovers*, the *Study of Thomas Hardy*, *Twilight in Italy*, 'The Crown' and 'The Reality of Peace', he builds and develops his ideas through poetic imagination. By poetic imagination I mean the manner he uses poetic means, such as images and metaphors, in these early discursive writings. I refer to the use and development of his imagery in the final chapter of the thesis; this discussion helps us to understand Lawrence's poetic intention in *Women in Love*, as I believe in a way *Women in Love* is a culmination of a journey he first embarks on after finishing *Sons and Lovers*. The 'Foreword' (1912) was written soon after finishing *Sons and Lovers*, which as Michael Black says can be considered a manifesto for his new novels. The *Study of Thomas Hardy* (1914) written during his rewriting of *The Rainbow* and other essays are written (from 1915 to 1917) while Lawrence was also working on different drafts of *Women in Love*.

Since my emphasis is on a comparative literary analysis, I have, therefore, focused on Lawrence's fiction. Prominent Lawrence scholars are in agreement that *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* are Lawrence's finest works of fiction and both these novels present Lawrence's mature metaphysical vision and his idea of fiction writing. Robert E. Montgomery notes, '*Women in Love*, Lawrence's greatest novel, is his most successful

attempt to combine metaphysics with a 'living sense of being,' to combine concept and metaphor, prophecy and scepticism, myth and science' (Montgomery, 1994, p. 111). F. R. Leavis and Michael Bell also consider *Women in Love* and *The Rainbow* as Lawrence's mature novels.

Since there is a similar study of *The Rainbow* available to the one I offer here, Fereshteh Zangenehpour's *Sufism and the Quest for Spiritual Fulfillment in D.H. Lawrence's The Rainbow*, I have chosen to focus solely on *Women in Love*. My study is a further contribution to debates such as Zangenehpour's efforts to illuminate mystical concepts in *The Rainbow* by following the inner transformation in the main characters. Concerning Lawrence's "mysticism" and how closely it can be compared to and understood through Sufi traditions of mystical literature, indeed, *Women in Love* alludes to some of the episodes of *The Rainbow*, and on many occasions *The Rainbow* sets some of the themes present in the later novel. However, *Women in Love* is a different novel in many respects. In *The Rainbow*, Lawrence allows three generations of the Brangwen family to grow historically and spiritually and there is a sense of a Biblical sky (through Biblical symbolism) and mother earth (the close proximity of early Brangwens to agricultural land) that nourishes the spiritual maturity of the Brangwens. *Women in Love* presents two modern couples, each engaged in pursuing his and her own meaning in relationships. In *The Rainbow* there is no Birkin figure, who speaks out loud Lawrence's vision, especially about love and relationships. As compared with *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* is a loud cry for forming a new relationship based on a holistic human experience, which includes a vague suggestion of the mystical or spiritual aspects of human experience.

The original contribution of the research in this thesis lies in its further development of Zangenehpour's argument concerning the relationship between the experience of spiritual transformation and ascension given to the major characters in Lawrence's novel *The Rainbow*, and Rumi's mystical concept of spiritual transformation and ascension to another level of being. Zangenehpour (2000) establishes in her thesis *The Rainbow*'s symbolic importance with relation to the Sufi doctrine of inner transformation. Nevertheless, her thesis does not fully consider the mystical concepts of 'Love', 'Ecstasy', 'mystic-conjunction', and 'Annihilation' in relation to Lawrence's presentation of sexual love. This thesis aims to develop this relationship.

Zangenehpour claims that Lawrence's mystical vision is influenced by Sufi cosmology of the spiritual path. She cites Lawrence's reading of Edward Fitzgerald's (1809-1883) translation of Persian mystic poet Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*, which Jessie Chambers mentions in her memoirs of Lawrence. Chambers records how Lawrence gave her 'the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam' to read (Chambers, 1980, p. 101). She also refers to the availability of Richard Garnett's twenty-volume *Anthology of International Library of Famous Literature* at Lawrence's home. Garnett's anthology contains some extracts from Sufi poetry. Chambers describes the value of this possession in these words:

One of the most treasured possessions of the Lawrence household was set of large volumes bound in green cloth containing long extracts from famous authors. The books had belonged to Ernest, and were regarded with a reverence amounting to awe. Lawrence must have made many literary acquaintances through the medium of these volumes (Chambers, 1980, p. 92).

There are strong possibilities on many other occasions of Lawrence's reading Sufi literature, including Rumi's poetry. One such example is the publication of Rumi's poetry in *The New Age* magazine of A. R. Orage. Lawrence's reading of this magazine is recorded in Chambers biographical accounts of Lawrence. Another such example is Lawrence's meeting with an Indian Oxford scholar Shahid Hasan Suhrawardy (Philip Arnold Heseltine's Oxford friend, mentioned in Lawrence's letters) who translated Rumi's poetry for Robert Bridges' *The Spirit of the Man*. Despite the fact that many sources can be cited which show Lawrence's possible reading of Sufi literature, the case for the influence cannot be argued to scholarly satisfaction. Lawrence never acknowledges Sufi influence in his writings.

The major argument of Zangenehpour's theory rests on the claim that the characters in *The Rainbow* go through similar psycho-spiritual transformations of a mystical kind as Sufis portray in their spiritual progress on the 'mystical path'. Zangenehpour follows the spiritual journey of the characters in *The Rainbow* and identifies a mystical quest in Lawrence's writings in order to draw a parallel with a Sufi's journey on the inner path towards spiritual awareness. In this regard, Zangenehpour convincingly argues the mystical significance of Lawrence's characterization in *The Rainbow*, such as Tom Brangwen's erotic experiences with Lydia. However, her principal argument is that the spiritual awareness of the Brangwens lies in the Brangwen women's aspiration for the 'spoken world beyond' and not in the blood

intimacy of men with the earth and women (Zangenehpour, 2000, p. 76)). She does not engage with the erotic spirituality and antinomian attitude in both Lawrence and Rumi.

This is also an important aspect of Persian Sufi literature, which is prominent in its handling of sensual love and its sacral significance. Much of Lawrence's mystical rhetoric is also in the service of celebrating sensual love as a holy sacrament. Both Lawrence and Rumi consider love as the 'threshold' of a higher state of being, and both attach transcendental value to erotic excitement. In Rumi's case, it is almost certain that he believed in the Quranic or Abrahamic God, although he has a different theory for reaching Him. Therefore, for Rumi the higher state of being is the divine consciousness and, as a mystic, he believes he himself is a part of the transcendental Godhead; only through love he can perceive that higher status of his soul which is essentially divine. We cannot say the same about Lawrence; however, Rumi's mystical connotation of sensual love can help understanding Lawrence's engagement with love in this manner. We can discuss his use of mystical language in connection with love and relationships in a modern English society and we can ask how far it is related to his early rejection of doctrinal faith, to his disillusion with his time and, significantly, to his reading of Sufi and other mystical writings.

My use of the word mysticism in relation to sexual love and its sacral meaning in connection with Lawrence and Sufi poetry carries a different connotation than what may be considered normative meaning. Ninian Smart, for instance, defines mysticism as: 'primarily consisting in an interior or introvertive quest, culminating in certain interior experiences which are not described in terms of sense-experience or of mental images' (Smart, 1965, p.75). Smart's rejection of 'sense-experience' as a genuine mystic way to knowledge excludes the sacral meaning in sexual love and erotic spirituality from mystic experience. Commenting on Smart's definition, Lloyd Ridgeon rightly notes the difficulty of identifying Sufism or at least the erotic and poetic form of Sufism as "mysticism" as understood in the western world. The main difficulty Ridgeon points out is the Sufi description of interior or mystical experience: In the standard definitions of mysticism the mystical experiences are not described in terms of sense-experience or of mental images as we see in the Smart's definition. Whereas Ridgeon states that Sufis describe their mystical experiences with sensual images, 'Smart's definition fails to correlate with the way that many Sufis described encounters of the Ultimate reality through what they called the 'imaginal' sense, and which were cloaked in sensory forms that made what they understood as the divine more comprehensible. This was not the case of Sufis witnessing what Rudolph Otto called the *numinous*, it was not a terrifying,

wholly other, awe-inspiring deity, but a beautiful beloved with whom the Sufi wanted to unite' (Ridgeon, 2015, p. 126). Without getting into a detailed discussion on the meaning of Sufism and mysticism in general, the comparable reading of Rumi and Lawrence in this thesis I hope will show the difficulty Ridgeon identifies here, as a point of correlation and similarity in many respects between Lawrence's vision and Rumi's mystical conception of love. This in turn reveals an aesthetic response to religion's claim of transcendence from Rumi and Lawrence in their own particular ways.

III A Review of Relevant Material

In the following paragraphs I will present an overview of Lawrence's scholarship to show the relevance of many important critical works to this study, in addition to the mainstream Lawrence scholarship mentioned above. It is not an extended study of the vast amount of critical attention that Lawrence's works have drawn. I will just mention those that point to similar interpretations or the ones which have changed the course of Lawrence scholarship.

Whilst most critical works on Lawrence's understanding of love refer to his metaphysics, and some studies have considered the Biblical, theological and Western philosophical influences on Lawrence, there have been only a few extended treatments of Lawrence's non-Christian religious influences beyond the Pre-Socratic and late nineteenth-century esoteric influences explicitly named in his work. Treatments of Lawrence in relation to Buddhism and other Eastern mysticisms exist, such as Gerald Doherty's study (Doherty, 1984, p. 211) of the correlation between 'sexual initiation' in *Women in love* and yogic theory of Tantrism. I will refer to Doherty's useful reading of the 'Excuse' chapter in *Women in Love* in my reading of the same chapter. He draws a comparison between Lawrence's presentation of the erotic body and Tantric sexual rituals. Similarly Chaman Nahal in his book *D. H. Lawrence: an Eastern View* compares elements in Lawrence's religious vision and Eastern religions, particularly he sees affinity between Lawrence's vision of life as it flows mysteriously and endlessly with the Vedic religions' affirmation of 'life in its continuity' (Nahal, 1970, p. 28). He rightly describes the vitalism in Lawrence's vision as something comparable to the Vedic tradition. But he does not mention that Lawrence's affinity with such a vision is also considered to be his affirmation of primitive culture in general. This was fashionable in Lawrence's days with anthropologists and others. However, there is little treatment of the possible comparative reading of Lawrence's mystically inclined ideas with the Sufi literature. This thesis adds to

the existing body of Lawrence research on the comparable aspects of his handling of physical love relationships in his fictions, and on Lawrence's interest in heterodox religious traditions.

For many of his contemporary readers, Lawrence's approach to his characters and his metaphysics shows the moral and artistic failure of a genius. For instance, one of Lawrence's friends, Edward Garnett, after reading the manuscript of *Women in Love*, writes to him that the 'psychology is wrong' in the manner in which he represents his characters. Lawrence urges him not to look for the 'old stable ego' in his characters and he tells Garnett that 'it is only that I have a different attitude to my characters'. (George J. Zytaruk, James T. Boulton, II, 2002, p. 182). It is not Garnett's fault. Most of Lawrence's contemporaries were bemused by Lawrence's motives in presenting a progressive spiritual psychology in his characters. Another of Lawrence's friends, John Middleton Murry, in his review of *Women in Love* published in the *Nation and Athenaeum* on 13 August 1921, responds to Lawrence's style and mystic vision: 'passionate vehemence, wave after wave of turgid, exasperated writing impelled towards some distant and invisible end' (Murry, 1921, p. 713). Murry's negative and exasperated response to Lawrence's penetrative and passionate prose echoes a general disapproval of Lawrence's techniques and his vision. However, some of Lawrence's contemporaries, such as Frederick Carter and Aldous Huxley, not only defended Lawrence's techniques, but also appreciated the esoteric message in his works. For instance, Carter explains the mystical vision in Lawrence's narrative, 'The great urgency, the call, the appeal, the peculiar penetration in David Herbert Lawrence's writing came from its mysticism' (Carter, 1932, p. 3). He also regards Lawrence's esoteric voice as necessary in a time when there are many false practitioners of mysticism, saying

It is necessary in these days when the very word mysticism has been confoundingly confused by certain exponents [...] the practitioners of a kind of juggling magic or necromancy [...] It is necessary for some strong voices to declare that the mystic seeks, simply, the method of approach in man's intimate relation with the universal. That it is a problem of passion and desire and not merely a point of view must be understood however, for great mystics have belonged to every real religion (Carter, 1932, p. 7).

Sadly, Carter's views are not prominent in Lawrence scholarship and most critics tended to follow a method of psychoanalytical reading and biographical criticism of his work during the 1930s and 1940s.

Later F. R. Leavis's monumental works (*D. H. Lawrence, Novelist* in 1955 and *Thought, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence* in 1976) during the 1950s and 1960s triggered a wide range of scholarly critical studies of Lawrence's writings. Leavis defends Lawrence's art against early adverse readings and argues that there is a 'vital intelligence' and a 'primal consciousness' in Lawrence which relates his art to his thought. Distinguishing Lawrence as a 'far greater creative power' than his antagonistic influential contemporary poet and critic T. S. Eliot Leavis says of Lawrence's artistic qualities, '[i]n his varied, voluminous and wide-ranging *oeuvre*, his concern is always with developing a sense of what vital intelligence is, and this entails a conception of art and of the relation of art to thought very different from that implied (if anything to be called a conception is) in Eliot's relevant utterances' (Leavis, 1976, p. 20). For Leavis, Lawrence's openness to the unknown and his sense of wonder do not entail a mystical purpose, as argued by Carter, but are a requirement of his 'creativity as an artist' (1976, p. 24). Leavis considers Lawrence's work on a purely aesthetic level and successfully defends the artistic merit in Lawrence.

Keith Sagar (*The Art of D.H. Lawrence*, 1966), another critic with wide consideration of Lawrence's work, recognises the deeply religious sensibility in Lawrence's writing. He maintains that Lawrence's vision corresponds to an ancient religious sensibility and points out Lawrence's understanding of a living relatedness with the cosmos. Sagar not only shows Lawrence's achievement within the great tradition of English novel, but he also notes Lawrence's reaction and departure from the great tradition. Sagar, in one of his later essays ('Lawrence and the Resurrection of Pan', 1992) notes that for Lawrence, the living relation with the cosmos was broken with the coming of the later Greek and Roman conquering and dominating spirit. The sensuous appeal of pre-Roman Etruscan art, for instance, interested Lawrence, who was struck with the life and celebration of the simple paintings of the Etruscans. The pictures of dancing girls, singing, hunting and intimate physical action make him consider them as expressions of the real and spontaneous life impulse of the 'old physical world' (Filippis, 1992, pp. 20-21). For Lawrence, the 'quick ripple of life' and 'liveliness and naturalness' of these paintings make them not only beautiful but these qualities also reveal the ancients' 'profound belief in life' and 'acceptance of life' which Lawrence wants to show in his novels. However, Sagar points to Jung's use of ancient symbolism and imagery for an explanation of Lawrence's cosmology, which also indicates a mystical conception of the world. Sagar also initiates an important discussion with regard to an awareness of ecological preservation in Lawrence's writing.

Robert E. Montgomery (*The Visionary D. H. Lawrence: Beyond Philosophy and Art*, 1994) considers Lawrence's work and his vision through the tradition of the English Romantics. He identifies Lawrence's vision with the Carlylean hero and Romantic imagination. In his observation of a parallel between the visions of Lawrence and those of German and English Romantic poets and philosophers, Montgomery acknowledges the pagan streams reaching the European Romantics and Lawrence through Medieval Gnostic traditions, but he reduces these metaphysical traditions to a Western post-Kantian subject-object paradigm. Within this paradigm he proposes his idea of polarity, according to which, unity is acquired through the tension of repulsion and attraction. He maintains that Nietzsche is an enduring influence on Lawrence. In his extended discussion of the parallel treatment of the opposite spirits of the Apollonian and the Dionysian in Nietzsche and Lawrence, Montgomery does not engage with Lawrence's theme of the erotic love as a departure from Nietzsche's conceptual discussion of these opposite forces and Lawrence's exploration of sexual experience in his fiction.

Since Lawrence's mysticism is more clearly manifested in *Women in Love* than in *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* will, as I have said, provide the main focus for this study's argument. Since there has been no such reading of *Women in Love* before, the thesis is original in its objective and will add to overall Lawrence scholarship.

IV Structure of the Thesis

To recap, the central focus of this thesis will be a comparative literary analysis of the writings of Lawrence and Rumi. The focus will be on theme of love in *Women in love* and Lawrence's other writings. The sexual imagery in Lawrence's writings will be compared and contrasted with the sexual undertones in Rumi's mystical poetry. However, before a comparison can be made of the salient features of their writings, the thesis will begin with an exploration of the antinomian literary traditions in which Lawrence and Rumi write. It will further contextualise Lawrence and Rumi's writing within their respective literary and religious traditions.

The thesis consists of four main chapters. In the first chapter I will discuss the context of Lawrence's writings and his own milieu in which he interacts with different ideas and people with different ideological backgrounds. I have given three main occasions in which Lawrence might have read the Sufi literature of Rumi and been influenced by this particular erotic tradition of Sufi mysticism.

In the second chapter I will discuss the antinomian elements in the writings of both Lawrence and Rumi. I will draw upon the aforementioned recently published research on the development of the theme of love and antinomian elements in medieval Sufism. Lawrence and Rumi are influenced by antinomian tendencies of their own religious traditions. This chapter traces the antinomian influences of the Pauline corpus and William Blake's spiritual poetry on Lawrence's writing. The chapter also discusses the background of antinomian tendencies in Rumi's poetry. The discussion shows a comparative antinomian gesture in both the writers' presentation of the theme of love.

In order to avoid superficial emphasis on similarities and differences in the parallel study of Lawrence and Rumi, in chapter three, I will give an account of Persian Sufi tradition and its concepts without reference to Lawrence. In this brief introduction to Sufism and its concepts, my aim is to provide the necessary understanding of the key Sufi concepts used by Rumi in his poetry.

In the fourth chapter, I will present my parallel reading of Lawrence's *Women in Love* and other writings and Rumi's poetry. This is a cross-cultural study of two literary writers from different ages, who write in different languages and genres. However, I have not approached them exclusively from the point of view of cross-cultural study. My choice of Rumi's poetry has been guided by elements which appear to be more or less universal in the various mystical traditions. His mystical views and his religious vision can be useful in illuminating certain aspects of Lawrence's writings which may be otherwise difficult to understand. This is especially true of the latter's mature fiction. My focus will be on certain mystical elements in Lawrence's *Women in Love* and some other writings, and I will emphasise how far a parallel view in Rumi's mysticism can go in helping an understanding of Lawrence's idea of love and its sacral nature.

The concluding chapter summarises the main argument of the thesis and highlights the salient features of the discussion about Lawrence's mystic tone and attitude toward human love and sexual experience in comparison with the tradition of mystic love in Rumi's poetry.

Lawrence's possible encounter with different mystical and semimystical ideas popular in his time

It is far easier to highlight mystical elements in D. H. Lawrence's work than pinpoint a particular influence of any mystical tradition in his writings. This is partly due to the vagueness of his mystical purpose and poetic expression and partly due to the manner in which Lawrence takes ideas from different sources and places them in his exclusive framework of ideas. Mystical elements, such as those mentioned by Frederick Carter – the search for his primordial 'self' wherever he went, 'the great urgency' (Carter, 1932, p. 3) and search for an intimate relationship with the universal through the particular – this quest of a mystical kind is a progressive theme in Lawrence's fiction. I need to emphasise from the outset that Lawrence is not a convert to mysticism of any kind as we can say in case of Rumi. Instead, he shows a rather vague allegiance to the mystical spirit of his age which included Sufi poetic traditions. It is not to contest the Englishness of his poetic temperament or his place in the 'great tradition of English novel' as Leavis has argued, but to highlight his frequent departures from such categories into a world of his own making. This chapter will tackle these issues of Lawrence's mysticism and will reveal the presence, sometimes minimal, of Sufi literature in Lawrence's immediate context.

Mysticism and mystical speculations share commonalities in all ages and places as far as the deepest impulses of spiritual experience of man are concerned. However, the variant colours of the strange spiritual phenomenon called mysticism are as diverse as human experience has been through the ages in different parts of the world. Mystical speculation is no different from philosophical speculation in its diversity across human cultures throughout history. In any philosophical speculation a rational explanation of being is sought and in mystical speculation a transcendental experience of the primordial self is what a mystic aspires to. A mystic aspiration of direct experience of the divine is the primary desire; a desire to be totally oneself, which can be interpreted as "unity" and "annihilation" at the same time in the mystical traditions of the Sufis. In conjunction with the mystical speculation in Rumi's poetry, that of an established mystic I will try to explore Lawrence's poetic and mystic portrayal of human love as a quest for something extraordinary. From his 'Foreword' to *Sons and Lovers* to *Women in Love*, the progression of a metaphysics in his writings gives the impression of a mystic conjuncture. In the following I will discuss Lawrence's religious beliefs and his interaction with different metaphysical debates of his time.

Lawrence's "mysticism" is immersed in his knowledge of the Romantic and Victorian literary and metaphysical tradition. I agree with Jeffrey Meyers' observation that the mystical dimension of erotic love in Lawrence is not entirely a foreign influence. This is suggested in Meyers' comment that 'Lawrence shares with most of the writers from Blake to Nietzsche a close connection to the line of Protestant Dissent; a belief in Darwinism; a plea for an organic as opposed to a mechanistic society; an emotional and spontaneous style, an immediacy, intensity and vitality; fictional characters rooted in the landscape; the quest of Superior female characters for an appropriate mate; an awareness of unconscious motivation; an emphasis on the physical body and sexual being; a belief in the redeeming power of sexual love' (Meyers, 1985, p. 5). However, Meyers does not identify where in particular he thinks from Blake to Nietzsche or in Protestant traditions Lawrence has taken his 'belief in the redeeming power of sexual love', which I consider fundamental to his idea of love.

The 'Foreword' to *Sons and Lovers* is considered to be a departure from Lawrence's earlier writings, which more or less present a conventional mode. The 'Foreword' is the beginning of a more complicated thought process and the beginning of his 'philosophicalish' essays. However, his engagement with theological and spiritual matters goes back to his Church and his early readings with Jessie Chambers. Lawrence grew up in a deeply religious atmosphere at his home and Non-conformist Church. Though religious, the diverse topics of sermon and lecture at his Chapel show a wide interest in and freedom of discussion of contemporary intellectual debates. Biographers of Lawrence (1991) note that it was not unusual for such a deeply religious but intellectual free young man to start questioning doctrinal belief. The later mystical tendencies in Lawrence's writings can be traced back to this young age. Once he started doubting the moral universe of the doctrinal faith, he became agnostic to all philosophical and theological reasoning. The history of mysticism suggests that it is not unusual for the route to mysticism to go through an agnostic attitude towards religious truth. While expressing his doubts about religious doctrine, Lawrence hints at the mystical direction for his religious beliefs to take. In his December 1907 letter to his chapel minister the Reverend Reid, he refers to St. Paul who is often considered to have a mystical and antinomian side to his teachings. Lawrence tells the minister:

I have been brought up to believe in the absolute necessity for a sudden spiritual conversion; I believed for many years that the Holy Ghost descended and took conscious possession of the 'elect' – the converted one; I thought all conversions were,

to a greater or less degree, like that of Paul's [...] I have watched for the coming of something from without; - it has never come (Zytaruk and Boulton, I, 1979, p. 39).

As he later finds out the intimation has to come from within rather than without. This later knowledge makes him a believer of 'flesh' against 'word', which he tries to argue in the 'Foreword' six years later. His letter further shows his aspiration for a cosmic God rather than a personal God. He further says in his letter: 'Then, it appears to me, a man gradually formulates his religion, be it what it may [...] At the present moment I do not, cannot believe in the divinity of Jesus [...] a cosmic God I can therefore believe in' (Zytaruk and Boulton, I, 1979, pp. 40-1). However, he never gives up his deeply Biblical language and more so in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, his two most mature novels as far as his ontological vision is concerned. His agnosticism gradually transforms into a personal religion, after a mystical fashion.

Other than the Bible and the sermons, Lawrence read many philosophical and literary writings at a young age which would have helped shape the later spiritual and metaphysical speculations in his writings. Most biographical studies reveal the emotional and intellectual crisis Lawrence went through as a young man. His letters show a great deal of anxiety about home and college. He finds his college professors inadequate and church sermons also unsatisfactory. Because of the drunken behaviour of his father, he was left without a father figure and his mother's high expectation and controlling behaviour forced him to rebel. Lawrence occupied himself with reading western literature and philosophy. In Jessie Chambers' accounts Lawrence read all the modern English authors and most of the Russian and French classics. Chambers records, 'He read, of course, all the modern English authors' (Chambers, 1980, p. 121). Lawrence was not a passive reader, he seemed to try to discover his own way through the ideas he found in books. Chambers makes a very interesting observation of Lawrence's intellectual engagement with different ideas when he was in his first year at college. She notes:

The materialist philosophy came in full blast with T. H. Huxley's *Man's Place in Nature*, Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*. This rationalistic teaching impressed Lawrence deeply. He came upon it at a time of spiritual fog, when the lights of orthodox religion and morality were proving wholly inadequate, perplexed as he was by his own personal dilemma. My feeling was that he

tried to fill up a spiritual vacuum by swallowing materialism at a gulp. But it did not carry him far (Chambers, 1980, p. 112).

Chambers also reports that Lawrence was reading Bishop Berkeley during this time and after listing the major nineteenth century texts of Western literature and philosophy Lawrence has read, she indicates his emotional and intellectual crisis and observes a vaguely personal need of some religious faith in Lawrence: 'In all his reading he seemed to be groping for something that he could lay hold of as a guiding principle in his own life [...] he seemed to consider all his philosophical reading from the angle of his own personal need' (Chambers, 1980, p. 113).

In addition to other things Lawrence read Persian poet Omar Khayyam, who at once is famous for his agnosticism and mysticism. His quatrains criticise religious piousness and religious laws and are full of a Dionysian celebration of life. A mathematician of great repute, Khayyam's poetry shows another side of him. He frequently employs Sufi symbols and imagery to show his mystical inclinations. Lawrence's biographer Mark Kinkead-Weekes highlights Khayyam's poetry as a major contributor to the cause of agnosticism and to the spiritual crisis of the young men of Lawrence's generation.

The process of questioning for Lawrence, as for so many others in his generation, was helped on its way by Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. Today it is hard to realise the potency and daring for Lawrence's generation of this hedonistic and cheerfully nihilistic poem. First published in 1859, it was rediscovered and became immensely popular in the late 1890s and early 1900s: as a contemporary of Lawrence noted, copies appeared 'in every bookseller's shop window.' It clearly produced a kind of spiritual liberation in many people. Lawrence gave Jessie Chambers a copy for a Christmas present, either in 1904 or in 1905, but Jessie's mother paid tribute to the poem's reputation when she reacted strongly on behalf of her younger children: 'I won't have their faith destroyed. You grieve me by reading such things, but you shan't take the children's faith.' What she would have objected to were stanzas like these:

XLVIII

A Moment's Halt – a momentary Taste
Of BEING from the Well amid the Waste
And Lo! The phantom Caravan has reach'd
The NOTHING it set out from –

Oh, make haste!

LXXII

And that inverted Bowl they call the sky,

Where under crawling coop'd we live and die,

Lift not your hands to it for help for it,

As impotently moves as you and I. (Kinkead-Weekes, I, 1991, pp. 172-3)

It shows how agnosticism and mysticism could have come close for Khayyam's young readers. Khayyam destabilises our perception of the world and questions our belief in a stabilised world, order and faith. Mystic vision thrives on wonder and bewilderment, on uncertainty and the quest for something to believe in. Therefore, it moves from disbelief to belief and from ignorance to knowledge. As I maintain, the mystical theme in Lawrence's writing is likewise a progression from doubt to belief. His early exposure to the agnostic mysticism of Khayyam, the Romanticism of Blake and others matured in *Women in Love* into a deeper mystical vision comparable to Rumi.

Lawrence's possible encounter with Rumi and other Persian Sufi literature is a later event. Most probably, through three major routes: the library of his orientalist uncle Fritz Krenkow, *The New Age* magazine and a mutual friend at Oxford, an Indian of Persian origin. I shall later come to Lawrence's possible reading of Rumi, first his engagement with the spirit of his age, which include Khayyam's poetry.

The late Victorian and pre-World War I period, in which Lawrence was growing up, was full of scepticism, revolutionary ideas and new religious formations. Lawrence was living in the midst of all this due to his connection with books, his intellectual friendships and his literary ambitions. His immediate intellectual context was the context of guild socialism and Nietzschean philosophy promoted by *The New Age*, Madame Blavatsky's and Anne Besant's humanistic mysticism of the Theosophical school, Edward Carpenter's oriental and humanistic mysticism, the Suffragette movement and the revolutionary ideas of his contemporaries. Lawrence's attitude to the spirit of his age was of struggle and absorption both. In his letter to the minister quoted above, among his personal spiritual failures Lawrence also gives humanistic reasons and a lack of social justice for his loss of faith in 'an Omnipotent, pitying Divine', he asks: 'how is it possible that a God who speaks to all hearts can let Belgravia go laughing to a vicious luxury, and Whitechapel cursing to a filthy debauchery – such suffering, such dreadful suffering [...]?' (Zytaruk and Boulton, I, 1979, pp.

40-1). At the same time, he tells the priest that he 'cannot be a materialist' (Zytaruk and Boulton, I, 1979, p. 40). He accepts the ideas of human freedom and social justice so vehemently put forward by his contemporaries. However, he seems to remain suspicious of any material and legal basis for such freedoms. His fundamental views remain individualistic and spiritually motivated. In the same letter one can see him struggling with spiritual zeal against the contemporary movements and ideologies that promote materialistic basis for human freedom, he says, 'I contend that true Socialism is religion; that honest, fervent politics are religion; that whatever a man will labour for earnestly and in some measure unselfishly is religion' (Zytaruk and Boulton, I, 1979, p. 40).

A similar view was expressed by Jessie Chambers, Lawrence's Eastwood friend and reading partner, a few years later in a letter to Lawrence's Croydon friend Helen Corke. Chambers seems to share Lawrence's views that the current crisis is a crisis of spiritual hope and commitment in modern life. Chambers expounds her views in the following manner:

How badly we need a religion in this life of ours! And what a fate to have been born in such an age of transition! To have nothing to worship is old age, and all the world is like that now. I wonder, shall we succeed in evolving a new religion! For it is the supreme task of this and of the ages to follow. The cry for a new religion sounds the deepest note in all the Labour struggles, for why does the democracy crave greater freedom from the animal burden of existence except from the inborn and immortal desire to find expression for its spiritual part in life! [...] But the only satisfying thing in life is an impersonal aim (Corke, 1965, p. 32).

The impersonal aim in Chambers' letter or the transcendent motif in man's earnest labour as Lawrence sees it is a powerful criticism of the different intellectual and political movements of their age. Lawrence seems to have diagnosed the lack of religious commitment in his age as the cause of the problem. However, in reality what Chambers is portraying is a crisis of their own loss of faith. Lawrence also shares the need for a new religion, because of his own loss of faith in doctrinal religion caused by his exposure to agnostic, mystic and socialist writings. According to his biographers, Lawrence's loneliness and his unwelcome ideas about religion and naturalism bring him close to socialists and agnostics like Willie Hopkin, suffragist and socialist Blanche Jennings and her friend Alice Dax and the Eastwood Debating Society, where among other things he may have come across eastern mystical traditions through the writings of Edward Carpenter and others. According to Emile

Delavenay, Carpenter was of the same temperament as this group of leftists and rebels and was known to these people and their society.

The mysticism of the later Victorian period, such as Carpenter's rebellious leftist mysticism, was manifest in a range of socially and politically rebellious ideas. In rebellion from the social and religious culture of the bourgeois social order or from the Christian Church, many sought alternative views either in socialism or in the oriental mystical traditions. Carpenter's work presents a mixture of leftist and Indian mystical ideals. Similarly, Anne Besant of the Theosophical Society tries to find the answer in medieval Christian mystical orders and mystical traditions in India. She combined socialist political thought from her Fabian background and Hindu mysticism in her works. Lawrence may have taken some of his ideas about sexual freedom and the sacred body from Carpenter's writings. Lawrence shares Carpenter's religious and emotional attitude to love and sexuality. However, as other rebel culture writers, Carpenter starts with individual freedom and comradeship but then forecasts a 'democratic and socialist future' (Delavenay, 1971, p. 48). The lack of such idealistic political forecasting in Lawrence's writings shows that he never took to any of these views present in his immediate environment except for a critical outlook about modern civilization.

However, he tried to communicate mystical elements, such as the sacredness of human intimacy and the nature of transcendent reality, in the 'Foreword', in the *Study of Thomas Hardy*, 'The Crown', *The Rainbow* and in *Women in Love*, which suggests he took to many of the mystical ideas present in his age. The most passionate intimacy of a sexual kind, which informs Lawrence's later writings also shows his personal religious quest. Helen Corke alludes to Lawrence's mystical teaching from his Croydon years; she notes that the *Apocalypse* shows what Lawrence 'taught twenty years ago, passionately and persistently' that: 'the Apocalypse shows, by its very resistance, the things that the human heart secretly yearns after [...] what man most passionately wants is his living wholeness, and his living unison, not his own isolated salvation of his 'soul'' (Corke, 1965, p. 130). Lawrence's religious involvement with life, with immediate experience and the pregnancy of the soul in erotic intimacy, seems to be a synchronistic process of his exposure to different mystical ideas. Chambers notes Lawrence's reading of Haeckel's monistic theories. Haeckel teaches that there is one substance in the universe, which is both God and nature, body and spirit. Kinkead-Weekes (1991) thinks that Haeckel helped Lawrence to abandon his doctrinal faith. Lawrence also read Schopenhauer's metaphysics of love, which at first must have impressed Lawrence for its insistence on the primacy of the sexual urge. However, Lawrence's

mysticism soon surpassed both Haeckel and Schopenhauer's philosophy. He remained religiously involved with emotional human relationships and largely unconcerned with metaphysical and dialectic reasoning. He rejects the Christian notion of love as a virtue and all other preservationist notions in favour of the emotional and impulsive reality of intimate relations. His impulsive writing about what has been considered in critical circles as 'shimmering life' can be observed in early poems and fictions. However, this sentimentality changed into the more mature emotional states he creates in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.

The emotional states in later novels become more obscure and mystical in their delineation, which shows a deeper involvement with transcendent thinking after his Croydon years¹. Since Lawrence writes in the English Romantic traditions, divine immanence in the natural world is part of his mystical vision. The Romantic Movement, according to Mark Sedgwick (2009, pp. 180-197), provided an emphasis on subjectivity, manifested as experience and self-discovery, and maintains its spiritual freedom from doctrinal faith. Lawrence, if he read Sufi literature, must have read it in the spirit of the Romantic Movement, in the spirit of Antinomian and primitivist freedom. In *Sons and Lovers* and in the opening chapter of *The Rainbow*, Lawrence draws a mystical picture of his characters' relationship with nature. For instance, Mrs Morel's transcendental and recuperative experience in the scene after her husband shuts her out, pregnant, in the night, and where she becomes aware of a living connection with nature. In *Women in Love* and in the relationship of Tom and Lydia Brangwen in *The Rainbow*, Lawrence seems to make a leap from immanence to the transcendental nature of reality. The sacrament of sensual experience becomes a bigger part of Lawrence's vision in creating the relationship between Tom and Lydia Brangwen, Birkin and Ursula.

¹ The Reader's Index, a bi-monthly magazine of the library, of the Croydon public central library from 1907 to 1912 included reference of several Sufi texts and books related to eastern religion, culture and history each year. Sufi texts and other related Sufi books including A. R. Nicholson's 1898 edition of Rumi's *Divan*, Saadi's *Scroll of Wisdom (pand Namah)* by A. N. Wollaston, Firdausi's *Buxton (Book of Rustam)* by E.M. Wilmot, A. R. Nicholson's *Literary History of the Arabs*, Sir Muhammad Iqbal's *Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (Iqbal himself was a famous Sufi poet of Urdu and Persian languages), Al-Ghazali's *Confession of the Heart* by Claude Field, Claud Field's *Mystics and Saints of Islam*, Hafiz's *Odes from the Divan* by Richard Le Callienne and J. H. Moulton's *Early Religious poetry of Persia*. In addition, a series of book were available called *Sacred Books of the East* which include many Sufi poets among Hindu, Buddhist and Chinese religious books. Several books on Egypt from archaeological to religious and cultural studies as well as Dosabahi Framji's *History of the Parsis* and other similar books on Parsis, Hindus and Muslims of India were also available in the library during the time Lawrence was a reader. The library held a wealth of books on eastern topics, particularly religion and literature from India, Persia and the Middle East. Source: *The Reader's Index: The Bi-Monthly Magazine of the Croydon Public Libraries*, Volume IX, X, XI, XII, XIII, XIV, edited by L. Stanley, Croydon: Published by The Libraries Committee

During the time he finished his teacher training course and started teaching near London in a Croydon school, he began to read *The New Age* magazine and the *English Review*. Both these journals were edited by leftist and social reformists at the time when Lawrence started reading them. The main contributors' primary concern was British and Continental literary and political issues. After A. R. Orage's took charge of *The New Age*, the magazine became a great contributor to philosophical debate. Orage's interest in Nietzsche's philosophy made continental philosophy one of the main attentions of the magazine's publication. Lawrence's early introduction to Nietzsche and other contemporary philosophical debate may be due to his reading *The New Age* and *English Review*. As leftists and reformists, many contributors wrote stories concerning the Empire in every issue. Most were political in nature, such as reports and political commentaries from India and Persia published in these magazines. However, many articles relating to art, religion and mystical traditions of imperial territories like India, Arabia and Persia were published in these magazines. For instance, two articles relating to ancient religious and cultural traditions of India published in *The New Age*.² Some of the contributors, such as Professor Edward Granville Browne the renowned orientalist, were experts on Persian literature and Sufism. Professor Browne contributed in the *Review*. Carpenter, as mentioned earlier, also contributed to *The New Age*.

One significant fact about *The English Review*, with regards to its role as a possible site of encounter between Lawrence and Persian Sufi literature and thought, is that it was financially supported by the greatest Persian scholar outside Iran, Professor Browne. Boulton notes that when the magazine was failing financially, Professor Browne supported it 'who had himself written for the Review' (Zytaruk and Boulton, I, 1979, p. 13). Lawrence must have read some of Professor Browne's writings and other oriental works whose publication in the *Review* Browne thought important and for which it should remain in print. Browne is one of the most celebrated Persian scholars, his name is still well respected in Iran and there is a statue of him in Tehran to honour his work for Persian literature. In his letter, Lawrence refers to Professor Browne's article (*The English Review*, Vol. 3, No. 9 London: Duckworth and Co., 1909-08) in the *Review* about Persian crisis and expresses deep sorrow about the atrocities in Tabriz. *The English Review* was edited by Ford Madox Hueffer, whose influence on Lawrence's career as a literary writer cannot be ignored. Not only does Hueffer launch Lawrence's career as a writer, he also provides him with much wider connections to the literary world. One

² Volume 1, Number 19, London: The New Age Press, Ltd., 1907-09-05 Reviews: 'The Brahmana, Theists, and Muslims of India' by John Campbell Oman: 299-300, and The Rites of Astaroth (Farr, Florence): 294-295).

particular relation between Lawrence and Hueffer's *English Review* is worth mentioning here. James T. Boulton notes that Hueffer 'established a link between Lawrence and the *Review* [that] was to persist until 1923' (Zytaruk and Boulton, I, 1979, p. 13). According to Boulton some thirty five issues of the *Review* included Lawrence's work.

According to Chambers, Lawrence meets A. R. Orage in 1909. Orage's interest in oriental mysticism can be judged by his decision to become a disciple of Georgei Ivanovitch Gurdjieff who claimed to have visited Turkey, Central Asia and India and have learned esoteric and occult knowledge there. Gurdjieff later set up the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in France where Lawrence's close friend Katharine Mansfield died in 1923. Although Lawrence did not approve of Gurdjieff's occult practices he did come across some Sufi texts and ideas used by occultists through his connection to Orage's magazine and the writing of Gurdjieff and another of Gurdjieff's disciples P. D. Ouspensky. In his book *Tertium Organum*, which according to Keith Sagar (*A D. H. Lawrence Handbook*, 1982) Lawrence read carefully, Ouspensky discusses mysticism in the modern language of philosophy and psychology and gives a thorough understanding of Eastern and Western mysticism. He mentions Sufism's character of blending poetry and mysticism as unsurpassable. Ouspensky was a mystic, a student of the *Mahabharata* and he considers Nietzsche's Superman as a metaphor for the 'higher state of consciousness'.

Ouspensky's works probably helped Lawrence in understanding Eastern and Western mystical traditions. His mystical readings of modern western philosophy may have influenced Lawrence's own mystical speculations. Lawrence adopted Ouspensky's idea of the fourth dimension in his writings. Ouspensky was inspired by Gurdjieff's philosophy of 'The Fourth Way'. By 'The Fourth Way' Gurdjieff means reaching a higher state of consciousness, the esoteric dimension. He described religious and mystic sensibility of the esoteric kind as the fourth way. J. G. Bennett in his *Gurdjieff: Making of A New World* (1992, pp. 56-57) claims that Gurdjieff took his esoteric ideas from the Naqshbandi Sufis of Central Asia, and Ernest Scott suggests Ouspensky believed that Gurdjieff's teachings originated in the Mevlevi Sufi order of Rumi (*The People of the Secret*, 1983, p. 165). However Ron Geaves notes that the claims Gurdjieff was taught by Sufis are highly contested but suggests that 'There is no doubt about the influence of his teachings on the development of Sufism in the west' (Geaves, 2015, p. 242).

Orage's co-editor Holbrook Jackson had written a book on Khayyam's poetry, where he introduces Khayyam's mystical poetry in these words: 'When philosophy is stripped of its technicalities, when theology is naked of its ill-fitting vestment of sect, when convention is laid low, and when the individual stands free, self-centred and sincere, this is the only end of life' (Jackson, 1899, p. 28). He calls Khayyam the 'gentle and wise bard of Persia' and 'the prophet of the Eternal Now' (Jackson, 1899, p. 26). Jackson's appreciation of Khayyam resonates with Lawrence's artistic qualities but it is not clear whether Lawrence ever read Jackson's commentary on Khayyam's poetry. Jackson had also published a book of verses in Khayyam's quatrain style and he named the book *The Eternal Now* (1900) in recognition of Khayyam's unsurpassable presentation of the immediate experience.

Rumi's mystical poetry is mentioned in many publications in *The New Age*. For instance, a review of eminent English orientalist Reynold Alleyne Nicholson's (18 August 1868 – 27 August 1945) monumental translation of Rumi's *Divan Shams Tabriz* and another of his books *The Literary History of the Arabs* published in *The New Age*. Nicholson, as a scholar of both Islamic literature and Islamic mysticism, is widely regarded as one of the greatest Rumi scholars and translators in the English language. His translations of Rumi's poetry are still followed by translators and Rumi scholars for authenticity. He later translated Rumi's *The Mathnawi*, published in eight volumes. He produced the first critical Persian edition of *The Mathnawi*, the first full translation of it into English, and the first commentary on the entire work in English. His work has been highly influential in the field of Rumi studies worldwide. A reviewer commends Nicholson for his 'well-known admirable renderings of the mystic poems of Jalal-ud-Din-Rumi' (*The New Age*, Feb. 12, 1914, p. 466). The reviewer also mentions Nicholson's translation of the sensuous love songs of Pagan Arabs, the *Mu'allaqat*. Lawrence's Uncle Fritz Krenkow was engaged in translating these poems in German. Like Sufi poetry, Pagan Arab poetry fascinated orientalists from William Jones to Nicholson. William Jones first translated these poems in 1877. His celebrated book on *Persian Grammar*, by the same name, not only helped learning Persian language for English men but also opened the door to Persian mystic literature. His translation of oriental poetry including some of Rumi's Odes in his *Poeseos Asiaticae Commentariorum* earned him the nickname 'Persian Jones' and 'Oriental Jones'.

On another occasion, Rumi's two Ghazals from the *Divan* were published in *The New Age*. Rumi's Ghazals are odes, and the first one begins, 'Seven heavens hast thou created, / I am powerless, be my succour [...]', which prayer eloquently describes the wonder of creation.

The second ode announces the poet's own exalted position as follows, 'I am the chain of being, / I am the ring of worlds, / The ladder of creation, / that reaches high and low.' (*The New Age*, May 27, Vol. XVII, No. 4, 1915, p. 93). The poems are paraphrased from the German Romantic poet Friedrich Ruckert's own adaptation. The poems' translator P. Selver confirms in the next issue of the magazine, in response to a reader's query, that his translation is not from the original Persian but is the German poet's paraphrase. On many other occasions, Rumi's mysticism and his poetry is mentioned in *The New Age* along with Plotinus, Eckhart and Blake (*The New Age*, Jan. 11, 1908, July 7, 1910, 1911-3-09, 1912-12-5).

Another possible source of Sufi mystical literature for Lawrence was his Uncle Fritz Krenkow's personal library. Krenkow was an orientalist who translated pagan Arabic poetry into German. Boulton regards Krenkow as a major influence in Lawrence's intellectual life, he observes that Krenkow's 'largely intellectual influence was reinforced by his wife's interest in Lawrence as a painter' and that Krenkow's 'dedication to scholarship and his intellectual energy could not fail to have their impact on the young Lawrence' (Zytaruk and Boulton, I, 1979, pp. 7-8). Evidently, Lawrence writes from his uncle's house in 1908, 'My friends here are books – nothing but books [...] Uncle is always working away at his Arabic, and I sit reading French, wishing I could tackle Spanish and Italian, of which there are such a lot of delightful books here' (Zytaruk and Boulton, I, 1979, p. 77). Krenkow's close friend Eduard Sachau translated the Persian philosopher Abu Rayhan-e-Biruni's encyclopaedic book *Kitab-al-Hind, India* into English. Biruni's book contains a detailed study of Sufism and ancient Persian religions such as Manicheanism and Zoroastrianism. We might imagine that Krenkow had a copy of his friend's monumental work in his library of oriental literature since German oriental scholarship is significant. Translation and commentary on Persian Sufi poetry in the German oriental tradition goes back to time of the German Romantic Movement. Goethe was so impressed by Hafiz and Rumi's poetry that he wrote his own '*divan*' (*The West-Eastern Divan*) in the Persian style.

Given the range of his uncle's scholarship on oriental literature and the amount of literature available in his library, we might speculate that Lawrence encountered Sufi poetry in his uncle's library. According to Boulton, Krenkow, a German national, in his spare time worked as an editor and translator of Arabic texts. He further describes Krenkow's achievements, '[f]rom 1907 he published frequently in the journal of the Royal Asiatic Society and other learned journals, mainly German; his edition of the poems of Tufail Ibn' Auf al-Ghanavi and

At Tirimmah Ibn ttakim At-Ta'yi was ready in 1906' (Zytaruk and Boulton, I, 1979, p. 8). Lawrence's interest in his uncle's work and the Arabic poetry he was translating can be seen in his letter to Frederick Atkinson of February 1911 where he writes, 'I've no heart to tackle a serious work just now. I amuse myself translating – or rather writing up Arabic stories and verses which my Uncle, who is a German and a fairly well-known orientalist, does into German for me' (Zytaruk and Boulton, I, 1979, p. 230). Later in life Krenkow travelled to India and became a professor of Islamic Studies at the Muslim University of Aligarh.

The most important source for Lawrence of Persian Sufi poetry in general and Rumi in particular was a personal friendship with composer and music critic Philip Arnold Heseltine's Oxford friend Shahid Hasan Suhrawardy. Kinkead-Weekes reports their meeting at Garsington. Lawrence 'persuaded Ottoline also to invite Heseltine and his Oxford friends, a Muslim Indian Shahid Hasan Suhrawardy, who claimed direct descent from the prophet' (Kinkead-Weekes, 1991, Vol. II, p. 286). Suhrawardy was from a famous Persian Indian family. His younger brother Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy became the Prime Minister of Pakistan in the late 1950s. Suhrawardy was proud of his Persian Sufi ancestry, and the name Suhrawardy refers to a famous Sufi order. He was the younger son of Justice Sir Zahid Suhrawardy, a prominent judge of the Calcutta High Court and of Khujastha Akhtar Banu (c. 1874–1919) a noted name in Urdu literature and scholar of Persian. His grandfather on his mother's side was Maulana Ubaidullah Al Ubaidi Suhrawardy, who claims that he was directly descended from the Sufi mystic and Saint Shaikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardy, who lived in Baghdad in the 12th century. Shaikh Shahabuddin was the author of what came to be regarded as the standard work on mysticism *Awriful-Maariffi*. He was a disciple and successor of Shaikh Abdul-Qadir Gilani, a famous Sufi master. Shahid Hasan Suhrawardy worked with composer Igor Stravinsky, and invited the Indian mystic poet Rabindranath Tagore to visit Oxford in 1913 (Ikramullah, 1991).

Lawrence admired Suhrawardy and invited him to Florida, the visit never materialized but he wanted Suhrawardy to be part of the circle of friends he wished to gather around him. Lawrence mentions him in his letter to Cynthia Asquith of December 1915. He tells Asquith of Suhrawardy's remarks about Lady Ottoline, '[t]he Indian says (he is of Persian family): 'Oh, she is so like a Persian princess, it is strange – something grand, and perhaps cruel.' It is pleasant to see with all kinds of eyes, like Indo-Persian eyes. He is coming to Florida' (Zytaruk and Boulton, II, 1979, p. 466). The extract reveals Lawrence's deep admiration for Suhrawardy and his intentions to take him to Florida with him. Lawrence is keen to stress the

Persian descent of Suhrawardy, but also sees Suhrawardy as an interpreter of Eastern views, 'Indo-Persian eyes'. Lawrence's biographer Kinkead-Weekes observes about their meeting that 'at Garsington they passionately discussed not only *The Rainbow* but also politics, and (with Suhrawardy) India' (Kinkead-Weekes, 1991, p. 190). Kinkead-Weekes also notes that 'Suhrawardy was involved in the episode when KM put a stop to mockery of DHL's Amores in the Cafe Royal in 1916' (Kinkead-Weekes, 1991, p. 816). Suhrawardy's credentials within Sufi traditions, as a translator of Sufi poetry and as someone proudly Persian-Indian, lead us again to imagine potential influence on Lawrence, especially both with literary and mystical interests. Before meeting Lawrence, Suhrawardy had already helped Robert Bridges (poet laureate) select the Oriental poems for his book *The Spirit of the Man*, which published in 1915.

Suhrawardy selected and translated Rumi's poetry and that of Kabir, the Indian mystic within the Bhakti and Sufi tradition, for Bridges' anthology. Bridges acknowledges his debt to Suhrawardy in his book, 'In all my oriental quotations, I owe everything to my friend Hasan Shahid Suhrawardy for putting his taste and wide learning at my disposal. The choice of this and of some other pieces is due to him' (*The Spirit of the Man: An Anthology*, Robert Bridges, 1973, Index – 19). One of the poems Suhrawardy included in his selection for the anthology from Rumi's *Divan* is about the immanence and transcendence of the nature of God's being. Suhrawardy's translation of Rumi's ghazal presents God in corresponding terms to Lawrence's concept of the Holy Spirit, which indicates a general parallel in their conception of mystical experience. The ghazal *The Idea of God* is a masterpiece of mystic wonder about the nature of being and divine reality:

Grasp Grasp the skirt of his Grace, for on a sudden He will / flee away; / But draw Him not impatiently to thee, lest He fly as / an arrow from the bow. / What shape will He not assume? What shifts He / employeth! / If thou seek Him in the sky, He will gleam in the water / like the moon: / If thou go into the water, He fleeth to the sky: / If thou seek Him in the spaceless, He beckoneth to / space: / when thou seekest Him in space, He fleeth to the / spaceless [...] / His Name will flee, the while thou mouldiest thy lips for / speech: / Thou may'st not even say, such an one will flee: / He will flee from thee, so that if thou paint his picture, / the picture will flee from the tablet, and his features from / thy soul (*The Spirit of the Man* by Robert Bridges, 1973, p. 54).

Lawrence allies his wonder of being with the idea of Holy Ghost, which is, like creation, itself incomprehensible. In the face of incomprehensibility, Lawrence maintains that he 'pay homage' only 'to the unknown, the Holy Ghost' (Herbert, 1988, p. 18). The idea of consummation, of the love between a man and a woman and of life's purpose all gather, for Lawrence, into the singleness of one's individuality and deliver him over to the 'unknown'. It is tempting to imagine that Lawrence was introduced to Rumi and Sufism through this influence.

Although only suggestive in terms of influence, textual evidence and Lawrence's contemporaries' engagement with the Sufi literature suggest that understanding of Sufism was not unknown to the intellectual circles of the time. Many possible lines of influence can be pursued, as I have suggested in this discussion. However, there is no direct evidence in Lawrence's writings where he acknowledges any approbation of specific Sufi poetry, so that one cannot argue unequivocally for a possible influence of Rumi's mystic poetry on Lawrence's thought, or on his poetic imagination.

The concept of love as an antinomian gesture in Lawrence and Rumi's writings

Lawrence's metaphysical concerns relate to his individualistic, naturalistic and holistic portrayal of life, which he shows through the creation of emotionally intense episodes and through concentration on passionate love in his novels. In his writings he remains fascinated by the individual's intimate relationships and he expresses his anger against what he considers the boundaries created by laws of different kinds through his provocative presentation of sexual love in his writings. Lawrence insists on the love relationship as a threshold to something beyond, which suggests an element of mystic aspiration. In the following I will explore this element in Lawrence's writing within the mystical and antinomian tradition of English poetry in comparison with the mystical tradition of medieval Persian poetry.

I consider the mystical element and antinomianism in Lawrence in the poetic tradition of Blake, which is comparable to the Persian Sufi poet Rumi and others. This antinomianism involves the densely poetic nature of their work, the anti-rationalist attitude, an emphasis on

imagination, radicalism and non-conformity, a belief in divine immanence, in spirit versus letters and an often prophetic and oppositional stance against the concept of the monarchical divine. Notwithstanding the huge distance in time, and different cultural and religious belief systems, there are many common characteristics which make the Sufi literature of Rumi and the Blakean tradition and Lawrence's writings comparable.

Lawrence, following Blake, has a well-established Christian tradition of antinomianism before him. Part of Christian theology teaches this, as in the Biblical tradition of St. Paul, the age of Spirit after Christ's birth. This tradition upholds the principle that salvation is now attainable in the life and body of Jesus not in the Jewish Law of the Old Testament. Lawrence's reading of Paul and Blake shows his interest in the religious tradition of an antinomian attitude to the law. Lawrence's references to Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus, the manner in which Paul received the mystery of faith and divinity show his desire for such a revelation. Lawrence adopts this mystic attitude of being one with the whole, in a similar manner as has been said about Paul, that 'Paul was not primarily an interpreter of the Bible; he was, rather, a mystic whose sense of his communion with the heavenly world made him a broker of the divine mystery' (Rowland, *Blake and the Bible*, 2010, pp. 200-11: Cor 4:1; Rom 11:25; 16:25; 1 Cor 15:51; Ch. 1 Enoch 12-13). Whether Christ represents the end of the law, as many theologians suggest, or the fulfilment of the Law of Moses, as for others, Pauline theology shows a different approach to the law and religious code. Blake's religious sensibility can be seen within this tradition of biblical reading. Furthermore, he goes a step beyond a theological reading of the 'Pauline corpus' and argues for an immanent divinity in the sense that not only is redemption possible through Jesus's body but that the body of man is divine as well. Christopher Rowland notes that 'Blake espoused what might be termed an inclusive version of the Body of Christ doctrine in which redemption is the recognition of the fact that one was already as a human being part of the divine body and in this space has the awareness to practice forgiveness of sins and the annihilation of selfhood' (Rowland, 2010, p. 200).

Instead of adherence to doctrinal law, Lawrence, like Blake before him, reveals his religious sensibility through an immediate and urgent response to life. This spiritual response consists of, as noted by John Colmer, the 'sacred awe before the mystery of creation' (Colmer, 1985, p. 11), and granting a sacred dimension to the mystery of life transposes nature into the mystical boundaries of religion. Blake's response to religious law reveals his deep apprehension of and antipathy to cruelty in the name of religion. He was writing in a time of

great revolution and movements for individual freedom, which became part of his spiritual struggle. Blake upholds what he thought of as Jesus's original message, the principles of social justice, mutual love and forgiveness, and freedom from the Church's doctrinal law. His emphasis on imagination and poetic expression give his message a mystical dimension, and his protest against doctrinal faith was also part of the revolutionary spirit of his age. He proclaims Jesus as a revolutionary force in the society and in each individual. Through his imaginative reading of the Bible, Blake diminishes the literal reading of the Commandments. He re-writes the story of creation in Genesis in his *The Book of Urizen*, where he shows the will as alienated reason and the cause of the repression of law.

Laws of peace, of love, of unity;
 Of pity, compassion, forgiveness.
 Let each chuse one habitation:
 His ancient infinite mansion:
 One command, one joy, one desire,
 One curse, one weight, one measure
 One King, one God, one Law. (78-84)

In *Urizen*, Blake imaginatively and with picturesque detail explores the origin of the tyranny of religious moral law which leads to political oppression. He not only challenges mainstream Christian doctrine, he also contests empiricism and accords supremacy to the imagination. Lawrence does not share Blake's notion of an original Christianity, which is revolutionary, but he writes in Blake's poetic tradition of antinomianism. In Blake's poetic spirit, Lawrence adopts a peculiar intensity in his writings, which, like Blake, shows his instinctive response to the beauty and wonder of life in the world. Blake, however, believes in redemption in Jesus, although not through the doctrine of atonement but in following Jesus in overcoming vengeance and selfhood. As observed by Rowland, 'Blake seems to have developed a concept of the cosmic Christ as the pedagogic and therapeutic space within which the transformation of society could take place' (Rowland, 2010, p. 210). This is certainly antithetical to what Lawrence believes, for whom the intense sensual feeling of love is the redemptive experience that creates a holistic sense of selfhood. For Blake, in Jesus's spirit one should act justly and morally from 'impulse not from rules'. In *Women in Love*, Birkin seems to take spontaneity and impulsive action in this greater Blakean sense, when he tells Gerald that it is noble to act spontaneously, provided one is 'fit to do it' (WL, 32)³.

³ Hereafter WL (*Women in Love*) the 2008 Oxford addition, ed. David Bradshaw

The Sufi path, likewise, proclaims a spontaneous and rapturous religious sensibility. There is no Jesus figure as divine body in the Islamic tradition within which later Sufism takes up its antinomian position but the 'breath of Jesus' as life-giver does exist as a metaphor in Sufi poetry, connoting divine presence and the physical importance of man's existence. Blake takes his idea of 'everything that lives is Holy' from Paul's teaching of participation in Christ. Since there is no divine body in the shape of Jesus in Sufi tradition, Sufis find divine form in beauty itself, from which the concept of the earthly beloved is derived. There is a concept of pantheism in Sufi poetry but the most contentious view of divine immanence, for the orthodox theologian, is the manner in which the Sufi poet portrays erotic love as analogous to divine experience. The antinomianism within the Sufi tradition lies in its concepts of the divine, the body and *sharia* (law) versus *tariqat* (path). Sufis proclaim the idea of divine unity, what they call *wahdat-ul-wajood* (unity of being), within their concept of God, in which everything including the phenomenal world is part of the divine. The body is a veil which separates the self from God but through the intense feeling of the love of God one can overcome the veil of the body and reach the state where God's knowledge prevails over everything including one's existence. *Tariqat* is the higher path where, like Blake's spirit of Jesus, one acts on impulse or in God's will since in *tariqat* the Sufi becomes one with God's will. Therefore, the *sharia* occupies a lower status and in many places Sufis suggest that as *wali* 'ullah (friends of God, as the Sufi call themselves) they do not need to follow *sharia*.

However, it has to be noted that where prominent Sufis like Hamid Al Ghazali, Rumi and Ibn 'Arabi maintained their adherence to doctrinal faith and *sharia* they also proclaimed their belief in divine unity and the superiority of the Sufi path. In orthodox theology, absolute adherence to divine law as outlined in the theological jurisprudence of *sharia* is the only correct path and following *sharia* is the only form of legitimately divine love. The divine reality in doctrinal faith is the absolute absence of creation from the Godhead. According to Ahmet T. Karamustafa, antinomianism within the Sufi tradition appeared soon after the mystical tendencies of Sufism in the ninth century. Karamustafa notes, that 'it is noteworthy that accusations of *ibaha* ('permissivism and antinomianism') and *hulul* ('incarnationism or inherence of the Divine in the material world, especially in human form') appear very early in the sources, concomitantly with the emergence of mystical forms of piety' (Karamustafa, 2015, p. 103). Before the ninth century Sufism followed an extreme devotion to doctrinal piety laws and austerity, which gave them great respect within religious circles. However, the mystical inclination within many Sufi schools invites sharp criticism, admonition and on

some occasions punishment from religious forces. Writing in the later ninth century, one theological commentator and jurist Abu Asim Khusheysh ibn Asram al-Nasa'i admonishes the Sufis in these words: 'They are so called because they believe that their spirits see the malakut ['the divine dominion'] of the heavens, that they see the pasture of paradise, and further, that they have sexual intercourse with the houris' (from al Nasa 'i's *kitab al-istiqama fil-sunna wa al-radd 'ala ahl al-ahwa* (*The Book of Sound Tradition and Refutation of Dissenters*) quoted in Karamustafa, 2015, p. 102). What al-Nasa'i considered as 'intercourse with houris' is the celebration of erotic love in Sufi writing. Another religious commentator, Jamal al-Din al-Murtada mentions many schools within early antinomian Sufi thoughts.

Antinomians called wasiliyya (the 'Attainers') who thought that they attained union with God and thus saw no need to observe religious duties, as well as others who were against books and learning, and still other Sufis who cared only for sensual pleasures (quoted in Karamustafa, 2015, p. 105).

Mu'tazila and other rationalist philosophers try to provide the proof of God's existence through abstract reasoning, which provides the scholastic theologian with a philosophical language in which they confront the mysticism of the Sufis. They use the language of law, of discipline and often a Greek sense of community and social order to condemn secretive and elitist Sufi orders. Some of these Sufi schools were extreme outlaws and, rejecting all social and legal conformity, lived outside cities in seclusion but the mainstream Sufi schools remained within social norms and functioned freely in many parts of the Muslim world. To reconcile Sufi doctrine with Islamic law some Sufi writers, such as Al Ghazali, condemned extreme antinomian attitudes and argued for the *sharia* to be followed. Some Sufis in the eastern Persian school started calling themselves *malamatiyya* (one who takes the blame unashamedly). They lived in cities and did not retreat to isolation and as their name suggests took blame for their antinomian behaviour. From this school the poetic tradition of later Persian Sufi mystics originated (Ridgeon, 1915).

These people adopted a libertarian lifestyle and their attitude was one of permissiveness, which helped establish an atmosphere of creative independence. In the eleven and twelfth centuries a peculiar literary type of Persian poetry emerged, in which the terms and attitudes of *malamatiyya* were used creatively. The *malamatiyya* Sufis called themselves *darvish* (literal meaning poor) and *qalandar* (literal meaning uncouth) in their libertarian tradition and were proud of their uncouth conditions. As a new poetic form in Persian poetry, best used for

the free expression of feelings and emotions, the *Ghazal* was adopted by many *malamatiyya* Sufis to express their mystic beliefs. These Sufi poets reveal their antinomian attitude in the imagery they use in their poetry. The orthodox Hambali commentator Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Ali Ibn al-Jawzi in his book *The Devil’s Delusion* strongly condemned *malamatiyya* and similar literary traditions in Bhagdad, where *samaa*, ecstatic dance and hand-clapping were part of recitation and reception of Sufi poetry. Karamustafa talks of the emergence of a cluster of images from the *Malamatiyya* School, which later become a recognizable feature of Sufi poetry:

One should talk of the emergence of a cluster of images organized around the central character of *qalandar*. This cluster, which finds its first full-fledged expression in the poetry of Majdud ibn Adam Sana’i (d. 1131), sometimes jelled into a separate genre called *qalandariyyat*, but more commonly it existed as a free-floating bundle of imagery found most conspicuously in lyric poetry but also in other poetic genres. It was composed of several sets of images connected, most notably, to the central themes of wine-drinking, sexual promiscuity, gambling as well as playing games of backgammon and chess, and entering into non-Islamic (especially Zoroastrian and Christian) cults, all located at the *kharabat* (literally meaning ‘ruins’ but with the very real connotation of ‘tavern’ and ‘brothel’). Through the use of this provocative cluster worn around the figure of an unruly libertine, a highly positive spin was given to the *qalandar*’s way of life as the epitome of true piety cleansed of all dissimulation and hypocrisy, and the *qalandar* (along with his ‘look-alikes’, *rind* (‘heavy drinker’) and *qallash* (‘rascal’) was portrayed as the truly sincere devotee of God unconcerned with ‘the blame of blamers’ – in other words, as the *Malamati*’ (Karamustafa, 2015, pp. 109-10).

The antinomian images of wine, tavern and the heavy drinker become foremost symbols used by the Sufi poets but it was the mystical meaning of the reality of the divine in later Sufi poetry such as that of Khayyam and Rumi, which make *tasawwaf* or Sufism for many theologians too much a challenge of monotheistic view of God in Islam. Concepts such as the underlining unity of creation and God were seen as a clear negation of the monotheistic God by theologians and jurists. By upholding the superiority of the Sufi *dhawq* (which literally means tasting but in connotation means knowledge of God in aesthetic experience rather than through reason and theological instruction), orthodox theologians thought these people not only put themselves above the law but also above doctrinal faith. As for many Sufis ordinary

monotheistic belief in God or a blind belief in the remote existence of God is the attitude of people who have not experienced the *kashf* (uncovering) of divine reality themselves. Rumi makes his case against the blind followers of the word and theological reasoning in this way:

There are two types on the path. Those who come / against their will, the blindly religious people, and those / who obey out of love. The former have ulterior motives. / They want the midwife near, because she gives them milk. / The others love the beauty of the nurse. The former memorize the proof texts of conformity, / and repeat them. The latter disappear / into whatever draws them to God (Rumi, 2002, p. 79, from James Cowan's translation of *Divan*).

There is a similar sense here to Blake's idea of action through 'impulse rather than rule' in matters of obedience to God in Jesus's spirit. Rumi gives an impression of sensual feeling in his phrase the 'beauty of the nurse' and at the end there is the suggestion of unity in annihilating the self in 'whatever draws to God', the 'whatever' usually being the human form of the beloved. In St. Paul's tradition Jesus's body is embodied divinity but in Rumi's poetry it is often the face of the beloved, likened to the moon, which implies physical attraction. The Sufis use the moon as a symbol of the heart's responsive to the light of truth: the ocean waters draw to the moon because of gravity, and all organic life on earth exists because of the moon's attraction. Rumi maintains his overtly antinomian tone in the phrase 'the blindly religious people' and in his reference to reward and punishment for obeying God and also by referring to a literal reading of the word in scripture, which is related to his *malamatiyya* heritage. Rumi never refutes *sharia* as a path to God but he diminishes its superior status by relating it to a blind and uncreative following of religion. He makes it even less worthy of respectability by collapsing it with egoistic wishes, as in the phrase 'ulterior motives', and reward and punishment. He lived a respectable social life, unlike many early antinomian Sufis, but his adherence to a Sufi path, of an anti-legalist view of religion, remained the same.

Lawrence clearly does not have a concept of a transcendent God equal to Rumi's or of other antinomian Sufis, and neither is he as faithful to the concept of Jesus's embodied spirit as Blake but Lawrence's response to the rules of love and social conformity resonates with Blake's attack on the Urizenic 'religion of chastity'. Lawrence attaches religious sacredness to erotic intimacy if it is rapturously deep beyond sentimentality and domestic respectability. We will see later in the discussion how Lawrence suggests a sort of transfiguration through

the manner in which he presents the sexual consummation between Birkin and Ursula. In the matter of sensual relationships, Lawrence does not take a moral stand. Blake's poetic tradition is Lawrence's predecessor in this respect rather than Hardy whose moral universe punishes transgressors. Robert Ryan notes that 'Blake's most persistent objection to Urizenic religion was the fear of sexual passion' (Ryan, 2003, p. 157), and he further point outs that in his *Book of Urizen* and other works Blake 'remythologizes' the Bible's message with greater permissiveness in religious matters. Blake, like Lawrence, sees sexual repression and the image of the sinful body in the teaching of the Christian church as the transformation of religious faith into mechanical order. In opposition to a theology of self-denial Blake stresses that 'Men are admitted into heaven not because they have curbed and governed their passions, or have no passions, but because they have cultivated their understandings' (Yeats, 2002, p. 233). Ryan emphasises Blake's antinomian position:

Blake's most sustained and withering attack on the Urizenic religion of chastity was *Vision of the Daughters of Albion*, in which Oothoon, the victim of a rape, having been scorned by the rapist and rejected by the man who once loved her, delivers a searing indictment of the entire moral system in which she has been trapped, concluding with a bold advocacy of free love. In lines that still have power to shock, she speaks of masturbatory acts and asks, 'are not these the places of religion? The rewards of continence? / The self enjoyings of self-denial?' (pl. 7 E. 50). In another remarkable speech she traces the connection between Christian theology and clerical privilege and the social injustices they foster, moving in quick imaginative progression from tithes to marriage as related manifestations of the same oppressive system:

With what sense does the parson claim the labour of the farmer?
 What are his nets & gins & traps, and how does he surround him
 With cold floods of abstraction, and with forests of solitude,
 To build him castles and high spires where kings and priests may dwell.
 Till she who burns with youth and knows no fixed lot, is bound
 In spells of law to one she loaths? (Ryan, 2003, p. 157)

Blake attaches the rules of love to social decadence and injustice and was writing in an age of great social revolution. In that spirit, Blake's antinomian attitude has both a spiritual and a social aspect. Lawrence's antinomianism also has a spiritual or psychic aspect in the sense

that he thinks that by ignoring the spontaneous and unconscious impulse of the sensual self, religion and civilization have split being into a subject-object duality. Lawrence, in his presentation of the erotic body suggests that like the process of creation in the natural world love, in the sense of a spontaneous and unconscious impulse, brings forth a sort of mystic wholeness. The theme of progress to an essential wholeness of the individual can be detected in both *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, where one can witness, as pointed out by Delavenay, 'the progress of the individual human soul through self-consciousness to a new and higher evaluative state in which there is a partial abandonment of self, and acceptance, in equilibrium, of the self of another' (Delavenay, 1971, p. 60). In contrast to the progressive wholeness of some characters, Lawrence also shows the projection of the egoistic self in others, which causes further self-alienation. Bell considers such self-alienation - the condition of Gerald in *Women in Love* - as a 'general ontological condition' (Bell, 1991, pp. 116-7), of the lost mode of cosmic relation in modern men. In Lawrence's critique of modern man's condition one can see serious metaphysical effort and in his progressive theme of love and wholeness a mystical tone and a vague religious allegiance.

Lawrence's view of love is, however, different from the Sufi mystic's aspiration of reaching the divine through earthly love because he rejects a straightforward supernaturalism and one might wonder therefore if there is any spiritual meaning to what appears to be in Lawrence an overtly religious and mystical presentation of love. The strong fusion of spiritual and sensual desire is the interpretive issue at stake in the following study of Rumi's poetry and Lawrence's *Women in Love* but before the parallel reading of Lawrence and Rumi and an examination of mystical resonances within the presentation of sexual love in Lawrence's novel *Women in Love*, it is appropriate to establish the meaning of Sufi mysticism and its concepts as they appear in Rumi's writings.

Sufi mysticism and its concepts in Rumi's poetry

Sufism as a peculiar spiritual response to religious truth is almost as old as the Islamic religion within which this mystical tradition establishes its roots. A few decades after the Islamic religion established itself the ascetic practices of early Sufis began. It is said that the word Sufi has its roots in the Greek word for wisdom, *sophia*, the implication being that these early ascetics were wise and knowledgeable about religious matters. In his *Sufism I: Meaning, Knowledge and Unity* Dr. Javad Nurbakhsh notes that 'Abu Rayhan Biruni derived the word Sufi from the Greek Sophia, meaning wisdom, which also forms the root of the word 'philosophy' (philo+Sophia, 'the love of wisdom'). Biruni maintained that Moslems who held views similar to those of the Greek sages were given this name. However, the best-known account of the origin of the word is that it comes from *suf*, meaning 'wool,' and signifies 'pertaining to wool,' used because Sufis wore woollen robes. 'From ancient times it was the custom of ascetics, the poor, and the pious to wear such garments' (Nurbakhsh, 1981, p. 11). Etymology suggests this explanation is the most likely one. Mystical elements came later when the concept of 'divine love' and still later the concept of 'unity of being' were introduced. The development of Sufism took many routes and shapes and although the antinomian credentials of Sufism were established above, it is important to note that in the historical development of Sufi traditions we can find ascetic practices and beliefs and a strongly legalistic ethical side.

Probably the greatest mystical poet in his generation of extraordinary literary writers, Rumi was moved wholly by mystical love in the composition of his lyrical poetry dedicated to his mystical beloved and his *darvish* friend, Shams al-Din of Tabriz. Rumi's lyrical poetry and his regular *Mehfil-e-Sama* (devotional music and dance) inspired the organization of what later became famous as the whirling dervishes, who seek ecstasy through an elaborate dancing ritual, accompanied by splendid music. Rumi lived in thirteenth century Anatolia. He was called Rumi, which is Arabic for 'Roman', because Anatolia was called 'Rum', as it was considered as part of the Eastern Roman Empire. Konya, where Rumi lived, was a multicultural city: people spoke Persian, Turkish and Greek with the same ease, and there are some Greek poems in Rumi's work. Rumi's major poetic work consists of the *Mathnawi* and *Divan Shams-e Tabriz*. Rumi's work contains all three major poetic forms of Persian mystical poetry namely couplets, quatrains and *ghazals*. The *Mathnawi* is also called the Spiritual

Couplets because it mostly contains couplets but the *Divan* consists of both quatrains and *ghazals*. For Rumi the love of God defines everything he wrote but the manner in which he celebrates his love and his belief in God, whose reality contains both the phenomenal and transcendental realms, is both liberating and metaphysically challenging. Rumi changed the course of his life after meeting his *darvish* friend Shams. He was a jurist and theologian and after meeting Shams he became a mystical poet. Shams saw things differently from many of the ascetic Sufis. James Cowan notes that it was ‘Shems’ (sic) adherence to reality, to the world as it was, that marked him out as a radical’ (Cowan, 2002, p. 12). This ‘adherence to reality’ in Shams helped Rumi to see the world in a different light. The tension between the phenomenal and transcendental defines Rumi’s poetic work, and the images and metaphors he uses carry the tension of his authentic spiritual experience of the world, which leads him think that the transcendent enlarges the meaning of the phenomenal. The essential nature of things is beyond mere appearance. Therefore, we can only experience essential reality once we transcend our own ‘mere human’ state and become aware of a higher state of being.

Cowan (2002) in his introduction to Rumi’s poetry highlights the varied nature of Rumi’s sources, his allegiance to a mythical past and symbolism, the simultaneous belief or tension of the phenomenal and transcendent in his poetry and holistic approach to being. Another key aspect or characteristic of his poetry, which distinguishes it from early Sufis and many other mystical traditions, is the extraordinary belief in life and the sense of hope Rumi shows in his poetry. Rumi calls his school of Sufism the ‘Caravan of hope’, where everybody is welcome, and he mingles his message of hope with nostalgia: the first few verses of *The Mathnawi* are about the reed-float’s separation from its bud. Rumi relates the nostalgia of the reed-float in its sweet musicality to a hope for all lovers. This message runs through the whole poem with different images and different stories. The *Divan*, on the other hand, is an outpouring of love and sensual images without any particular story line. There are many aspects and interpretations of Rumi’s poetry; I will concentrate on the following key concepts in relevance to this comparative study of his mystic vision to the mystical the aspect of Lawrence’s writings. Before drawing any parallel, it is appropriate briefly to define these key Sufi concepts, which will recur in the later discussion.

The Divine

In *tasawwufic* tradition the divine is referred to as both transcendent and phenomenal. The Sufis justify their view by referring to a Quranic verse that says that God is nearer to one's jugular vein. 'We indeed created man; and we know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than the jugular vein' (50:16). They see God in all living things and this view later becomes the main thesis of Ibn 'Arabi's concept of the 'Unity of All Being'. Rumi's poetry testifies to God's presence in the world. However, unlike many later mystic traditions, who took Ibn 'Arabi's concept into monistic and pantheistic territory, Rumi maintains a distinction between the here and now and something beyond. He says that being in the world is the necessary expression of God's desire to be known, but he then places divine reality in the human heart, in the form of intensity of feeling. As he says: 'God replied: 'I was a hidden treasure / Whose Love and Grace needed to be known. / 'A mirror's face is the heart, its back the world - / Knowing the back is enough, if the face is unseen' (Rumi, 2002, p. 57, from James Cowan's translation of *Divan*).

The Sufi sees God as a treasure and the unseen essentiality of being in the world. This view is different from the orthodox concept of God as the Sovereign Will, the Law Giver and the Ruler in a monarchical sense. God is rather a presence, a great impersonality, which is at the same time transcendent and bigger than our sensuous existence. However, in the manner of Neoplatonian emanation, it is also the transcendent self or exalted individuality from which all existence emanates and will return to, to be united in one reality. The Sufis' aspiration for God corresponds to their view of God: divine reality in its absolute form is transcendent and beyond any colour yet reveals itself through appearances. Therefore, the world is the self-revelation of the divine and it is the aspiration of the Sufis that they may pierce the veil of their lower selves and the outer things and see the hidden treasure or essential self. While God permeates the phenomenal world, he still remains beyond the flux of time and space. Thus is formed the Sufis' aspiration for eternal peace or unity with the greater self.

The concept of Love

Muslim theologians raised powerful objections to the Sufis' concept of love and the sensual imagery they use in their writings to express their love for God. In the same way as the Christian theologians raised their objection to the Greek Eros or Latin Amor as equivalent to the Pauline Agape. It is the foundational characteristic of theistic mysticism to describe God and men's relationship in terms of love. It is this fusion of conceptions of love that

characterizes the works of Lawrence. The Sufis see human love as an analogue of the love of God. For the Sufis the world of the senses has no final or intrinsic value and the apparent world, which they see as one particular world among many 'worlds' hidden from us, is not real on its own but it is not a mere illusion from which one must step aside. It is a shadow, an image of reflection of the truth, and a gateway to the real. The Sufi poets in their imaginative world view the relation between the creator and the created as that of a lover and beloved because not only are human beings created in God's image but we are the reason and manifestation of the knowledge of God. A hidden treasure is still a treasure but without any value until it is known to the treasure seeker.

Love is seen by mystics as a total dedication of the will of the physical and divine aspiration of the soul towards its source, or the fullness of its being. This love is not just one-sided, for mystics believe in the mutual attraction between God and the soul, and their need for each other: 'For thirty years I sought God, but when I looked carefully, I saw in reality, God was the seeker and I the sought' (Cragg, 1976, p. 48). 'The soul resembles this window, in which is ever being reflected, or rather is dwelling, the divine light of the all-pervading presence of God' (Lewis, 1906, p. 23). The Sufis, and Christian mystics, have emphasized the importance of loving God for His own sake rather than for any hope of reward. The female Sufi Rabi'a Basri introduces the concept of love in Sufism. She addresses God: 'Thou art enough for me!' Similarly the Christian mystic Catherine of Genoa says: 'I do not wish to follow thee for sake of these delights, but solely from the motive of true love' (Underhill, 1995, p. 81). One can see countless such examples of love in the mystical traditions of the Sufis and within Christian mystic traditions. The phenomenon of mystical love lies at the heart of the mystical expression in Sufi literature. However, the use of a symbolism of human love to describe the relationship between God and the soul in Sufi poetry created a new metaphysics of love. Later Sufis, particularly within the Persian literary tradition, started engaging with the concept of love in terms of psychology and phenomenology, through their different descriptions of consciousness and the unconscious, and the phenomenon of being, for instance, Attar's *Conference of Birds* and Ibn 'Arabi's treatises on being.

The legal description and classification of love seems to ignore the psychology of the self and its phenomenological relation with the other but in the mystical classification of love the stages involved show a progression of the self from one state of being to another and from one station of awareness to another. The Sufi poets do not concern themselves in the matter

of love with altruistic or instrumental reasons. Simon May critically sums up the basis of the theological and legal connotations of the concept of love:

We tend (especially under the influence of Lutheran theology) to distinguish Eros-love – love as passionate desire, which longs for the delights of intimacy and even union with the loved one – from friendship-love – a more temperate, just and reciprocal devotion to the welfare of another whom we experience as a ‘second self’; and to separate both these ‘types’ of love in turn from love as self-giving – the altruistic and unreserved placing of one self at the disposal of the other (May, 2010, p. 25).

May is referring to Christian theologians’ efforts to differentiate Pauline Agape from Greek Eros as we noted in the discussion of Nygren above. He goes on to argue that:

Love is neither an unconditional commitment to the welfare of others for their own sake, nor can it be reduced to drives for recognition, intimacy, procreation or sexual gratification’ and [...] it provides ‘ontological rootedness – ontology being that branch of philosophy that deals with the nature and experience of existence [...] rapture we feel for people [that inspires] in us the hope of an indestructible grounding for our life (May, 2010, pp. 5-6).

So self-preservation and a sense of grounding and rootedness inform our devotion to the other in love. There are elements of both legal and theological conceptions of love in Sufi descriptions, but there are also differences, particularly the idea of progression in one’s state of being while engaged in love relationship.

Carl W. Ernst notes this characteristic of the Sufi concept of love: ‘Mystical classifications of the stages of love differed from secular, legal, and philosophical analyses of love in that the Sufis consistently placed love in the context of their mystical psychology of ‘states’ and ‘stations’, with an emphasis on love as the transcendence of the self’ (Ernst, 1993, p. 435). Rabi’a, in early ascetic terms, used the Quranic term *mahabba* for love meaning ‘concentration on God to the exclusion of all else’ (Ernst, 1993, p. 438). The non-Quranic term *ishq* (passionate love) was later introduced into Sufi discourse (especially in Persian poetry) and becomes a metaphor for erotic Sufi literature, such as in the love stories of Laila Mujnun and Yusuf Zulaika in Rumi’s poetry. Expressing the concept of love in terms of Sufi psychological ‘states’ and ‘stations’ gives love its mystical meaning and significance. Love in this new meaning is classified in terms of different stages of awareness and connection with

the unknown, from *dhoa*q (desire or attraction) to the unveiling of the absolute reality of the soul or the divine. Love also becomes the way to describe intensity of feelings and emotions, such as eternal gladness before the face of the beloved. Love's existence is described as *zainath* (beauty or profundity).

According to Ernst, the psychological classification of love was first introduced into Persian Sufism by Shaiq al-Bulkhi (d. 810) an early Sufi of Khurasan. He recommends meditation for the soul's progress in Sufi 'states', and love as the last station. Hallaj from the intoxicated school also describes love in terms of psychological states and the soul's progression. Abu al-Hasan al-Daylami, a scholar of Sufism in the tenth century, placed *ishq* or passionate love at the pinnacle of the Sufi 'stations'. Ernst notes, 'Daylami succeeds in fine-tuning the gradations of love with an unmistakable increase in energy and intensity in the progression of ten stages. He preserves terms central to the Sufi vocabulary of love, such as *mahabba*, *uns*, and *walah* [these are low intensity attractions or feeling for the other], and he has also put the hitherto controversial term '*ishq*' at the heart of the discussion' (Ernst, 1993, pp. 444-5). Ernst shows that Daylami's half *tusawwufic* and half philosophical work includes tendencies from Sufism, philosophy and court culture in his concept of love, the symbolism of human and passionate love becomes part of this. Later, another Sufi scholar Ruzbihan Baqli (d. 1209), writing in Daylami's traditions, illustrates the character of mundane human love in terms of spiritual psychology. In Baqli's illustrations the lover seeks the beloved through the senses, and spiritual progression is described in phenomenological terms the nature of physical experience. All these distinctions from Rabi'a to Baqli and Ibn 'Arabi can be seen in Rumi's poetry, but illustrations such as Baqli's are prominent when it comes to the theme of the sacred and profane love in Rumi, as we shall see in our later discussion.

Ecstasy

Ecstasy is one of the principle aims or 'states' of being in the Sufi doctrine of love. The concept of ecstasy has its origin in the intoxicated school of Sufism. It is one of the most controversial Sufi ideas after the concept of God in theological circles, so controversial that some of the Sufis in Junayd's sober school abandoned this idea altogether. However, within the antinomian traditions of Sufism, such as *malamatiyya* and Persian Sufi poetry, it is the principle aim, the 'state' in which the Sufi empties himself from his willing self and, in a state of what Sufis call *wajd* (ecstasy), meets the beloved. Again the Sufis describe it in psychological and phenomenological terms, such as the description of ecstasy as a type of

madness and also a lofty experience of the other. D. J. Moore describes the ecstatic quality of Rumi's poetry in these words:

Rumi's poetry was born out of ecstatic technique. Even before his time, Sufis had begun to move their bodies during mystical, musical performances (*sama*). These spontaneous movements, probably something like ecstatic dancing, were distinguished from ordinary dancing in the Sufi manuals (Moore, 2014, p. 58).

In the tradition of the intoxicated school of Sufism and in the tradition of Persian mystical poetry, unlike the sober mystics of the Apollonian type, the Dionysian symbol of wine and trope of the intoxication is the hallmark of Rumi's poetry.

Mystic conjunction

The early Sufis take Islam's monotheistic characterization of the divine idea in the theory of *tauhid* (unity of God) to mean, not that God is one being, but that he is the only being. From this early reinterpretation of Islamic monotheism into something close to monism and pantheism, later Sufis form their concept of a transcendent 'Unity of Being' or *wahdat e-wajud*. For the Sufis, mystic conjunction with the divine and other beings in a state of union, where only existence or *wajud* is real and nothing else is there – where multiplicity or existence in multiple form vanishes – is both a present fact of experience and the goal of life. This mystic state implies both a higher state of consciousness and an immediate vision of divine reality, in which the division between man and God is done away with, and there is a transformation of the human personality, whereby the unification so achieved becomes a permanent condition of life and being. From this exalted human personality, the idea of the 'Perfect Man' or perfect being is derived. This idea of the exalted self (in mystic conjunction the Sufi becomes more than his usual self by reaching the station of essentiality) gives birth to the title *wali-ullah* (friend of God) to the Sufis, which marks the Sufis' prophet-like figure. It is not a merging and vanishing of the personality but reaching a higher state of being.

Annihilation

Annihilation is progression from mystic conjunction. It is one of the most dramatic concepts of the Sufi mystics. Bistami of the Persian school of intoxication was said to introduce this idea into Sufi discourse. This seems to be similar to Buddhist *nirvana*, but *nirvana* burns out of the desire to be set free from life, from the prison of body and material existence whereas *fana* is different from the extinction of individual life because it does not denote the

extinction of material reality as such. It is more like consummation in mystic conjunction. The Sufi in his exalted-self becomes the other, which is either his essential self or the divine beloved. In one of his famous sayings, Rumi indicates his own essential being for divine reality: 'I looked within my own soul / There I saw Him; He was nowhere else' (M. V, 239)⁴. For Rumi, it is consummation in love when one passes away in the manner of bursting into flame like the *simorgh* or phoenix: 'Love is the flame which, when it blazes up, burns away all except the everlasting Beloved, / It slays 'other than God' with the sword of no god. Look carefully: After no god, what / remains? There remains but God, the rest has gone. / Hail, O Love, great burner of all others! It is He alone who is first and last, all else grows up from the eye that sees double' (M. IV, 2168). Rumi refers to the Quranic verse that says 'there is no god but God', which for Rumi implies that there is one essential being and nothing else. Love has the essential quality that makes the journey from not being into being possible. In the manner of Neoplatonism (Bistami might have taken his concept of ecstasy and annihilation from ideas of *ekstasis* prevalent in Hellenistic culture), the Sufi concept of *fana* is the culmination of human possibility, the prospect of transcending to the source of being in the world. For many, it also means transcending one's egoistic-self, from willing to a peaceful subsistence, a life of eternal bliss. This eternal state does not mean eternity in time since a single moment can be described as eternal for its blissfulness and quality of being.

The concept of Knowledge

The Sufis seek a different meaning to knowledge or *'ilm* which includes both its definitions of science, philosophy, theology and also another concept of knowledge, attaining peace in spiritual greater self. Al Ghazali criticises scholastic and rational philosophers for ignoring the mystical side of existence in attaining knowledge. Rumi expresses similar ideas about knowledge in his poetry, in *The Mathnawi* he says, 'Though you believe in the accuracy of the scholastic knowledge, / it will not open your inner eyes to invisible existence' (M. V, 263). In his famous story of a grammarian, Rumi shows that the knowledge of invisible existence can only be attained through experience, or tasting, as the Sufis refer to experience in this way. A grammarian 'embarked in a boat. That self-conceited person turned to the boatman / And said, 'Have you ever studied nahw ('grammar')?' 'No,' he replied. The other said, 'half your life has gone to naught.' The boatman did not answer immediately and kept silent for a while, until the wind cast the boat into a whirlpool. Then the boatman shouted:

⁴ *The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi*, Books I, II, III, IV and V, translated by Reynold A. Nicholson. All the quotations from Rumi's poetry are either from Nicholson's translations, or noted otherwise.

‘Do you know how to swim. The boatman said: ‘O Nahwi! Your whole life is naught, because the boat is sinking in these whirlpools’ (M. I, 2835-40).

The Idea of Dispersion and Gathering

This concept is closely connected with the idea of annihilation. In the state of being described as ‘dispersion’, the soul or the individual’s spiritual heart is distracted by his egoistic self-willing-ego. In this state the ego has the upper hand and controls one’s being. It also can be described as separation from one’s essential self that is opposite of wholeness of being. It is almost mentalistic in that one not only becomes alienated from the cosmos but one’s essential self and the divine reality. The idea of ‘gathering’ is the opposite of ‘dispersion’. In this state a holistic vision of the self emerges and one becomes whole again.

In this brief discussion of Sufism and its concepts, I have tried to introduce all those aspects of Sufism which will come up in the later comparative study of Rumi’s and Lawrence’s works. Sufism is a broad concept and there are various aspects from didactic ethical teachings to pure metaphysical and mystical speculations. My main focus has been on the development of later Persian mystic literature, the tradition in which Rumi writes his poetry. All these concepts and their importance to Sufi mystical doctrine will be further elaborated with the help of Rumi’s poetry in the course of this study.

Parallel Reading of Lawrence and Rumi

There will be four sections of this discussion. The first section dwells on the concept of love and its mystical connotations in terms of the general themes of the novel and in terms of its presentation and Lawrence's characterization. The second section deals with rapture or ecstasy in *Women in Love* as a state of mystical transport, which has been related to sexual love and attraction by many writers on mysticism. In analysing of several episodes rich with ecstatic experiences I will draw some comparison to Rumi's poetry. The third section gives a critical view of the attainment of mystic conjunction in love proposed by Birkin to Ursula and the failure of such sexual and spiritual satisfaction in the relationship of Gerald and Gudrun. The last section concludes with an analysis of Lawrence's contrasting views on yielding or giving oneself away to the unknown in a love relationship, as in Tom Brangwen's sexual experience with Lydia Brangwen in *The Rainbow*, which Lawrence describes the experience as an annihilation of sort. Tom Brangwen's sexual experience is described as he 'burnt away till he lit with her in one consummation' (Lawrence, 1981, p. 132). But Lawrence also insists on singleness, as the orbit image of star-equilibrium in *Women in Love* shows. How close this experience, which is amplified with Biblical symbolism, can be compared and contrasted with Rumi's ecstatic love and annihilation is a prominent theme of my discussions and the sole concern of the last section.

I. THE CONCEPT OF LOVE: A CONSUMMATION AND THE REALIZATION OF OTHERNESS

In *Women in Love* Lawrence proposes love and a better sensual intimacy as a solution to the disarray of feelings in modern self-conscious and egoistic social life, which we observe as two couples progress in their love relationship but the complexity of these two love stories or one love story with two dimensions tells us there is more to be perceived than just improved sexual relationships in Lawrence's novel. Commentators and critics have noted the complexity around this story of two couples in love and have responded in many fruitful ways. My response concerns the many episodes of intense emotion in the novel. After presenting my reading of those episodes, themes and some of the prominent images in the

novel, I will suggest some aspects of comparison to Rumi's poetry in order to establish whether there is any mystical implication to Lawrence's portrayal of sexual love in the novel.

In Lawrence, love in its consuming effect allows the self to transcend its contradictory condition of soul versus body, mind versus blood into a holistic and essential state. One typical example of Lawrencean style in delineating the theme of love is Tom and Lydia Brangwen's coming together in *The Rainbow* after two years of marriage, and the intense emotional state after Lydia's pregnancy and birth of their child.

His blood beat up in waves of desire. He wanted to come to her, to meet her. She was there, if he could reach her. The reality of her who was just beyond him absorbed him. Blind and destroyed, he pressed forward, nearer, nearer, to receive the consummation of himself, be received within the darkness which should swallow him and yield him up to himself. If he could come really within the blazing kernel of darkness, if really he could be destroyed, burnt away till he lit with her in one consummation, that were supreme, supreme. Their coming together now, after two years of married life, was much more wonderful to them than it had been before. It was the entry into another circle of existence, it was the baptism to another life, it was the complete confirmation. Their feet trod strange ground of knowledge, their footsteps were lit-up with discovery. Wherever they walked, it was well, the world re-echoed round them in discovery. They went gladly and forgetful. Everything was lost, and everything was found. The new world was discovered, it remained only to be explored. They had passed through the doorway into the further space, where movement was so big, that it contained bonds and constraints and labours, and still was complete liberty. She was the doorway to him, he to her. At last they had thrown open the doors, each to the other, and had stood in the doorways facing each other, whilst the light flooded out from behind on to each of their faces, it was the transfiguration, the glorification, the admission (Lawrence, 1981, pp. 132-133).

The poetic expression and religious symbolism here could not be more noteworthy: the first sentence sets the mode of sexual desire – man's coming to woman in desire – the last sentence invokes one of the dramatic scenes and symbols of the Bible. The symbolic value of Jesus's Transfiguration divinely confirms Jesus's transcendent knowledge of his fate and the glorification of his reaching beyond the human, into God's presence. Lawrence applies one of the greatest symbols of God's presence in the Bible in describing the sacral nature of sensual

coming together in love. If we contrast this episode with Will Brangwen's and Anna Lensky's experience in the Church, we can see Lawrence's critique and his departure from convention. Will's transformation happens without sensual connection to Anna. Anna feels left out and isolated and she hates the Church for interrupting their sacred physical bond, but in reality it is because of their clinging to their egoistic selves, which prevents the sort of further experience in love that Tom and Lydia Brangwen experience. Lawrence suggestively refers to Anna's sexual experience with her husband as one of fear: 'she was afraid', 'this frightened her', 'she wanted to preserve herself' (Lawrence, 1981, p. 210). For Lawrence, this is the opposite of what love requires from the lovers. He notes in his Thomas Hardy essay that 'In love, a man, a woman, flows on, to the very furthest edge of known feeling, being, and out beyond the furthest edge: and taking the superb and supreme risk' (Steele, 1985, p. 52).

The dual meaningfulness of the end in *The Rainbow* in a way gives birth to *Women in Love*; Ursula's struggle with herself in the wilderness at the end reveals a great destruction and dissolution of the world and the Christian symbolism of the rainbow gives the hope of a new world. This image of dissolution and destructive relationships on the one hand and a new world or a new relationship on the other remains the focus of *Women in Love*. The emphasis in *Women in Love* shifts from nature, from the prophetic voice of the author and from overarching religious symbols such as the rainbow and the arch, to modern voices and characters. In *The Rainbow*, Lawrence creates a foundational work out of past generations by recreating the English Romantic landscape and giving mystic meaning to the religious tradition. In *Women in Love*, he wants to create a new relationship for the future, a post-war manifesto for a new individual, more aware of themselves and more connected with their vital being. The focus is on the characters' struggle with themselves and with others in making physical relationships. Some characters are emblematic social types in which Lawrence shows the world he criticizes and some others present Lawrence's vision for a new relationship.

Gerald and Gudrun express themselves through identification with character types, whereas Lawrence's more favoured characters Birkin and Ursula struggle towards self-realisation. Birkin and Ursula both reveal a mystical vision of love although Ursula is attracted by a more typical vision of marriage than Birkin. Birkin's quest and struggle with others is ontological and more fundamental than ordinary relationship issues. In this sense he is the only character to resist a typology of characters. His quest with Ursula is for something more than sexual

pleasure and the physical element is part of that something more. Gerald's character is not only a modern industrial magnate and egoistic individualistic rational man but, as Peter Fja'gesund points out (2008, p.182), he is the warrior and heroic type of the past and present. He is referred to as 'soldierly', as someone who fought in the 'last war' and who has explored the 'savage regions' of the Amazon. So he is a typical male of the historical and heroic type and a modern son of the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution. Birkin, on the other hand, is solely defined in his capacity as a lover; he is described in association with his two love relationships. What he has achieved or has failed to achieve as a school inspector, we do not know. His first relationship resulted in a deathly ego consciousness; in his intimacy with Hermione. In his relationship with Ursula he seeks a new way of love and also seeks a greater purpose of achieving the state of his essential being – a sort of forgetfulness in the eternal present.

The novel begins with a dialogue between the Brangwen sisters. The conversation is triggered by Gudrun's coming home which seems to be the start of a new chapter in Lawrence's exploration of love. Gudrun along with other characters represents modern corruption, which since 'The Crown' Lawrence saw as an essential part of the story. She, like Eve, is the cause of this new struggle of life on earth - self-conscious, anxiety-ridden, rotten like vegetation and full of corruption. Her similarity to Eve is later mentioned in the chapter 'Death and Love', where she makes love to Gerald for the first time as something like the beginning of his tragic down fall. She has found in him 'the desirable unknown' (WL, 345) which she discovers like the 'forbidden apple, this face of a man' (WL, 345). 'She reached up, like Eve reaching to the apples on the tree of knowledge, and she kissed him' (WL, 345). Lawrence seems to be thinking of Genesis, the story of man, of a mythical past and its connection and meaningfulness in the present. Here a contrasting acknowledgment of mystery is more important than Gudrun's 'conceit of knowledge', as Lawrence also argues in his philosophical essays.

In contrast to Gudrun's reaching for the tree of knowledge for certainty, Ursula and Birkin's paradisaal forgetfulness in love, the mystery of their experience at the end of the chapter called 'Excuse' makes them the Lawrencean couple in the novel. After 'Excuse', the reader is constantly reminded that Birkin and Ursula's status as lovers is beyond the 'superficial unreal world of fact' (WL, 405). On their way to Europe, in the last part of novel, their being is described as an all-encompassing existence, 'the paradisaal glow on her heart, and the unutterable peace of darkness in his, this was the all-in-all' (WL, 405). This cosmic kinship is

another significant mystical theme in the novel. *Women in Love* presents a unique contrast in the progression of Lawrence's mythical and mystical vision. In terms of religious imagery he travels backward to the pre-human consciousness of paradisaic life, but in historical terms he portrays contemporary men and women and records modern voices. His critique of Christian love, as we witnessed in his 'Foreword' to *Sons and Lovers*, remains part of a story which Lawrence shows in the fading of Thomas Crich's character.

In delineating the theme of love and relationships, Lawrence identifies what is wrong with the individual in modern society, which is also obvious in the critique of modern life in his other works. For instance, in his essay 'Blessed are the Powerful', written while he was working on *Women in Love*, he blames modern man for not opening his heart to the 'unknown' sources of life and notes that, 'the communion of power does not exclude the communion of Love. It includes it. The communion of Love is only a part of the greater communion of power' (Herbert, 1988, p. 325). Gerald has the 'vision of power' (WL, 230), when he sees his name written in white letters on coal wagons but he lacks an open heart, which Lawrence describes in the same essay as the first step, that is 'to open one's heart to the source of Power, and Might, and Glory, and Honour' (Herbert, 1988, p. 325). After assigning this apparently divine dimension to power, he further defines love in a divine paradigm of creation, which refers to Adam and Eve's story. He says, 'Power is the Supreme quality of God and man: the power to cause, the power to create, the power to make, the power to do, the power to destroy. And then, between those things which are created or made, love is the Supreme binding relationship' (Herbert, 1988, p. 325).

Therefore, in Lawrence's perspective, Gerald's vision of power lacks the divine dimension, the unknown source. The exclusive exercise of power by Gerald and Hermione shows their flaw. Hermione wants to control Birkin's life by giving him things and doing things for him. Gerald's will lies in improving things by adding technological and automatic processes to make things move in mechanical harmony. Ursula, on the other hand, although frightened by the existential chasm and lacking a firm belief in her self, keeps on insisting on Birkin's verbal allegiance and wants him to express his love for her. She still has some connection with the unknown, as Lawrence informs us in the beginning of the novel. She has some qualities of the early Brangwens in *The Rainbow*. After identifying her essential flame, he says, 'Still she had a strange prescience, an intimation of something yet to come' (WL, 7). Here Lawrence hints at Ursula's readiness for the kind of love Birkin is going to offer. Perhaps because of this intimation from the unknown, she finds herself ready to accept

Birkin's love. However, Michael Bell warns that the readers of *Women in Love* need to be mindful of the exploratory nature of presentation of the growth of the major characters in the novel rather than deducing a descriptive meaning. Bell notes:

Of all his novels, this is the one with the most significant and sustained tension between the absoluteness of its emotional imperatives and the relativity of their forms. The book is founded on an absolute imperative of rejecting the old and discovering something new. But the absoluteness applies only to the imperative, not to the specific forms of its realisation. That is why it is always important not to slip into seeing it as the story of the 'good' Lawrencean couple contrasted with the destructive 'modern' couple. (Bell, 1991, p. 105).

Bell is right to point out the exploratory nature of the narration and presentation of the major characters in *Women in Love*. One of Lawrence's concerns is to raise the question and identify the meaning of sexual love in a modern self-indulgent world. He explores modern relationships by dramatising them and questioning the concepts behind the complexities of our idea of a love relationship. Lawrence does not reject the potentiality of Gudrun and Gerald's spiritual growth. They realise some sort of Lawrencean wholeness in their sexual intimacy, but which immediately turns into anxiety, because of their ego-consciousness. Birkin, although considered to be the principal Lawrencean voice, is constantly challenged and at one point feels himself 'a fool' (WL, 133), realising his contradictions when pressed by Ursula about his concept of love.

However, if we look at their relationship at a spiritual rather than on a psychological level, from the point of view of attaining mystical wholeness, I believe, there can be some explanation of the obscurity surrounding the sexual relationship between Birkin and Ursula. On a personal psychological level Birkin and Ursula are constantly trying to narrow the gap between their respective views of love and relationship but their relationship also embodies a higher aim, Birkin constantly bringing matters of life and death and the general condition of living into their relationship, which makes her anxious. Ursula's insistence, on the other hand, on the customary meaning of love and relationship makes Birkin conscious of his preaching self and of his inability to express what he wants to say.

From Birkin and Ursula's struggle in love, we can see that Lawrence's critique of the modern notion of middle class family life and moral decorum is informed by his own conclusions about the traditional concept of love. For instance, in the chapter 'Man to Man', after

accepting a bond with Ursula, Birkin considers his options for a love relationship with her. The first type of love relationship that comes to his mind is domestic coupling, which he considers 'disjoined' and 'separatist' (WL, 205). He rejects free love as well, 'he hated promiscuity even worse than marriage' (WL, 205). Then he considers the idea of unity in love, the Platonic myth about love as a means to itself in the sense that each individual is the other half of a single whole and in love we unite. He rejects this way of fulfilment in sexual love and suggests something very different, which later in his offer of love to Gerald he elaborates as an 'impersonal union that leaves one free' (WL, 213).

Why should we consider ourselves, men and women, as broken fragments of one whole [?] It is not true. We are not broken fragments of one whole. Rather we are the singling away into purity and clear being, of things that were mixed. Rather the sex is that which remains in us of the mixed, the unresolved (WL, 207).

In other places as well, love remains a cause of tension and struggle. Birkin's bizarre attacks on Hermione show this extreme tension in sexual relations. In Hermione, Birkin seems to struggle with his own concept of love, which is beginning to take a definite form in his relationship with Ursula, although his idea of a man-to-man relationship remains unresolved at the end.

Before reaching any definite resolution of sexual relationship between men and women, in his sexual tension with Hermione, Birkin thinks she is living a disgraceful life, not because of any shame, but because he thinks she is missing a real connection. Lawrence mocks Birkin and Hermione's relationship as the 'holy connection', which Birkin 'wanted to break' (WL, 16). Birkin wants to come out of the 'old ethics' he feels he endures but he feels trapped in his relationship with Hermione. Hermione seems to be a metaphor for his own intellectual self. Whenever he is with Hermione he becomes self-conscious. She is like his self-asserting ego, which makes him mindful of his own movement and his own presence. At Hermione's house, he feels himself confined in the past, 'what a horrible, dead prison Breadalby really was, what an intolerable confinement, the peace!' (WL, 99). He realises he wants to build a future after his 'own heart' which contains the 'simple truth to life' (WL, 100). He does not want intellectual truth, the beauty of the past and the peace of Breadalby and neither does he want the pseudo-spiritualism of a holy connection with Hermione. He realises that he wants the simple truth of his heart, which a woman with a connection to his body and soul can

provide. Hermione reminds him of social conformity, and her correctness of taste and her thoughts bore him.

Lawrence wants to suggest a meaning to love that is not only above the sensation of a momentary feeling but beyond any sentimentality and superficiality. Love in *Women in Love* becomes a metaphor for life at its finest, where death does not matter or rather where death does not happen at a spiritual level but is just a process of life. This reminds us of his later version of 'The Crown' where he says 'Death is part of the story' and 'we know we are purely relative' (Black, 1991, p. 347). Love is not only a force for life and divine wisdom, or knowledge; it is also the source of infinite new lives – a divine activity. Birkin makes this point to Ursula after the death of Diana Crich. Diana's death does not matter, Birkin tells Ursula, because her life already belongs to death. Death makes her more real than life because, as a 'fretting and negated thing' (WL, 191), she does not belong to life.

On the other hand, Birkin tells Ursula he wants a life that does not belong to death, 'There is life which belongs to death, and there is life which isn't death. One is tired of the life that belongs to death – our kind of life. But whether it is finished, God knows. I want love that is like sleep, like being born again' (WL, 191). The life that does not belong to death is possible through the kind of love he proposes to Ursula – 'the mystic conjunction, a bond' (WL, 156). Lawrence sets his vision against the deathly idea of mechanical progress in Gerald's character, of which Ursula says that with nothing left to improve, he has to die. Gerald seems to represent a process towards death, the process of mechanization and material improvement. Birkin offers him his love in an attempt to save him.

Birkin's notion of love is a path, a way out from a stray and futile existence. In the 'Mino' chapter, while on her way to Birkin's for tea, Ursula still notices the 'sordid streets' of the town, but now she is not part of the degeneration of the modern world. She is 'absolved from the conditions of actuality' (WL, 148), she feels like she has fallen away from this material reality, the only known world, and is going on towards a strange path, 'to the real unknown' (WL, 148). Though she is sceptical but not frightened, she wants to go alone. She does not tell Gudrun of her trip because she thinks '[T]hen I shall know' (WL, 148). So there is an expectation of spiritual progress, or a progress in quality of being, and an expectation of knowledge which Lawrence projects here. The reality we know from the beginning of the novel, the ordinary existence of people and usual familiarity of place is somehow becoming

unreal for Ursula. What is becoming real, she does not know and neither does the reader at this stage.

The mode of the narration is changed soon after Ursula arrives at Birkin's lodgings. The oppositional tone of their relationship and struggle in the expression of their feelings and ideas dominate the conversation between them. After great efforts in communicating through verbal means, Birkin fails to communicate what he wants in his love relationship with her.

'I can't say it is love I have to offer – and it isn't love I want. It is something much more impersonal and harder – and rarer.' There was a silence, out of which she said: 'You mean you don't love me?' She suffered furiously, saying that. 'Yes, if you like to put it like that. – Though perhaps that isn't true. I don't know. At any rate, I don't feel the emotion of love for you – no, and I don't want to. Because it gives out in the last issues.' 'Love gives out in the last issues' she asked, feeling numb to the lips. 'Yes, it does. At the very last, one is alone, beyond the influence of love. There is a real impersonal me, that is beyond me, that is beyond love, beyond any emotional relationship. So it is with you. But we want to delude ourselves that love is the root. It isn't. It is only the branches. The root is beyond love, a naked kind of isolation, an isolated me, that does not meet and mingle, and never can.' (WL, 149)

Communication between them breaks down because Ursula does not see the point Birkin wants to make, or Birkin cannot express his desire. Ursula, or probably both are not prepared for this, which both perhaps know. Seeing Ursula in total opposition, Birkin almost says to himself, 'One can only follow the impulse, taking that which lies in front, and responsible for nothing, asked for nothing, giving nothing, only each taking according to the primal desire' (WL, 150-151). A little later, the paradisaal image of 'old Adam' replaces the 'primal desire' (WL, 155).

The mode of the narration changes again when their conversation is interrupted by Birkin's cat Mino. Mino's episode demonstrates the sort of love relationship Birkin has been trying to explain to Ursula. Mino's behaviour with the female cat, for Birkin, creates the image of a relationship of 'superfine stability' (WL, 154). This image brings back the paradisaal image of their first encounter in the 'Class-Room' chapter. In the 'Class-Room' Birkin unconsciously refers to the Genesis story of the fall of man; in the heat of his attack on Hermione's intellectual ideas he says:

‘To know, that is your all, that is your life – you have only this, this knowledge,’ he cried. ‘There is only one tree, there is only one fruit, in your mouth.’ Again she was some time silent. ‘Is there?’ she said at last, with the same untouched calm. And then in a tone of whimsical inquisitiveness: ‘What fruit, Rupert?’ ‘The eternal apple,’ he replied in exasperation, hating his own metaphors (WL, 39).

Birkin tells Ursula that the impulses of Mino, his cat, are justified in the eyes of the wild cat in the apparent show of superiority. For Ursula, Mino’s behaviour is tantamount to bullying and the will to overpower. For Birkin, the relationship between Mino and the wild cat is different because they are intimate. Mino’s superiority is spiritual and beyond a mechanical ‘petty’ and ‘base’ (WL, 154) will to overpower. Mino wants to bring the female wild cat into a ‘pure stable equilibrium, a transcendent and abiding *rapprochement* with the single male’ (WL, 155 Lawrence’s italics). It is an initiation to form a trusted bond to go beyond verbal consciousness through intimacy. Without spiritual leadership, which is Mino’s ‘will to ability’ or sort of initiation (WL, 155), in leading to the path of spiritual awakening, the wild cat ‘is a mere stray, a fluffy sporadic bit of chaos’ (WL, 155). Birkin wants this commitment from Ursula, which she takes as a demand for surrendering her freedom to choose. Physically they have registered each other beyond verbal consciousness, but their oppositional situation still persists. Birkin struggles to bring Ursula out of her moral universe, or paradigm where she insists on her freedom to make moral choices. For Birkin, freedom in this sense is much like the freedom of the wild cat – chaos, isolation and ultimately will to power.

Birkin rejects Ursula’s ‘old Adam’ apprehension about creating a new moral universe of freedom in isolation, for truth has always been the same, the intimate trust, as in the relationship between Mino and the female cat. Ursula challenges Birkin’s allusion to the Adam and Eve story in her modern spirit, where the Adam and Eve story is understood in the perspective of male-female social relations. However, for Birkin the fall of man represents human civilization and destructive ego-consciousness. Instead, Birkin insists on essentiality, or true being. For him, the idea of ‘essential’ states means that ‘the world is only held together by the mystic conjunction, the ultimate unison between people – a bond. And the immediate bond is between man and woman’ (WL, 156). Therefore, as a whole, love is universal and held together by our all-cosmic unity but the truth of that cosmic reality can be found at the micro level in our most personal and intimate relationships. Furthermore, at the human level, love is a ‘direction’, a path that ‘excludes all other directions’ (WL, 156). It is

‘freedom together’, a spiritual freedom, through which one can initiate the journey out of the ‘ugly barrenness’ of the mechanical and moral world of self-conceit and egoistic will.

There are comparable aspects as well as fundamental differences between the concept of love Lawrence presents in *Women in Love* and Rumi’s mystical idea of love. Indeed, the vital contrasting aspect is the mystical aim in Rumi, which is the divine purpose of unity. Creation and multiplicity originate from the divine purpose in order to be known, and so the Sufi desire to be united with the truth means going back to the source. In *The Mathnawi*, Rumi makes this point in different ways, in one place, for instance, he expresses it very clearly, ‘Your reality is the form and temporariness / you delight in that which is dependent and rhymes; / Whereas Reality is what enraptures you / That which makes you independent of form’ (M. I 71-720, Zangenehpour’s translation). Neither Lawrence nor Rumi follow any conceptual framework in delineating their concepts of love. Instead they apply poetic imagination to express what they call love. However, Rumi’s presentation of two forms of reality in *The Mathnawi* can be seen as important conceptual difference with Lawrence. For Lawrence, ‘dispersion,’ or ego-consciousness is a problem of the fall of man, ‘the eternal apple’, but this world of ‘I know I am I’ (Herbert, 1988, p. 255) though a problem but is not less real than any other imagined world. Lawrence’s mystical hope or spiritual quest does not imagine a full-fledged world beyond the reality of this world. In ‘The Crown’, for instance, the tiger-self is part of our essential self. The snowy world at the end of *Women in Love* is as real as the soul enriching fragrance of the soil in the beginning of *The Rainbow*. Therefore, there is no world ‘independent of form’ as such in Lawrence. There seems to be no question of real and unreal, or a world other than this world between the destructive love story of Gerald and Gudrun and Birkin and Ursula’s mystic forgetfulness. Rather the question is of degree and quality of being in both cases. The transcendent in Lawrence lies in the paradox of flame and darkness, as the flame and dark flesh represent the sexual body of Ursula and the mystical rapture her presence invokes in Birkin.

At the level of religious connotation, however, the dichotomy of the flame and darkness in *Women in Love*, and light and darkness in his philosophical essays has some terminological affinity with the concept of *roah* (soul) and *khaki* (earth) and *jism* (body) in Sufi literature. The *roah* is sometimes referred to as *kafoor* (light, brightness, wine of paradise) and has flame-like qualities. It is referred to as the divine flame. *Jism* is sometimes referred to as *khaki*, because God made Adam from clay. It is dark but it is the divine flame or *roah* that makes it not only alive but sacred. The paradisaal imagery in *Women in Love* is comparable to Rumi’s

overall mystical vision of love in *The Mathnawi*, and Lawrence's Blakean presentation of his own creation myth can be seen in Rumi's mystical rendering of theme of love. 'Paradisaal bliss' in the fulfilling love relationship is part of the creation myths found in both *The Mathnawi* and in *Women in Love*. The imagery of darkness and light, of contrast and paradox, also indicates the mystery of creation in 'The Crown', 'The darkness, this has nourished us. The darkness, this is a vast infinite, an origin, a Source. The Beginning, this is the great sphere of darkness, the womb wherein the universe is begotten [...] then there is universal infinite light' (Herbert, 1988, p. 256). In *Women in Love*, Lawrence's river imagery - the paradoxical 'dark river of dissolution' and 'silver river of life' (WL, 177) - presents the mystery of creation. This also represents the overall structure of the novel, of two different paths. One is the path of destruction and other is the path of redemption but not necessarily in a religious sense, as we might want to understand it. Birkin introduces Ursula to these two opposite rivers to induce her into his vision of love. The dark river, which he tells Ursula we often overlook, is like a flowering. It is the process of creation, life in its physical reality. Destruction is part of this process of creation, which we see in characters such as 'Gudrun and Gerald - born in the process of destructive creation' (WL, 177). The silver river seems to be the Christian paradise, the kingdom of the Lord, or the 'Light' of 'The Crown', and Birkin distracts Ursula from it. An image in 'The Crown' can shed some light on Birkin's purpose, where Lawrence brings all the colours of the rainbow together in a state of consummation.

The rainbow, the yellow and rose and blue and purple of dawn and sunset, which leaps out of the breaking of light upon darkness, of darkness upon light, absolute beyond day or night; the rainbow, the iridescence which is darkness at once and light, the two-in one [...] It is the lovely body of foam that walks forever between the two seas, perfect and consummate, the revealed consummation, the oneness that has taken being out of the two (Herbert, 1988, p. 261).

The foam here represents the flowering after consummation, the 'roses' of Birkin in *Women in Love*.

Rumi's creation myth is not exactly similar but love plays a central role, as in Lawrence. In the first thirty five verses of prologue to *The Mathnawi*, Rumi introduces his creation myth and the images which run through the stories and parables he tells.

Listen to the reed how it tells a tale, complaining of separations / Saying, 'Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, my / lament hath caused man and woman to moan. / I

want a bosom torn by severance, that I may unfold (to such a one) / the pain of love-desire. / Every one who is left far from his source wishes back / the time when he was united with it. / In every company I uttered my wailful notes, I consorted / with the unhappy and with them that rejoice. / Every one became my friend from his own opinion; none / sought out my secrets from within me. / My secret is not far from my plaint, but ear and eye lack the / light (whereby it should be apprehended). / Body is not veiled from soul, nor soul from body, yet none / is permitted to see the soul.' / This noise of the reed is fire, it is not wind: whoso hath not / this fire, may he be naught! / 'Tis the fire of Love that is in the reed, 'tis the fervour of / Love that is in the wine. / The reed is the comrade of every one who has been parted / from a friend: its strains pierced our hearts. / Who ever saw a poison and antidote like the reed? Who ever / saw a sympathiser and a longing lover like the reed? / The reed tells of the Way full of blood and recounts stories / of the passion of Majnun. / Only to the senseless is this sense confided: the tongue hath / no customer save the ear. / In our woe the days (of life) have become untimely: our days / travel hand in hand with burning griefs. / If our days are gone, let them go! – 'tis no matter. Do Thou remain, / for none is holy as Thou art! / Whoever is not a fish becomes sated with His water; whoever / is without daily bread finds the day long. / None that is raw understands the state of the ripe: therefore / my words must be brief. Farewell! (M. I, 1-18).

In these first eighteen verses Rumi presents his creation myth, the separation from the source. The reed serves as the perfect image of separation and rapture. In the reed image, Rumi brings his sense of music and sexual desire together with his myth of creation and being in the world. Most commentators, including Nicholson, see it as the story of the fall of man and the desire to return to God's presence in Paradise. I do not deny such a reading, however, it is hard to overlook the sexual undertone and mystic rapture implied in image after image. It is customary within Muslim poetic traditions, including Sufi poetry, to begin one's poetic work with a special poem called *hamd* (praise of God) but, in Rumi's case, it is important to note that Rumi chooses to begin *The Mathnawi* by laying out his mystical purpose and a creation myth of his own, not without Quranic imagery however. In the next seventeen verses, Rumi relates the status of love and its connection to being in the world.

O son, burst thy chains and be free! How long wilt thou be / a bondsman to silver and gold? / If thou pour the sea into a pitcher, how much will it hold? / One day's store. / The pitcher, the eye of the covetous, never becomes full: / the oyster-shell is not filled

with pearls until it is contented. / He (alone) whose garment is rent by a (mighty) love
 is purged / of covetousness and all defect. / Hail, O Love that bringest us good gain –
 thou that art the / physician of all our ills. / The remedy of our pride and vainglory,
 our Plato and our Galen! / Through Love the earthly body soared to the skies: the /
 mountain began to dance and became nimble. / Love inspired Mount Sinai, O lover,
 (so that) Sinai (was made) / drunken and Mosses fell in a swoon. / Were I joined to
 the lip of one in accord with me, I too, like / the reed, would tell all that may be told; /
 (But) whoever is parted from one who speaks his language / becomes dumb, though
 he have a hundred songs. / When the rose is gone and the garden faded, thou wilt hear
 / no more the nightingale's story. / The Beloved is all and the lover (but) a veil; the
 Beloved is / living and the lover a dead thing. / When Love hath no care for him, he is
 left as a bird without / wings. Alas for him then! / How should I have consciousness
 (of aught) before or behind / when the light of my Beloved is not before me and
 behind? / Love wills that this Word should be shown forth: if the / mirror does not
 reflect, how is that? / Dost thou know why the mirror (of thy soul) reflects nothing? /
 Because the rust is not cleared from its face. / O my friends, hearken to this tale: in
 truth it is the very / marrow of our inward state (M. I, 19-35).

The sea image relates to the fish figure in the first extract. The sea represents the holistic view of being in the Sufi connotation and the fish is a metaphor for the Sufi who experiences a holistic vision of existence by swimming in the sea of being. The 'garment' image which is later associated with the scent of Yusuf's shirt is a sensual image of beauty. It is taken from the Quranic story where Yusuf (Joseph) is separated from his father David, and where David goes blind from grief at Yusuf's separation. When Yusuf's shirt is brought to David many years later, the scent of Yusuf's shirt brings back his sight (*The Quran*, Yusuf, 12: 7). Love is associated with Plato, the symbol of wisdom and knowledge, with the 'passion of Majnun' for Laila, and with the presence of God on Mount Sinai where the Biblical equivalent is the 'burning bush', an important image in Lawrence's writings. In *The Rainbow*, Anna, exasperated with Will's devotion to the doctrinal faith which is represented by the Church, says 'God burnt no more in that bush' (Lawrence, 1980, p. 188) referring to the altar. Anna probably means God burns in the flame of her body instead of at the altar of the Church.

The mystical imagery in the above verses is associated with the earthly love of Majnun, the natural phenomenon of the rose and the nightingale and the divine presence on Mount Sinai. Amin Banani referring to this quality of Rumi's poetic imagery notes,

Rumi fused the mystic vocabulary and the language of the *ghazal*, the predominant ethos of mysticism as well as the intricate fabric of symbolism, to such an extent that *ghazal* as a form takes on a unitary vision of the universe [...] It was Rumi's conflating of the purest mystical spirit with the most corporeal sensuality that paved the way for Hafez's tantalizing irony and ambivalence (Banani, 1994, p. 31).

In Rumi's imagery, assimilation is a process of love in the same way as consummation in Lawrence. In Lawrence we have noticed that consummation is metaphorically referred to as a 'foam' created by opposite currents in the sea in 'The Crown', and also referred to as the 'rose of peace' in his flower imagery in 'The Reality of Peace'. In Rumi, 'fire and bread turn into life' (M. I, 1475), as above where the oyster-shell assimilates the sun's rays and turns them into pearl, 'the oyster-shell is not filled with pearls until it is contented'. Khalifa Abd al-Hakim proposes that assimilation and transformational form in Rumi's poetic imagery show his metaphysics of love, which distinguishes, for him, Rumi's concept of love from the Greek Eros. He notes, 'here we find a tremendous difference between the Eros of Plato and the Ishq of Rumi; the former leading to the gazing of impersonal intellectual beauty and the later leading us to be partakers of Infinite life by becoming living organs in the Life of life' (abd al-Hakim, 1933, p. 41). It is questionable how far one can compare the mystic knowledge, or 'gathering', in Rumi's conception of passionate love with Plato's idea of wisdom and transcendental knowledge in the *Symposium* and Lawrence's presentation of sexual love, which give access to a knowledge of the other at a transcendental level. However, Lawrence and Rumi's particular view of being in the world suggest they both consider love as one of the pre-eminent means of, in Hakim's words, partaking in Infinite life.

Similarly, the image of the 'veil' which represents the density of the phenomenal world is associated with the lover, 'The Beloved is all and the lover (but) a veil'. The same image is assimilated to the being of woman as the beloved later on in *The Mathnawi*, 'Woman is a ray of God: / She is not the earthly beloved. / She is creative: you might say she is not created' (M. I, 2431). Nicholson explains that 'Sweeping aside the veil of form, the poet beholds in woman the eternal Beauty, the inspirer and object of all love, and regards her, in her essential nature, as the medium through which that Beauty reveals itself and exercises creative activity. Ibnu'I-'Arabi went so far as to say that the most perfect vision of God is enjoyed by those who contemplate Him in woman' (Nicholson, 1978, p. 44).

Indeed, Lawrence would not sweep aside the veil of form in the manner of Rumi's theory of earthly love but one can find affinity between the sexual nature of the desire, *dhwaq*, and metaphoric assimilation in Rumi's poetry and Lawrence's sexual imagery. It is also significant to note that in *Women in Love*, Lawrence shows that in sexual attraction the other is seen in a different form than the conventional objective image as taken from a camera. The visualisation of and objective view of the other is always transformed into something different. Fiona Becket underlines this different quality of Lawrence's presentation of the other through sexual attraction and regards this as Lawrence's 'anti-visual mode' (Becket, 1997, p. 149). Birkin finds it hard to look at Ursula and have a visual image of her in the chapter 'Flitting'. When Birkin and Ursula decide to get married, she breaks the news to her family, which results in a violent reaction from her father. Ursula leaves her family home and goes to live with Birkin. This shows to Birkin that she has left all her demands for assurances behind and has accepted his offer of a mystic bond. In a rapturous mode Birkin connects with Ursula in a 'perfect silence of bliss' (WL, 384), whatever he says and sees is other than ordinary reality.

How could he tell her of the immanence of her beauty, that was not form, or weight, or colour, but something like a strange, golden light! How could he know himself what her beauty lay in, for him. He said 'Your nose is beautiful, your chin is adorable.' But it sounded like lies, and she was disappointed, hurt. Even when he said, whispering with truth, 'I love you, I love you,' it was not the real truth. It was something beyond love, such a gladness of having surpassed oneself, of having transcended the old existence (WL, 384).

In Birkin's eyes Ursula becomes eternal and ageless, in her Birkin seeks his youth and his resurrection: 'He worshipped her as age worships youth, he gloried in her, because, in his one grain of faith, he was young as she, he was her proper mate. This marriage with her was his resurrection and his life' (WL, 384). A few sentences earlier Lawrence refers to Birkin's hope and his faith in Ursula's love as a 'grain of mustard seed' (WL, 384), an allusion to the kingdom of heaven. The paradisaal imagery continues as the ultimate desire in Birkin's hope for a love relationship. Unlike Rumi, Lawrence's creation myth indicates a naturalistic connotation of love and consummation. Lawrence emphasises the natural process of the creation of a third entity out of two in the process of consummation. However, the Genesis and paradisaal imagery that Lawrence associates with sexual attraction and the love relationship designates a pre-human paradisaal world, which, like the Christian concept of the

kingdom of heaven, seems to be in the future. Nevertheless, in 'The Crown', Lawrence tries to negate his own prophetic vision of the future by creating an eternal now in his images of 'light' and 'darkness' and 'Lion' and 'Unicorn'. In *Women in Love*, 'the golden light' and dark 'flame' of Ursula represent both the eternity of the past and of the future.

Rumi, however, emphasises the return to eternal unity, and calls this 'colourlessness', but in many of his stories in *The Mathnawi*, he also underlines the importance of the world of colour and contradictions. For instance, in the story of 'The Bedouin and His Wife' where the wife, who here represents flesh or the body, tired of her husband's arrogant poverty and unwillingness to ask for any worldly comforts, forces him to go to the king and ask for help. In praise of the wife of the Bedouin, Rumi says,

The Prophet said that woman prevails exceedingly over the wise and intelligent, / (While), on the other hand, ignorant men prevail over woman, / for in them the fierceness of the animal is imprisoned [...] / She (woman) is a ray of God, she is not that (earthly) beloved: / she is creative, you might say she is not created (M. I, 2433-2437).

Then Rumi provides the reason, why the way of the wife (the flesh or body) is wise and why the Bedouin husband, representing the arrogance of the egoistic-self, is foolish: the key is the acceptance of the world of colour, the world of multiplicity. In Rumi's words:

Since colourlessness (pure Unity) became the captive of / colour (manifestation in the phenomenal world), a Moses came into conflict with a Moses. / When you attain unto the colourlessness which you (originally) possessed, / Moses and Pharaoh are at peace (with each other). / If it occurs to you to ask questions about this mystery, (I reply), / how should (the world of) colour be devoid of contradiction? (M. I, 2466-2469).

In the moral of the story, Rumi furthers his argument of the necessity of body as a witness to one's feeling and inner self. He says,

If the spiritual explanation were sufficient, the creation of the world would have been vain and idle. / If love were (only spiritual) thought and reality, the form of your fasting and prayer would be non-existent. / The gifts of lovers to one another are, in respect of love, naught but forms; / (But the purpose is) that the gifts may have borne testimony to feelings of love which are concealed in secrecy, Because outward acts of kindness bear witness to feelings of love in the heart, O dear friend (M. I, 2624-2628).

In Lawrence, the polarity of existence, as emphasised in 'The Crown', shows his belief that the self, in its transcendental connotation, is the mirror of a greater cosmic reality which is ruled by the principle of dualism from within. In his essay 'The Two Principles', Lawrence refers to the greater cosmic reality as part of the creative process and the life which 'is an unbroken oneness' (Greenspan, Vasey and Worthen, 2003, p. 263). In the same essay he argues that God is part of the cosmic creative process but he tries to refute the idea of first cause and the religious idea of an outside force. This shows a close parallel with the idea of 'partaking' and the mirror image in Rumi's cosmology, seen above. The 'mirror' image in Sufi poetry refers to the spiritual world and the soul of man's close relation with the universe. This image refers to the soul's being aware of its essential reality, as stated in the verses, 'Love wills that this Word should be shown forth: if the / mirror does not reflect, how is that? / Dost thou know why the mirror (of thy soul) reflects nothing? / Because the rust is not cleared from its face'. If the mirror, or one's soul, for Rumi, does not reflect reality then the problem is in the failure of registering what has been 'shown forth'. One has to partake in the process of creation to perceive.

In an essay called 'Man is Essentially a Soul', Lawrence proposes a poetic sensibility to perceive one's real being. His use of the word 'soul' suggests a mystical, or religious connotation to knowledge, as he says:

Real education is the learning to recognising and obey the instincts of the soul [...] the most subtle and sensitive thing in life, is the recognising and responding directly to the instinctive soul. All men do it in their own degree. But to catch the finest and ultimate flickers of intimation that can come from within needs a rare, pure, burning soul, a pure body, a sensitive, strong spirit, and a quick imaginative mind. And this is rare (Herbert, 1988, p. 389).

Lawrence mentions both the wisdom of the body, for which Lawrence is well known, and the more elusive term soul, which is a religious response to rational intellectualism in Lawrence's work. A burning soul is both a reference to the instinctive mode of action and perception, as emphasised by Birkin in the second chapter of *Women in Love*, and also signifies the passionate heart of a lover. For Hafiz, in a lover's passionate heart the ray of eternal beauty can be perceived. It is hard to guess what Lawrence means by 'real education'; it may not be the same as Hafiz's divine knowledge, but it is a more essential knowing of the self than the one which can be perceived through rational and objective means. *Women in Love* shows

both the possibility and the impossibility of such an authentic experience in an increasingly self-conscious world. The inability of modern discourse to express this instinctive mode of being is stressed in Birkin's failure to communicate with others without being misunderstood and even ridiculed, as well as in others' failure to act spontaneously and instinctively. In the 'Class-Room' chapter, after meeting Ursula Birkin unconsciously feels elated and with 'a new pleasure' (WL, 35) Birkin confronts Hermione. He makes a long speech, which is received with antagonism by both the women. In his speech he attacks what he thinks is Hermione's intellectual world while all the time conscious of his failure and of being mocked. He emphasises the sensibility of a 'burning soul' and lover's heart, the conditions of a lover in Rumi's poetry. Birkin says:

'There's the whole difference in the world,' he said, 'between the actual sensual being, and the vicious mental-deliberate profligacy our lot goes in for. In our night time, there's always the electricity switched on, we watch ourselves, we get it all in the head, really. You've got to lapse out before you can know what sensual reality is, lapse into unknowingness, and give up your volition. You've got to do it. You've got to learn not-to-be, before you can come into being' (WL, 43).

In Sufi understanding volition is the substance of egoistic-self, which the Sufis call *nafs*. This kind of rhetoric in Birkin's speeches makes him vulnerable. That is why he fails to connect with others. For Ursula this rhetoric is a 'defused' form of past knowledge that Birkin carries with him, and does not belong to the modern consciousness. The manner in which Lawrence exposes Birkin's views to ridicule, as in the chapter 'Gudrun in the Pompadour' where Birkin's Bohemian friends openly ridicule his views, is based on real incidents, in this case a situation where Lawrence's friend Katherine Mansfield witnessed a similar attack on Lawrence's views in a London cafe. Mansfield acted in similar fashion to Gudrun in the novel. Birkin's letters are read out loud and are ridiculed at the moment he claims that 'Desire is holy' (WL, 398). His ideas of 'darkness and light' and other notions about his creation myth and human love, which Lawrence promotes in his philosophical essays and which I note above, are referred to and made fun of here as the views associated with Birkin. This shows two things, firstly Lawrence's firm belief in these values and secondly his desire to illustrate the bankruptcy of modern consciousness. It can also mean a Blakean manner of dramatising his creation myth, of placing into imagined dialogue and drama the corruption of rational conceit and of the egoistic-self.

In Rumi, separation creates a longing, a desire (*dhwaq*) like the sweet notes of the reed float which is bitter and nostalgic but also optimistic, and this separation is also positive in the sense that it allows the colours of the Divine beauty to reveal themselves. Through this revelation love can flourish in the form or in the multiplicity of the world. Unlike Rumi's mystic vision, Lawrence presents a holistic rather than a unified concept of creation. In Lawrence, love represents a fulfilment of this holistic vision of existence. Love can give one a singular vision of one's existence, which one can never know through other means. At best the exploration of the concept of love in *Women in Love* offers a modern version of old mystic quest for fulfilment.

III. ECSTASY AND PHYSICAL FULFILMENT

Love in Lawrence has a transporting effect. The passionate experience in a love relationship, in which the sexual act is the climax, can give access to something other than our perceived self and the world as we ordinarily know it. Similar to what Paul Morel in Lawrence's early novel *Sons and Lovers* experiences in his sexual consummation with Clara, 'It was all so much bigger than themselves that he was hushed' (Lawrence, 1981, p. 421). The word 'hushed' can be associated with phrases like 'calm delight' in his later writings. The phrases and images Lawrence associates with the transporting effect of passional experience, such as 'bliss', are always indicative of calmness and happiness and at the same time Lawrence associates a new sort of knowing with such experience between lovers. In *Sons and Lovers*, immediately after this experience, Paul is described establishing a new cosmic connection with the earthly things and sounds around him, and also with 'the wheel of the stars' (Lawrence, 1981, p. 421). The orbit image is later introduced in the philosophical essays and in the novel *Women in Love*. In *Women in Love*, Lawrence uses the orbit image to define Birkin's conception of love. The Wheel image signifies many things including 'fortune' in Zodiac mythology but in Lawrence it defines a kind of love relationship and a connection between two lovers, which includes a cosmic awareness. Lawrence's vision is to create a living relationship with the cosmos. In Lawrence, this kind of transport in love signifies a religious and spiritual meaning, as he says in *Apocalypse*, 'everything that puts us into connection, into vivid touch is religious' (Kalmns, 1980, p. 155). Love, as the 'happiness of the world' for Lawrence, can create that bond which makes us free, as he proposes in *Women*

in *Love* in a mystical and paradoxical manner. In his essay 'Love', Lawrence says, 'In love, all things unite in an oneness of joy and praise' (Kalnins, 1988, p. 7). In this section, I will explore the theme of pleasure and ecstasy in *Women in Love* and at the end I would like to draw some parallels with Rumi's poetry.

In *The Rainbow*, the sense of sacredness and transcendence in Tom and Lydia's relationship lies in Lydia's unfamiliar and foreign figure and also the presence of the Church tower and an ancient bond with the earth, which give a permanent sense of sacredness to Tom's being. In *Women in Love*, however, the corruption of human civilization has already descended, as we have seen in Lawrence's description of ego-consciousness and the disintegration of holistic vision. The question Lawrence's exploration of love relationships seems to ask is whether love can play a part of renewal and regeneration. For Lawrence, in order to reach the vision of reality which has been lost and to make that vital connection, it is necessary to make the leap into a new kind of relationship and in this respect, there is a mystical and transcendental significance to Lawrence's presentation of ecstatic rapture and sacred eroticism in *Women in Love*, inasmuch as these experiences provide a glimpse of a renewed spiritual life which is beyond the deathly process of modern corruption.

In *Twilight in Italy* Lawrence gives a sense of his creation myth, a vision of primordial life in the south. The mystic rapture he seems to experience remains characteristic of his concept of love in later writings. Robert Montgomery, for instance, comparing Nietzsche's attempt to create a new myth and combine art and philosophy, or living and theory, says about *Women in Love* that it is the greatest of Lawrence's novels because it is the most successful attempt by Lawrence at combining 'metaphysics with a living sense of being' (Montgomery, 1994, p. 111). In the *Twilight* essays the profound mystical feeling records Lawrence's perspective on love, which also can be seen in the symbolic value of Birkin and Ursula's travel to the south and in the failure of Gerald and Gudrun to take this step. This is in a way the culmination of both the couples' love stories.

In the eyes of the old peasant woman, whom he meets near a church, Lawrence describes the obliviousness and the supremely unconscious approach to life through a sense of universal connection. This obliviousness and unconscious living is a characteristic of sexual attraction in *Women in Love* and is associated with Birkin and Ursula's love story. Lawrence sees his own rapturous vision in the old woman's eyes: 'She glanced at me again, with her wonderful, unchanging eyes that were like the visible heavens, unthinking, or like two flowers that are

open in pure clear unconsciousness' (Eggert, 1994, p. 107). He then goes on to relate her lack of awareness; she does not care if she has not seen another part of the earth because in her complete knowledge of being, '[t]he lands she had not seen were corporate parts of her own living body, the knowledge she had not attained was only the hidden knowledge of her own self' (Eggert, 1994, p. 107). Lawrence projects his mystical vision on to the simple and contented life of the peasant woman. Self-consciousness is the reason for not accepting the mystery. If you are part of mystery then seeing and not seeing becomes the same thing. The flower image, as we have seen in 'The Reality of Peace' and *Women in Love*, later becomes part of Lawrence's paradisaal imagery. Lawrence observes a more potent life and mystic delight in the peasants, who unlike the holy men of the church, whom he describes in *Twilight*, live with great sensual awareness. The monks, on the other hand, are 'neutral' and live in the 'neutrality of the law' and in them Lawrence sees only the 'abstraction of the average' (Eggert, 1994, p. 111), which amounts to what he thinks is 'not to be', or the rejection of life.

The blood consciousness in the southern peasants is later associated with sexual transport in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. In a moment of rapture when Birkin's 'soul was arrested in wonder' (WL, 134) and in 'perfect attraction' (WL, 134) to Ursula's 'glowing smiling richness', in a total breakdown of verbal communication, Birkin's words fail to capture the meaning of the 'beam of understanding between them'. Verbal consciousness turns into a moment of trance. Birkin amusing 'himself unconsciously' picks up a daisy and drops it on the pond, 'the flower floated like a little water lily, staring with its open face up to the sky. It turned slowly round, in a slow, slow Dervish dance' (WL, 134). Lawrence's imagery and its effect on both Ursula and Birkin show a distant reference to the Sufi dervish dance and ecstatic poetic mood. It cannot be ascertained for sure if Lawrence had in his mind Rumi's mystical meaning, and it may well be a reference to a popular sense of the eastern mystic dance. In the Sufi dervish dance called *samaa*, the Sufi stands in the middle of the room or, if there is more than one, they make a circle. Each wears a white robe, and one hand points towards the earth and the other towards the sky, with faces lifted to the sky. They move like Lawrence's daisies, turning slowly round, silent and intoxicated in a cosmic connection with the Divine Being. The dervish dance developed as a significant ritual in the Mawlawi Sufi Order, which was first founded by Rumi's son and other disciples after his death. For Rumi it was the soul of his poetry; Rumi's poetry appears to be written in this trance like state, as suggested by D. J. Moore. I will come to Rumi's poetry later in the discussion after exploring

in some detail how the mood of the narration in *Women in Love* changes from one state to another, from the monks' abstract consciousness to ecstatic rapture.

After polarising each other and 'rousing each other to a fine passion of opposition' (WL, 130), the mood of the narration changes, with the daisies' dervish dance on the water. Birkin drops one daisy after another into the water and watches them with 'bright, absolved eyes' (WL, 135). This shows his change of mood, Birkin, a moment ago, was arguing with Ursula about the meaning of love and telling her that she has 'no business to utter the word' (WL, 134). Now watching the dervish dance of the daisies, he has become unconsciously free with a clearer sight and 'absolved' eyes'. Ursula, on the other hand, has started to leave, mocking Birkin, and says that she will not be a part of his quest for a new meaning to love, 'I must leave it to you, to take it out of the Ark of the Covenant at the right moment' (WL, 134). Ursula's mocking reference to the Ten Commandments, and her later statement to Birkin that his 'star equilibrium' is the same as bullying and the superiority of man, show her apprehensions about conventional religious sensibility but the daisies' mystic dance arrests her. When Ursula turns to look, 'A strange feeling possessed her, as if something were taking place. But it was all intangible. And some sort of control was being put on her' (WL, 135). To follow the dancing flowers, they come to the shore, 'Do let us go to the shore, to follow them' (WL, 135). On the shore, Ursula is glad to be on the 'free land'. The island is a symbol of their isolated selves before the mystic dance and the free land is the symbol of their awakening and coming together and to the cosmos in a meaningful way. She was 'almost in tears' watching the flowers moving towards her. She cries, 'Why are they so lovely?' They are both watching them 'barely conscious' and they remain like 'two impersonal forces' but 'there in contact' (WL, 136).

Similarly, in the 'Excuse' chapter before their final consummation in love, Ursula and Birkin find themselves in a state of ecstatic rapture when they hear the 'Minister bells playing a hymn' (WL, 323). The hymn says, 'Glory to thee my God this night / For all the blessing of the light' (WL, 324). Here a direct reference to light, like the light of moon 'melting everything into universal shadow', is a divine blessing. Ursula's reaction is ecstatic and fulfilling at the same time; the conscious reality gives way to become 'unreal' and Ursula feels herself in 'a strange, transcendent reality' (WL, 324). In her enchanted state, new eyes are opened 'in her soul' (WL, 324). She sees Birkin in a new light and becomes aware of the divinity in Birkin – 'not a man, something other, something more', as if 'she were enchanted, and everything were metamorphosed' (WL, 324). Lawrence here reveals the paradisaal

imagery and an image of pre-history as a shadow which is unreal in common understanding, as it all seems strange to Ursula, therefore in a state of intoxication the lovers realise something beyond and unknown to their ordinary conscious selves.

Birkin and Ursula achieve an ecstatic consciousness in their sensual relationship, which Lawrence shows as 'palpable revelation of mystic otherness' (WL, 332). For Lawrence, the ecstatic state, or this twilight experience can reveal a knowledge of the other, which we do not ordinarily have any access to. Against this twilight image in Ursula and Birkin's experience, the others' quest of knowledge is similar to daylight, for instance, Gudrun wants mentally to know Gerald and see his manly power. That is why she remains mentally alert and misses the consciousness of ecstatic experience. She remains on a mental level and through her sensual relationship with Gerald does not experience the 'immemorial magnificence of mystic, palpable, real otherness' (WL, 332) that the other two become aware of. Lawrence says that Ursula has received the 'maximum of unspeakable communication in touch' (WL, 332). The others have also touched each other in their sexual encounters, but perhaps without the sort of mystic desire and hope of something beyond the ordinary.

In *The Rainbow*, as Kinkead-Weekes notes, she dances with Skrebensky in anguish because of her 'fear, of losing control, of losing one's self at the hands of the other; yet they are given over, Skrebensky's consciousness already 'melted away'' (Kinkead-Weekes, 1992, p. 66). But the Ursula of *Women of Love* is more ready to go along, in fact it is Birkin who resists and wants his singleness protected. At the end of *The Rainbow*, Ursula realises that she has been failed in love because she has not yielded enough. In *Women in Love*, she asks Birkin why love is not enough for him and Birkin says, 'Because we can go one better,' to which she reacts in 'a strong, voluptuous voice of yielding' (WL, 158). However, Kinkead-Weekes makes a very significant comment on the anguish of losing oneself in *The Rainbow*, that, 'complete loss of self at the hands of the other which now seems (to the Lawrence of 1915) the condition for renewal and fulfilment' (Kinkead-Weekes, 1992, p. 64). I think Lawrence presents this anguish in different way in *Women in Love* than in *The Rainbow*. In *The Rainbow* the modern voices and self-consciousness are not as vivid as in the later novel, which is shown in the rising tension between characters.

Lawrence makes clear the difference between what Ursula and Birkin have gone through in their ecstasy, and what Gudrun has achieved in her ecstatic experience with Gerald. Gudrun's fingers find his features, and her soul thrills with the knowledge of his face: 'This was the

glistening, forbidden apple, this face of a man' (WL, 345). Gudrun's knowledge of the unknown in Gerald is an image of destruction, while the metaphor of 'forbidden apple' has a negative self-conscious meaning. Whereas images in Ursula's experience are dark, mysterious and unclear, like the path her fingers take in the search for Birkin's flow of life.

Lawrence differentiates between the power of love that elevates the status of the lover and raw sensuality or lust which degrades the seeker of such pleasure. Later I will discuss how Birkin notices the raw sensuality of the African fetishes at Halliday's flat. Birkin thinks it is 'mystic knowledge in disintegration and dissolution.' Lawrence calls it the 'principle of knowledge in dissolution and corruption' and in his *Studies in Classic American Literature* says that, 'When the self is broken, and the mystery of the recognition of otherness fails, then the longing for identification with the beloved becomes a lust' (Greenspan, Vasey, and Worthen, 2003, p. 75). The sense of wonder and mystery remains in the relationship between Birkin and Ursula. However, Gudrun and Gerald's tragedy lies in their knowing each other in the abstract and in the lack of wonder in their relationship. Gudrun, Lawrence notes, 'Knowing him [Gerald] finally she was the Alexander seeking new worlds. – But there *were* no new worlds, there were no more *men*, there were only creatures, little, ultimate *creatures* like Loerke' (WL, 468 Lawrence's italic). However, Gerald's only superiority, like the 'phallic cult' of African unspiritual sensuality, lies in his death, 'in Gerald's soul there still lingered some attachment to the rest, to the whole' (WL, 470).

Birkin and Ursula's ecstatic knowledge allows them to see 'beyond love'. While going away from the snow-covered tops of the Alps, Ursula tells Gudrun that, 'I believe what we must fulfil comes out of the unknown to us, and it is something infinitely more than love' (WL, 454). To which Gudrun says, 'I've got no further than love, yet'. But this is not true, and Ursula corrects her, saying that it is because 'you never have love.' The truth is that, if one really loves, one is bound to go beyond love and reach to divine knowledge. That is why Ursula tells her sister that 'you can't get beyond' because you never 'have loved'. John Worthen notes, on this aspect of Lawrence's treatment of love, that Lawrence treats his 'character's desires for love – not in a natural moral settling down way but fulfilment – from the beginning till end' (Worthen, 1991, p. 9). However, for Worthen, the question of fulfilment is only related to erotic success and failure of sensual experience, not to the mystical 'freedom together' as, in *Women in Love*, Birkin insists on in his relationship with Ursula.

Gerald Doherty in his “‘Ars Erotica’ or ‘Scientia Sexualis’”? : Narrative Vicissitudes in D. H. Lawrence’s *Women in Love* addresses the ecstatic mood in Lawrence’s narratives in the light of Michel Foucault’s theory of sexual pleasure. In his *History of Sexuality* Foucault distinguishes the western notion of sexual pleasure, which he calls ‘Scientia Sexualis’ from the eastern notion of ‘Ars Erotica’. As Doherty notes, for Foucault Ars Erotica is ‘where truth is drawn from pleasure itself; i.e., from its subtleties, intensities, progressive devotion, liberating effects, and its access to other planes of existence’ (Doherty, 1996, p. 137). Applying Foucault’s idea of the eastern ‘Ars Erotica’, Doherty maintains that *Women in Love* is a rare novel in English novelistic tradition since it adopts the eastern ‘Ars Erotica’ principle as a source for its ‘ultimate value’ (Doherty, 1996, p. 138). He relates the paradisaic bliss imagery and mystic wishful forgetfulness in the ‘Excuse’ chapter, as we noted in Birkin and Ursula’s ecstatic experience above, with the eastern erotic sensibility of non-articulation and erotic initiation. What Doherty calls ‘transcendent attainment’ (Doherty, 1996, p. 140) in Foucault’s ‘Ars Erotica’ theory of pleasure can also be found in the Sufi poetic tradition of intoxication. However, in Foucault the pleasure is an end and an aesthetic fulfilment in itself, which he thinks the western science of sexuality lacks because of historical repression and also because of a scientific interest in sex in the modern age. In the Sufi literature such pleasure is a means to a greater end of unity and fulfilment in the Divine reality. The imagery around sexual pleasure in Sufi literature, similar to what is maintained by Doherty about the eastern and also in Lawrence’s presentation, is shrouded with mystery and non-articulation.

Rumi, in *The Mathnawi*, describes his condition as that of an ecstatic lover and implies that whatever he is going to say in *The Mathnawi* comes from the knowledge he attains due to the state of his intoxicated love for his companion Shams-e Tabriz. As he says,

When news arrived of the face of Shams’uddin (the Sun of the religion), / the sun of the fourth heaven drew in its head (hid itself for shame). Since his name has come (to my lips), it behoves me to set / forth some hint of his bounty. / At this moment my soul has plucked my skirt: he has caught / the perfume of Joseph’s vest. / (He said): ‘For the sake of our years of companionship, / recount one of those sweet ecstasies, / That earth and heaven may laugh (with joy), that intellect and / spirit and eye may increase a hundredfold (M. I, 123-127).

Love, he says, whether human or Divine, leads to the beyond, or leads us yonder. The purpose of his tales, Rumi tells the reader, is to disguise in the stories of others what he has

attained in his experience of ecstatic love. He calls his experience madness and a state of being 'intoxicated with reason of love' (M. I, 238).

Being in love is made manifest by soreness of heart: there is no sickness like heart-sickness. / The lover's ailment is separate from all other ailments / Love is the astrolabe of the mysteries of God. / Whether love be from this (earthly) side or from that (heavenly) side, / in the end it leads us yonder (M. I, 109-111).

The conception of 'sickness' and 'madness' is implied to show the extraordinariness of this experience and the word 'yonder' is implied to the transporting effect of love. The ecstatic love which has overtaken Rumi in the beginning of *The Mathnawi* and which has the power to lead him to 'the mysteries of God' is hard to explain other than in the fables and tales Rumi wants his reader, or listeners (listener may be more appropriate since Rumi appears to have spontaneously recited his poetry and a close friend or a disciple took notes) to watch for such knowledge. As he alerts his listeners, 'It is better that the secret of the Friend should be disguised: / do thou hearken (to it as implied) in the contents of the tale. / It is better that the lovers' secret should be told in the talk of others' (M. I, 135-136). For Rumi partly because it is inexplicable as an experience for the lovers and partly because he warns against plain speaking about the ecstatic experience of love: 'Lift the veil and speak nakedly, for I do not wear a shirt / when I sleep with the adored one' Rumi replies that 'If he should become naked in (thy) vision, / neither wilt thou remain nor thy bosom nor thy waist' (M. I, 138-139). If we watch closely how Rumi proceeds in his tales and their implied meanings, the one thing that becomes obvious is that he adds irony and metaphorical language to the religious discourse of the Islamic scripture. The amount of religious allusion in *The Mathnawi* is the reason why it is called 'the Quran in Persian'. But at the same Rumi is saying that it is just not possible to articulate plainly what is supposed to be a religious experience. This is a powerful contrast to mainstream understanding of Quranic language, which is considered to be very simple and in a plain language that everybody can understand. This lack of irony in the orthodox interpretation of the Quranic knowledge is challenged in the way *The Mathnawi* creates its own myth and meaning in the religion. This is not only the poetic and mystical but the antinomian attitude of Rumi's conception of love and ecstasy. He further explains why it is necessary to adopt metaphorical and mystical language to talk about his love of God and earthly love,

Whatsoever I say in exposition and explanation of love, / when I come to love (itself)
 I am ashamed of that (explanation). / Although the commentary of the tongue makes
 (all) clear, / yet tongueless love is clearer. / Whilst the pen was making haste in
 writing, / it split upon itself as soon as it came to love. / In expounding it (love), the
 intellect lay down (helplessly) / like an ass in the mire: it was love (alone) that uttered
 the / explanation of love and loverhood (M. I, 112-115).

In *The Mathnawi* the ecstatic experience gives access to spiritual fulfilment, and a better and more imaginative knowledge of the other. Rumi returns on the same theme of love's ecstatic experience at the end of book six of *The Mathnawi*. He expounds its meaning in Zulika's love for Joseph, which is a metaphor throughout the poem for his conception of sensual love. Zulika conceals Joseph's name in all other names and in this way she takes pleasure and fulfilment from everything she mentions. Every moment becomes a moment with the lover, so there is a sense of eternal now, as he says in the beginning of *The Mathnawi* that 'O comrade: it is not the rule of the way to say 'To-morrow' (M. I, 132). In her ecstatic state, Zulika lives in a constant sensual awareness of Joseph's presence.

Zalikha had applied to Joseph the name of everything, / from rue-seed to aloes-wood.
 / She concealed his name in (all other) names and made / the inner meaning thereof
 known to (none but her) confidants. / When she said, 'The wax is softened by the fire,'
 this meant, / 'My beloved is very fond of me [literally hot towards me]. / And if she
 said, 'Look, the moon is risen'; or if she said, 'The willow-bough is green (with new
 leaves'; / Or if she said, 'The leaves are quivering mightily'; or if she said, 'The rue-
 seed is burning merrily' [...] If she praised, 'twas his (Joseph's) caress (that she
 meant); and if she blame, 'twas separation from him (that she meant) (M. VI, 4021-
 4033).

One can notice the sexual undertone in the phrases and words Rumi applies to Zulika's ecstatic remembering of Joseph's sensual presence in everything. It also absolves her from her egoistic self, 'She was empty of self and filled with love for her friend' (M. VI, 4041). As in the first instance, here again Rumi has no good news for the intellectual pursuit for such an experience which is only known to the lovers, 'He (the lover) is like a child getting milk from the breast: he knows nothing in the two worlds except the milk. / The child knows the milk and yet he does not know it: (intellectual) consideration has no means of entrance here' (M; VI, 4048-4049). *The Mathnawi* is a sober book as compared to his *Divan* which is written in

ghazal form, more suitable for ecstatic expressions. In the *Divan* the antinomian and transgressive aspect of Rumi's poetry is more prominent and so is the mood of intoxication. The *ghazal* form allows free expression of one's state of consciousness without regard to any plot and storytelling. However, I have chosen more poetry from *The Mathnawi* because it is considered to be ontologically Rumi's mature work and written after *Divan* with much more consideration. The *kharabath* imagery, which is associated with ecstatic love and sexual and social transgression, is more prominent in the *Divan* than in *The Mathnawi*, but one can notice sexual transgression in *The Mathnawi* as well, as Zulika is already married when she falls in love with Joseph. In the *Divan* the tavern and other *kharabath* images are physical reminders as sacred places for the followers of ecstatic love. In the *Divan* Rumi states the condition of such as Zulika's in association with his creation myth,

First there were intoxication, loverhood, youth and the like; then came / Luxuriant spring, and they all sat together. / They had no forms and then became manifested beautifully within forms / behold things of the imagination assuming form! / The heart is the ante-chamber of the eye: For certain, everything that / reaches the heart will enter into the eye and become a form' (Chittick, trans. 1983, p. 279, from D. 2154-76).

So the ecstatic state not only takes one beyond but it is also the attraction of love and desire which manifests in the form, as in Zulika's eyes the beloved manifests itself in the sensual form. Ecstasy as a profoundly transformative experience is related with pleasure and particularly sexual pleasure in different poetic traditions, which is the experience of elevation of self, but is also transformative in relation to the other. The Greek root word for ecstasy *ekstasis* suggests a similar meaning of transcending the self and reaching a different state of being, as we can see in both Lawrence and Rumi's connotation of such an experience, however, with different ends. In Rumi it is the state of the Sufi, which he associates with the lover in the sense that like the earthly lover who sees his beloved in everything, the Sufi attains a profound sensual awareness of divine being in the world. In the state of ecstatic love the Sufi has a sublime view of himself, which not only elevates him but he also finds himself in an intimate relationship with God. However, in the Sufi tradition there are different stages of ecstatic experience, and Rumi differentiates between the degrees of such experiences. For instance, the *abdāl* is a saint who has reached a state of madness, or higher state of intoxication, and Rumi also refers to *abdāl* as the lover. Similarly, *Majnūn* means the mad one which is also Rumi's connotation for lover. He says '[a]nd of the loving kindness of God

to the Abdal (saints), / in order that he might know (the meaning of) *maqam* (permanent station) and *hal* (passing state). / The *hal* is like the unveiling of that beauteous bride, while / the *maqam* is the being alone with the bride (M. I, 1435-1436). As the sexual imagery here suggests, in *The Mathnawi* Rumi associates divine love and earthly love, or sexual love with the state of Majnun (the lover of Laila in the famous Persian love story) and the state of a Sufi (Rumi uses different words for the Sufi, such as '*arif*, *abdal*, *peer* etc.) (M. I, 390-410).

Apart from the similarity of sensual imagery and an idea of cosmic connection the concept of ecstasy works with different ends in Lawrence and Rumi. Given the complex web of imagery both Lawrence and Rumi build around their poetic use of ecstatic state, it is hard to pinpoint a particular meaning to Lawrence's 'beyond' and Rumi's 'yonder' which they, in mystical fashion, refuse to clarify. However, it is certain that Lawrence does not share Rumi's final aim of mystic detachment from the material conditions of life and a path of a non-attachment and esoteric discipline. Both see love as a privilege in human life, but perhaps with different ends. For Lawrence it is one's privilege as a material and physical being that one can attain a blissful state of freedom in love.

III. MYSTIC CONJUNCTION

Lawrence describes Ursula and Birkin's attraction in paradoxical language. In seeing Birkin in the 'Class-Room' Ursula feels a stillness in Birkin's motion and Birkin's 'presence' is described, as a 'vacancy' that 'hushed' the activities of Ursula's 'heart' (WL, 35). Ursula, in 'arrested silence', watches Birkin move 'in another, concentrated world' (WL, 35). The effect of this bewilderment goes beyond mere sexual attraction; there is a more vital connection Lawrence wants to reveal as the story of their love progresses. Lawrence defines this connection in Birkin's proposal to Ursula as 'mystic-conjunction'. The general characteristics of this sexual relationship, as have been described by many, can be understood as a relationship which leaves one single, free and still able to enjoy the vitality of a connection with another, as the star image in the novel suggests. Therefore, the thematic importance of 'mystic-conjunction' is established in the star image and in the novel's main concern about relationships. How should this bond between men and women 'hush' them into 'superfine bliss' and liberate them from their modern age ego-consciousness? As we noted earlier, in the fictional space of *Women in Love* as well as in his real life during the Great War, Lawrence

finds himself confronting an age of disintegration and heightened egoistic pursuits of individual without a sense of a sacred connection with others and with the cosmos.

By proposing a new basis for sexual relationships in his concept of love as a sacred bond, Lawrence wants to animate something dead in modern man. What Lawrence seems to suggest is dead in modern man and in his relationships does not belong to our 'human' element, but to something 'inhuman' and extraordinary. In order to transcend our usual self, or to be non-egoistic, Lawrence attaches some mystical aspiration to a man and woman's relationship. In the following my emphasis will be on a critical understanding of those mystical aspirations with a reading of some of Rumi's poetry in order to ascertain some parallels in his mystical approach to sexual relationships and Lawrence's 'mystic-conjunction'.

The thing which catches one's eye as mystical in Lawrence's treatment of sexual relationships is not Lawrence's phrase 'mystic-conjunction' though Lawrence frequently uses terms such as 'mystic', 'mysterious', 'strange' and 'beyond' in his writings, mainly for sexual experiences. His descriptions of sexual attraction can also be seen with associated sacred imagery from religious scriptures, as we have seen earlier. Lawrence celebrates sexual experience in his novels, but at the same time he mostly finds people insufficiently sensual, or not bodily aspirational, as in the case of Will Brangwen in *The Rainbow*. Will is too abstract in his religious sensibility and does not attach any sensual awareness to his religious experience. Therefore, the significance of the body and the sensual self is very important in Lawrence's novels.

In his poetry Rumi celebrates bodily existence, in his story of 'The Bedouin and His Wife'. Rumi, in an image of the body being consumed into perfection, or holiness, casts the body as a sacred place for spiritual awakening. He says, 'The spiritual way ruins the body and, after having ruined it, restores it to prosperity: / Ruined the house for the sake of the golden treasure, and with that same treasure builds it better' (M. I, 306-307). It has to be remembered that in Rumi's connotation the 'ruined' has a positive mystic meaning, as in the *kharabath* imagery which literally means ruined. Like the tavern (one of the places of the *kharabath*), where the *rind* takes his wine of spiritual maturity, the 'ruined' heart of the lover is the symbol of his maturity in the way of love. We recall that *rind* defines the antinomian personality of a Sufi, or lover who is capable of expressing his desire freely and takes the

blame happily and is not a hypocrite. Therefore, the body is like the tavern where the Sufi, or the lover, takes his journey to spiritual intoxication and ecstatic love.

This shows that attaching sacred meaning to the body has a mystical connotation in many traditions. Birkin's proposal encompasses a mystical aspiration in the sense that he seeks a bond which not only sets the lovers free from many material wants - after establishing their relationship he immediately suggests he and Ursula resign from their jobs and when they contemplate buying an eighteenth century chair they realise that they do not need any possessions - but he also seeks a relationship which at the end will leave them free from each other. Their relationship, as Birkin projects it, also has a sacred purpose of saving the ultimate aim of creation. Lawrence's meaning of love enlarges its mystical significance through, to borrow a phrase from Kyoko Kay Kondo, a 'paradoxical relatedness of polar opposites' (Kondo, 2001, p. 68). The secret of mystic conjunction, for Lawrence, is laid down in non-egoistic being, which means freedom from the instinct of self-preservation, a singleness which he identifies with the 'great man', as he reflects in his 'Education of the People', '[t]he great volcanoes stand isolate' and that life cumulates at the summit where the 'great man is alone' (Herbert, 1988, p. 109). The images of fire, volcano and summit can also connote sexual consummation which can be associated with the imagery of flame and sexual attraction in *Women in Love*.

The erotic body, therefore, being the perfect source of spontaneous and liberated feelings becomes the place of Lawrence's holistic vision. In his criticism of modern democratic ideals of equality and identity, he identifies the 'living self' of spontaneous impulses as the true source of our identity, 'If we look for God, let us look in the bush where he sings. That is, in living creatures' (Herbert, 1988, p. 73). This Blakean idea is very close to the naturalistic mysticism of some of the Sufis, which I will discuss later. However, for Lawrence the idea of the 'living self' is different from American mystic poet Walt Whitman's mysticism of equality and of one existence. Similarly, he distinguishes his idea of singularity from the American Transcendentalist Waldo Emerson's 'Oversoul' and what he calls speculative 'idealism'. Distinguishing his idea of self from abstract individualism, as he sees it in both rationalist and speculative conceptions of the self, Lawrence maintains that human desire is more sacred than any political or moral ideal. He argues,

We must discriminate between an ideal and a desire. A desire proceeds from within, from the unknown, spontaneous soul or self. But an ideal is superimposed from above,

from the mind, it is a fixed arbitrary thing, like a machine control. The great lesson is to learn to come direct, spontaneous into consciousness. But it is a lesson which will take many aeons to learn. Our life, our being depends upon the incalculable issue from the central Mystery, into indefinable *presence*. This sounds in itself an abstraction. But not so. It is rather the perfect absence of abstraction. The central Mystery is no generalised abstraction. It is each man's primal original soul or self, within him. And *presence* is nothing mystic or ghostly (Herbert, 1988, p. 78).

For Lawrence, this desire which is first born in the mystery of our being must manifest itself into indefinable but concrete presence, which is the 'fact of otherness' (Herbert, 1988, p. 78). He rejects the speculative mysticism of otherworldliness, or the 'ghostly' presence of the other, but celebrates the presence which can manifest desire, as in sexual attraction. In sexual attraction desire manifests itself in the beloved. By making this impulse a product of the 'soul', he wants to transcend the idea of seeing the body mere a material object and introduces the spiritual aspect of sensual existence. Singularity in this sense lies in the mystery of one's creation which consists of one's 'original soul' from where the desire has originated. So desire is part of the mystery of creation.

Moreover, Lawrence further defines the concept of the self and human desire in terms of the purpose of our existence. He says, '[t]he living self has one purpose only: to come into its own fulness of being, as a tree comes into full blossom, or a bird into spring beauty, or a tiger into lustre' (Herbert, 1988, pp. 78-79). The flowering image here is associated with the purpose of the living self, the one who does not wait for tomorrow but lives in his present, and this is again related with his idea of the spending and the spring imagery in *The Study of Thomas Hardy*. Lawrence's mystic conjunction in *Women in Love* presents itself as a solution to the moral tragedy in Hardy's novels. Lawrence sees a great deficiency in some of the finest English novels of the nineteenth century, such as George Eliot and more so in Thomas Hardy. The conformity, the tradition and escape into moral transcendence of Hardy's characters, for Lawrence, is the real problem. For Lawrence, Hardy is capable of creating characters with a real living self but they fail to transcend social conformity and die in the process. In these novels, Lawrence observes a dearth of an antinomian attitude, which is essential for new life, as he constantly says in his writings.

Moreover, the glad forgetfulness of a mystic sort that one can achieve in consummation, for Lawrence, is through love. This is the process of attaining the living self, as he remarks in the

Study of Thomas Hardy that '[t]he via media to being, for man or woman, is love, and love alone. Having achieved and accomplished love, then the man passes into the unknown. He has become himself, 'his tale is told' (Steele, 1985, p. 20). Again in 'his tale is told' Lawrence suggests a definite end, as in his idea of spending, or waste where one cannot dwell on the continuity of existence once consumed. This consummation is not deathly but creative as in his natural imagery of flower and seed. The flower by wasting creates life continuously. However, among his natural and evolutionary imagery, Lawrence introduces the ultimate mystery of being, the Holy Ghost, a divine image. In 'Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine', maintaining his natural and evolutionary imagery, he mentions the Holy Ghost as a divine manifestation of all being. He says,

Being is not ideal, as Plato would have it: not spiritual. It is a transcendent form of existence, and as much material as existence is. Only the matter suddenly enters the fourth dimension. All existence is dual, and surging towards a consummation into being. In the seed of the dandelion, as it floats with its little umbrella of hairs, sits the Holy Ghost in tiny compass. The Holy Ghost is that which holds the light and the dark, the day and the night, the wet and the sunny, united in one little clue (Herbert, 1988, p. 359).

Lawrence's reference to a mystical 'fourth dimension', or 'a higher consciousness' as the Theosophists have argued, suggests that in the conception of the Holy Ghost he sees the transcendent motif in the love relationship. Despite Lawrence's consistency in deploying his imagery in relation to his argument about the living self, attaining one's essential self, spending in relation to sexual consummation and his concept of love in association with all this imagery, as we noticed in his philosophical essays and other writings, the question still remains to what purpose the 'mystic conjunction' serves in *Women in Love*.

On a semantic level, Lawrence's metaphysical references such as 'soul' and 'mystical conjunction' give us a clue to his meaning. Lawrence constantly contrasts his metaphysical references with mechanical concepts, as in his portrayal of Gerald's character and in the description of the mining industry, to underline his peculiar vision about material pursuits and the soul's fulfilment through love. For instance, despite his 'progressive improvements' (WL, 47), industrial magnate's skills and practical efficiency (WL, 230-239), Gerald's life remains chaotic. His strength of will is the driving force he uses to modernize his mines, train his horse in a harsh manner, and master women like the Possum and Gudrun. For instance,

Gudrun says, 'he seems to reap the women like a harvest' (WL, 410). He uses the same mechanical means to achieve material things as well as in the pursuit of love. However, that cannot help him stabilize his inner self and his soul. He cannot cope with his father's death. He goes to Gudrun and apparently rapes her, which torments his soul. Gudrun, later tells him in an accusing manner: 'You were in a fearful state when you came to me' (WL, 459). At the end, he destroys himself in anguish unable to bear seeing Gudrun choosing another man. The solution, for Lawrence, lies in Birkin's suggestion to Ursula, that 'If you admit a unison, you forfeit all the possibilities of chaos' (WL, 156). Birkin thinks that it is the call of the mystery, the source of being, to make a mystical conjunction with another. For Birkin, this is the direction one has to take, if one wants to avoid the chaotic existence of material conditions, emotional sensationalism and the torments of the egoistic self. As Birkin doubts that instead of seeing love as a vital connection with one's living self, people want love to serve their base instincts, he tells Ursula, 'you want love to administer to your egoism, to subserve you. Love is a process of subservience with you – and with everybody. I hate it' (WL, 157).

The idea of mystic conjunction against what Birkin sees as the instrumentality of love arises during an argument between Birkin and Ursula about their relationship in the 'Mino' chapter, which is central to understanding what Lawrence means by his conception of love and mystic conjunction. This style of presenting a central theme also shows a departure from *The Rainbow*, where central themes are embedded either in the symbolic structure of the novel or presented in the authorial voice. The significance of this uncertainty is twofold: the first is Lawrence's deliberate use of modern voices to reveal the confusion and anxiety about sexual relationship in the modern world. The reason for this anxiety is the disjunction in our being and in our relationship to each other, as we notice in Birkin and Ursula's argument about instrumentality and morality. Birkin is worried about the instrumentality and mechanisation of their love relationship and Ursula is uncertain about Birkin's motives and she doubts Birkin's idea of love. She feels herself vulnerable, as her argument with her father and her struggle with Birkin shows. The second significance of Lawrence's style of showing uncertainty about one of the central themes is what Michael Bell observes, 'the 'struggle' of the characters towards a new emotional consciousness is more inextricably a formal and rhetorical struggle of the book itself' (Bell, 1991, p. 97). Bell underlines the thematic importance of Lawrence's language in presenting the struggle of the characters to express their emotional self, which I think is also important in the sense that while presenting his

‘verbal struggle’ Lawrence shows the difficulty and uncertainty created by our egoistic and rational pursuits when we try to form a real connection with each other.

Birkin and Ursula’s struggle continues until the ‘Moony’ chapter, where Ursula feels a connection with the celestial element. Critics like Jack Stewart think that Lawrence’s ‘art speech’ unites the individual with the archetype. For Stewart, in the ‘Moony’ chapter, Lawrence tries to unite the individual with the archetype and primitive consciousness through the enactment of ‘Ritualistic’ scenes of the Cybele myth and primitive animism (Stewart, 1999, p. 110). Primitivism in Lawrence is considered by many critics including Bell, who points out the use of primitive consciousness in *Women in Love*, which Lawrence has learned from his anthropological readings. However, the density of imagery in the episode, an overlaying of images, a constellation of associations, can also be illuminated with reference to imagery used by the Persian Sufi poets. In the ‘Moony’ chapter, ‘the heart of the rose’ (WL, 256) conspires to unite the scattered ‘fragments’ (WL, 256) of the moon on the water, which Birkin tries break by throwing a stone on the reflection of the moon on the pond. Black (1991) and Zangenehpour (2000) suggest that the source of the sensual undertone in Lawrence’s work, relate to his symbol of rose and poppy, may be FitzGerald’s translation of Omar Khayyam’s *Rubaiyat*. Zangenehpour also mentions many of Lawrence’s poems, where the symbol of the rose presents the ‘quick of life’ or ‘running flame’ for Lawrence. The rose is a symbol of the human and the divine beloved in Rumi’s poetry, as we can see in the stories of the Rose and the Nightingale, where the rose is the attraction for the nightingale to return to the garden. The separation of the rose and the nightingale in the autumn is a symbol of our separation from our source. For Lawrence the desire to return to the source is the ‘law of creation’. The symbol of the nightingale and garden shows this inevitability in Sufi literature.

Lawrence’s mystic conjunction and its comparison to Sufi mysticism can be illuminated if we take a closer look at the ‘Moony’ chapter in the novel. After his illness, Birkin’s emotions are in disarray and he goes to the south of France. Ursula, meanwhile, falls into a state of isolation and separation from everything in the universe, after losing connection with Birkin. Ursula finds herself in a situation of ‘contemptuous, resistant indifference’ (WL, 253). The ‘indifference’ is characteristic of ego-consciousness, as Gerald maintains an indifferent attitude to Birkin’s speeches about the soul, spontaneity and love. Ursula is becoming aware of her resistance to the consciousness Birkin wants to awaken in her, or in their relationship, or she is becoming conscious of her struggle in her isolation rather than in her verbal arguments with Birkin. The world for her lapses into a ‘grey wish-wash of nothingness’ (WL,

253). Despite her own vitality and the 'strange brightness of her presence, a marvellous radiance of intrinsic vitality', which is her sensual, body self, she feels herself without any 'connection' in the world (WL, 253). The connection she loses is like the separation of the nightingale from the rose. Her glowing radiance, her 'luminousness', is a 'repudiation' (WL, 253) without a vital connection, like the rose's glowing beauty without the nightingale's rapture.

She yielded and softened, she wanted pure love, only pure love. This other, this state of constant unfailing repudiation, was a strain, a suffering also. A terrible desire for pure love, overcame her again (WL, 254).

In the repetitive manner of his narrative style, like poetry, Lawrence creates a mystical mode in his description of Ursula's suffering and longing. Words like 'repudiation', 'suffering', 'love', 'connection', 'pure', 'loneliness' and 'mystery' are repeated again and again. The moon is like a 'great presence' 'watching her' from the sky (WL, 254). She connects with the heavenly elements. She finds herself 'exposed' at the presence of the moon. But she also identifies herself with the moon, and suffers when she sees Birkin stoning its reflection in the pond, and stops him from doing so. The moon's reflection on the water increases her longing for some connection and it intensifies her feeling of loneliness. 'She could feel her soul crying out in her, lamenting desolately' (WL, 255). She feels exposed, her secret suffering becoming known because of the moon.

When Ursula witnesses Birkin stoning the moon and disturbing the clear reflection in the water of the pond, she feels 'a darkened confusion' (WL, 256). She thinks the broken moon has no meaning and no aim in its situation of confused fragmentation on the pond, which no longer has the clear reflection of the moon. She feels herself like the moon broken into pieces; she feels she is 'spilled out, like water on the earth' (WL, 257). In her 'gloom' and confusion, she becomes aware of a 'flake' of light again. In a mystical vision like a 'dream' she sees the flakes of the fragmented moonlight make their way to each other and forms a unity. Lawrence's description of the moon's broken fragments, coming together in one large sentence with an image of a heart and rose, reflects a ceremonial coming together of Ursula and Birkin.

They were gathering a heart again, they were coming once more into being. Gradually the fragments caught together re-united, heaving, rocking, dancing, falling back as in panic, but working their way home again persistently, making semblance of fleeing

away when they had advanced, but always flickering nearer, a little closer to the mark, the cluster growing mysteriously larger and brighter, as gleam after gleam fell in with the whole, until a ragged rose, a distorted, frayed moon was shaking upon the waters again, re-asserted, renewed, trying to recover from its convulsion, to get over the disfigurement and the agitation, to be whole and composed, at peace (WL, 257).

This gives an impression of a source, where they become whole again, 'at peace' which is reminiscent of the paradisaic imagery in the philosophical essays. Birkin says, 'I want us to be together without bothering about ourselves – to be really together because we *are* together, as if it were a phenomenon, not a thing we have to maintain by our own effort' (WL, 259). In a while, they are at peace together, like the flakes of the moon's reflection on the pond's water. Birkin feels 'heavenly freedom' in just enfolding her and kissing her gently, 'and not to have any thoughts or any desires or any will, just to be still with her, to be perfectly still and together, in peace that was not sleep, but content in bliss' (WL, 261).

Birkin is equally in pursuit of the mystery of the living self yet he wants to achieve his living self through a sensual and spiritual unity with Ursula. When Birkin and Ursula consummate their sensual relationship, they become aware of the 'mystic, sensual reality' of their union with the life mystery, 'that can never be transmuted into mind content, but remains outside, the living body of darkness and silence and subtlety, the mystic body of reality' (WL, 332), as Lawrence describes in this peculiarly poetic language at the end of the 'Excuse' chapter.

The transcendent element in the sexual experience helps to break the familiarity of ordinary existence. The mechanical image of 'tick-tack' (WL, 157) is contrasted with the ebb and flow which is associated with heart's the systole and diastole. The heart is a place of unbound desires, which is also related to the feeling of intimacy and sexual love. These contrasting images are played against each other in the *Study of Thomas Hardy* where the 'walled city' (Steele, 1985, p. 29) represents conformity and that which consists of what Lawrence calls here the 'mind content', one's rational self. Therefore, 'the mystic body of reality' is their moment of transcending the 'tick-tack' of ordinary existence. This gives an impression of the romantic sense of longing for the unachievable object of love, a condition in which one stops caring about one's ordinary existence and transports in the idea of love. However, in Lawrence it is not the idea of the transcendent beloved but the condition of intimacy through which one can achieve one's living self that is important. However, the question remains

whether the singularity that Birkin pursues in his love with Ursula is the mystic God, or some psychic condition.

In this lies the significant difference between Lawrence's concept of mystic conjunction and Rumi's idea of divine union of the lover and beloved. In Lawrence, as Birkin contemplates in the 'Moony' chapter, it is the 'company in proud indifference' (WL, 259) which defines the mystic conjunction between the lovers. Indifference to other realities, for instance egoistic pursuits, is achieved through the companionship of the lovers, which Birkin wants with Ursula in his proposal of mystic conjunction. In Rumi's poetry longing and desire, which he refers to as the heart's sickness, make one indifferent to the world. Bodily image and sexual undertone is the feature of this longing for the beloved, as I mentioned above, the body which is the sacred threshold. However, through longing alone the lover reaches a state of indifference. In Majnun's story, for instance, his love for Laila is sickness of his heart and in the pursuit of his love he attains the status of indifference and singleness in the idea of the beloved. This is the meaning of the reed-float's notes, of longing and the heart's desire, as Rumi says 'its strains pierced our hearts' which is likened to the 'passion of Majnun' (M. I, 11).

In *The Mathnawi*, Rumi uses the metaphor of scent to describe the union with the beloved. It is both sensual and allusive and signifies the romantic unattainability and presence of the other. The scent is the flowering of one's desirous self; for Rumi, the *batin* (essential self) is where one should look for real longing and emotions to flourish.

O brother, collect thy wits for an instant: from / moment to moment (incessantly)
there is autumn and spring within thee. / Behold the garden of the heart, green and
moist and fresh, / full of rosebuds and cypresses and jasmines; / Boughs hidden by the
multitude of leaves, / vast plain and high palace hidden by the multitude of flowers. /
These words, which are from Universal Reason, are the scent of those flowers and
cypresses and hyacinths. / Didst thou (ever) smell the scent of a rose where no rose
was? / Didst thou (ever) see the foaming of wine where no wine was? / The scent is a
remedy for the (sightless) eye; (it is) light-making: / the eye of Jacob was opened by a
scent. / The foul scent darkens the eye, the scent of Joseph succours the eye. / Thou
who art not a Joseph, be a Jacob: be (familiar), like him, / with weeping and sore
distress [...] In the presence of Joseph do not give thyself airs and behave like a beauty:
/ offer nothing but the supplication of sighs of Jacob. / [...] How should a rock be

covered with verdure by the Spring? / Become earth, that thou mayst grow flowers of many a hue (M. I, 1896-1911).

The contrasting images of rock and the earth show the importance of one's emotions and feelings, characterised in moisture, the 'garden of the heart' and one's essential desire, construed life-changing scent. In Rumi's poetry Jacob is the ultimate symbol of the desirous self and lover, as Job is the ultimate symbol of *tawakal* (faith and patience). Similarly, Joseph is the symbol of youthful beauty and the ultimate desire and Zulika the patient lover. The most important distinct quality of Rumi's poetry from many other mystics of his age is his constant reference to human emotions in his delineation of divine love. In his *Divan*, for instance, he frequently mentions Shams, his dervish friend, as the centre of outpouring his emotions in his poetry. In his *ghazals* Rumi appears to be invoking the abstract concept of love but reminds us of his human emotion by referring to Shams, as he says in one *ghazal*,

Upon love's face gaze, that you may be considered a man. / Don't sit with cold people, their breath will chill you. / Seek from love's face something other than beauty; / It's time you associated with a genuine friend. / A clod of earth, you'll not rise in the air / unless you break and become mere dust. / If you don't break, he who made you will; / when death does come, will you remain separate? / A fresh root makes green again a leaf that yellows; / So don't blame love at your increasing paleness. / If Shams of Tabriz, O Wild One! Draws you to his side, / On your escape from gaol, you'll re-enter his orbit (Cowan, Trans. 1997, p. 143).

One can notice the continuous shift from abstraction to human emotions. Love, in Rumi's poetry, in one moment appears to be the abstract idea of God and the longing remains the meditation of the faithful and in another moment the face of the earthly beloved appears. In Rumi's poetic imagination the abstract idea of love transforms into physical attractions, as in *zulf* (curls), *khal* (mole), *qadd* (lofty stature), *dida* (eye), *ru'y* (face), *ghomza* (coquettish glance), and in the laughter of beloved, or in her reproachful face (*rahar ru'y*) (Lewisohn, 2015, p. 169). In Ibn 'Arabi's systematic theories of love, this kind of erotic yearning is called *tarjuman al-ashwaq* (the lover's language, or the expression of passionate emotions). In Ibn Arabi's mystical treatises erotic imagery with which he describes his love for a Persian girl and the descriptions of spiritual realities are embedded with each other, as in his *al-Futuh al-Makkiyya* (*The Meccan Revelations*). However, in Rumi's poetry, apart from the poetic moments in which sexual imagery is associated with the spiritual realities of the soul,

it is only longing and deep desire, like meditation as in the reed's story, or in the love stories of Laila Majnun and Joseph Zulika, that offer a path for mystic union. That is why, for most commentators, earthly love in Rumi remains an analogy unlike Lawrence's mystic conjunction.

Leonard Lewisohn, however, maintains that the imagery of passionate love in Sufism is due to this idea that 'man's witnessing of God cannot take place outside of matter' (Lewisohn, 2015, p. 175). Lewisohn traces this idea to Ahmad Ghazali, who take his hint from a saying of the Prophet that 'Three things have been made beloved to me in this world of yours: women, perfume, while the coolness of my eye was placed in ritual prayer' (Lewisohn, 2015, p. 175). For Lewisohn, following Ahmad Ghazali, the Sufis including Rumi, 'largely conceived of love as a unitary reality manifesting itself in diverse levels and degrees – so that it would be possible to move from earthly to heavenly love simply by focusing one's attention upon the divine source' (Lewisohn, 2015, p. 178).

The significance of the sensual image is later further intensified by Rumi's poetic imagination and Ibn 'Arabi's treatises. In his philosophy of being Ibn 'Arabi, for instance, maintains that 'Men are needy and must actively seek out women in order to know both themselves and God' (quoted by Lewisohn, 2015, p. 176). Lewisohn and others observe, in Sufi literature passionate love, or union with the earthly beloved, is always regarded as a supreme station of meditation and contemplation and the purpose of mystical self-realisation, as Hafiz says in his Divan, 'A life time has passed in a hope of a sign / Fixing my eyes to the two corners of that eyebrow' (*Divan-e-Hafiz*, 284, Zangenehpour's translation). Rumi says along similar lines, 'When he saw those languorous eyes which make the reason and understanding unquiet, / And the loveliness of that fascinating cheek on which this heart burns like rue-seed, / Face and mole and eyebrow and lip like cornelian, 'twas as though God shone forth through a subtle veil' (M. V, 959-960).

The comparable elements in Lawrence's conception of mystic conjunction, the core of Lawrence's pursuit in a man and a woman's relationship, and the Sufi idea of union with the beloved can be seen in their sacral treatment of erotic body and in the transcendental importance of human desire. This can also be understood within the long held antinomian attitude in their respective literary and mystical traditions. Lawrence's resistance to abstraction is due to his historical perspective on the development of dogmatic faith and rational thought in European culture. His response to the idea of sinful body and the

mechanical approach to sexual relationships, as we can see in Blake before him, remains rebelliously religious, and this is intensified by the power of his poetic imagination. This intensification can be seen in his vision of the erotic body and in his forceful presentation of the crisis of modern sexual relationships. Rumi, however, following a tradition of Sufi literature presents his vision of divine union in the multiplicity of this world and especially in the human emotion of passionate love.

VI. ANNIHILATION (*FANA*) AND SUBSISTENCE (*BAQA*)

In Rumi's poetic and mystical identity there is a very interesting paradox, which he uses to authenticate for what he says is his genuine mystical experience. Rumi identifies himself as Shams Tabriz, his dervish companion with whom he shares his mystic identity, in his works in general and in his *Divan* in particular. He named his *Divan* as *Divan-e Shams-e Tabriz* (the works of Shams of Tabriz) and as it is the usual practice in the Persian *ghazal* that in the last couplet of a *ghazal* the poet mentions his or her name, Rumi interchangeably uses his own name and the name of his friend Shams. Rumi describes his experience of losing one's identity and gaining a new identity after meeting Shams with the help of different images and metaphors. In one place he says, 'when the fleshly soul is associated with another fleshly soul, / the partial (individual) intellect becomes idle and useless. / When because of loneliness you fall into despair, you become (bright as) a sun (if you go) under the shadow of a friend' (M. II, 21-22). In other places he describes his experience of 'companionship' as a 'passing away from myself' (M. I, 126).

However, the intriguing aspect of this mystical state in Rumi's poetry remains the dramatic change of his own self, a change from a follower of doctrinal faith into a new religious identity as an *ashiq* (passionate lover) and most importantly the transformation of a *faqih* (jurist) into a poet. The difference between a poet and a jurist, between the lover and the follower of doctrinal faith lies in experience –someone who participates and someone who observes, or of an abstract idea and a sensual awareness of the other. Therefore, Rumi's claim of authenticity is the loss of what he calls his 'partial intellect' in the 'shadow of a friend', in his intimacy and participation in the being of the other. He creates the sensation of touch and intimacy through his use of oxymoron, such as 'fleshly soul', a contradiction which also applies to his identity in the sense that after passing away into the other he becomes more

authentically himself as the transmitter of that experience in his poetry. The doctrine of *fana* and *baqa*, for Rumi, explains this paradox of being himself and the other, where the Sufi through annihilation experiences a state of *baqa* in the divine reality, which is also understood as a state of gathering.

Indeed, in Sufism, annihilation means losing one's egotistic existence or temporal self and becoming conscious of divine knowledge. This state is both annihilation and subsistence: annihilation on the phenomenal level and subsistence on the transcendental level of being. The Sufi doctrine of *fana* and *baqa* has its roots in the Sufi school of intoxication, the poetic and imaginative tradition of mystical speculation from the earlier to later medieval era within the Muslim world, as noted earlier. In antinomian fashion, the Sufis who follow the doctrine of *fana* and *baqa* within the school of intoxication and later in the Persian literary tradition of *malamatiyya* called their path *rah'y ashqan* (the way of the lovers) in opposition to the doctrinal path of the *shaikh* or *zahid* (the pious and faithful follower of *sharia*). The Sufis use these terms sometimes in a taunting manner to imply that their own *tariqa'th* or path is superior.

In Lawrence, however, the issue of authenticity is religious at a naturalistic and human level, as he says 'God in me is my desire' and 'the way to immortality is in the fulfilment of desire' (Boulton, 1997, p. 132). Again in the same letter to Catherine Carswell in July 1916 he says, '[t]he body is immediate, the spirit is beyond: first the leaves and then the flower' (Boulton, 1997, p. 131). In *Women in Love*, Lawrence raises the question of the authenticity of abstract and mental knowledge, as in the case of Hermione. Her 'intimacies' with men are described as being of 'mind and soul' (WL, 14) not body and soul. She is passionate about 'reform' and the intellectual world of men, 'it was the manly world that held her' (WL, 14). Her idealism has created a hole in her personality, a 'terrible void' and a 'deficiency of being' (WL, 15). She remains the inauthentic self, the consciousness of the age, and a non-living rotten apple which Birkin wants to fall from the tree and perish to allow new life. Birkin tells her '[y]ou've got to learn not-to-be, before you can come into being' (WL, 43). She represents Birkin's own ego-consciousness as well, as she is his past and his false consciousness which Ursula attacks in the 'Excuse' chapter. Similarly, in other characters Lawrence reveals a deficiency of being, as Loerke's deficiency lies in his art; his painting of a naked girl on a horse as an epitome of European civilisation. When Ursula looks at his paintings, she spots the inauthenticity of his work immediately. Neither Loerke loses his self in his work nor does Hermione give herself up for her love for Birkin; like Loerke who uses his girlfriend's cold

and abstract body for his art, she wants Birkin for her own egoistic end. Birkin, however, sees in Ursula an opportunity to overcome civilizational chaos and attain an authentic self. He has been involved in a 'deathly process' (WL, 317) of false experience with Hermione and in his relationship with Ursula, they struggle for a 'mindless connection' (WL, 331).

Furthermore, it is not only the authenticity of one's being but the potentiality of our being as well at the centre of the concept of *fana* in Sufism. The creation myth the Sufis follow, as I discussed earlier, and which guides their concept of love and meditation, validates the idea that through the experience of *fana* one can ascend to a blissful state of living through God. Thus, in our being we have the potentiality of a divine character, or a higher gnostic possibility. I will come to these Sufi ideas and Rumi's poetry later; but before a comparison can be made, I would like to discuss the issue of authenticity and potentiality in Lawrence, in the above mentioned sense, and also what Birkin and Ursula's remembering and forgetting means in a mystical understanding of their experience in the 'Excuse' chapter. The imagery in Lawrence, as we have seen, is naturalistic; however, there is a religious sensibility in his adherence to the mystery of creation, in the balance created by the idea of the Holy Ghost and in the image of paradisaal bliss.

The spiritual path in Lawrence, as suggested by Black, requires one to take a 'chance' (Black, 1991, p. 5) in existence and acquire an essential self or singleness through a process which in Lawrence's imagery is similar to blossoming, or consummation as the phoenix image shows. Lawrence's imagery suggests that in order to partake in the mystery of being one has to annihilate part of one's existence and then one can be real or essential in one's living self. The journey from chance existence to becoming oneself is part of his creation mythology. It is worth noting that in Lawrence's view, as he expounds in his creation mythology, time in this sense does not have the same property as clock time, which he considers as mechanical 'tick-tack', noted earlier. Lawrence sees creation from a prospect of the mystic present, or 'Eternal Now'. Within our present existence we have the potentiality of being essential, or remaining in a state of the non-being. In his essay 'Life', where he mystically meditates on being and existence, Lawrence describes the beginning of time and the end of time in one moment of man's creation, or his being in the world. He ponders on creation and life in terms of chaos and fulfilment, creation, or existence in a world that is chaotic and for him the purpose of creation is fulfilment, the mystic balance in the Holy Ghost. He contemplates,

Midmost between the beginning and the end is Man. He is neither the created nor the creator. But he is the quick of creation. He has on one hand the primal unknown from which all creation issues; on the other hand, the whole created universe, even the world of finite spirits. But between the two man is distinct and other; he is creation itself, that which is perfect. Man is born unfulfilled from chaos, uncreated, incomplete, a baby, a child, a thing immature and inconclusive. It is for him to become fulfilled, to enter at last the state of perfection, to achieve pure and immitigable being, like a star between day and night, disclosing the other world which has no beginning nor end' (Herbert, 1988, p. 15).

Lawrence describes man in his highest gnostic possibility, who contains in his being the beginning and the end. But this state is just a possibility of being from chaos to fulfilment. Lawrence's works are full of such meditations and in his fictions, particularly *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, we can see such meditations dramatized. Therefore, in *Women in Love*, when Birkin wants his star singleness, it is not his individual selfhood, or individuality as we know it, but he refers to the higher purpose of his existence. He wants to consummate his relationship with Ursula and transcend chaotic existence and achieve what Lawrence refers to as the 'quick of creation'.

The star image is associated with the flame and the candle metaphor elsewhere. By associating the candle and flame metaphor with the imagery of light and darkness, as in the *Study of Thomas Hardy*, Lawrence creates a palpable sense of creation – the beginning and end, the light and darkness – in the mystic moment of perfection. This momentary perfection is the process of consummation, as in his idea of the erotic relationship. The candle burns in the darkness around it and it produces light, but it is neither light nor darkness. However, it is partaking in both, which is the moment of its perfection. Lawrence explains this process in terms of his creation myth, as he says later in the same essay:

We are balanced like a flame between the two darknesses, the darkness of the beginning and the darkness of the end. We derive from the unknown, and we result into the unknown. But for us the beginning is not the end, for us the two are not one. It is our business to burn, pure flame, between the two unknowns. We are to be fulfilled in the world of perfection, which is the world of pure creation. We must come into being in the transcendent otherworld of perfection, consummated in life and death both (Herbert, 1988, p. 16).

Similarly, as I mentioned in the beginning of this discussion, in his religious meditation about the conversion of St. Paul he calls this process the 'mortal fact of the conversion' which Lawrence equates with the Sermon on the Mount' (Herbert, 1988, p. 38), where Jesus teaches the possibility of perfection as God, 'be perfect, as your heavenly Father' (Mathew 5:48) and the path to paradisaal bliss of the Kingdom of Heaven. Lawrence freely uses the Biblical narratives as symbols and metaphors for his purposes, his imagination in invoking the scriptural categories to envision his earthly heaven has no bound. In the essay on 'Life', he also invokes Paul's story by referring to this process of coming into being as a process of pain and joy which needs the strength of faith. Through 'insuperable faith' (Herbert, 1988, p. 18) one can undergo the trial of waiting for the moment of perfection to transpire. This is also linked with Lawrence's conception of spontaneity and authenticity in *Women in Love*. For instance, Birkin wants his mystic conjunction with Ursula's authentic self, as Birkin ponders to himself after seeing his futile and pointless argumentation with Ursula about love, 'It must happen beyond the sounds of words. It was merely ruinous to try to work her by conviction. This was a paradisaal bird that could never be netted, it must fly by itself to the heart' (WL, 259). Birkin wants her to stop bothering about herself, which shows her mental anxiety, and become indifferent. Their moment comes to pass when she attains this level of indifference, as in the beginning of the 'Moony' chapter.

The key to living an authentic life and the possibility of attaining a potential state of calm delight, for Lawrence lies in the process of destruction and rebirth. In 'The Reality of Peace', he uses a seasonal symbolism of spring and winter to argue for life in annihilation and joy in pain; he says, 'The beginning of spring lies in the awakening from winter' (Herbert, 1988, p. 33). Moreover, he argues that we deceive ourselves when we deny the 'desire of dissolution' and annihilation. He uses external natural symbols. However, he explains the process of internal dualism of dissolution and creation in terms of our inner selves. Therefore, one can see that he is concerned with the spontaneity of feelings and the promptings of the heart against the preserving old habits. Continuing his argument in 'The Reality of Peace' he maintains that 'There is in me the desire of creation and the desire of dissolution. Shall I deny either? Then neither is fulfilled. If there is no autumn and winter of corruption, there is no spring and summer. All the time I must be dissolved from my old being' (Herbert, 1988, p. 37). The aim, however, is blissful paradisaal peace, which is a state of awareness, or quality of being where one can absolve into perfection. As it is a perfect state of peace and silence, there is no memory, only a state of forgetfulness. It is, for Lawrence, reaching into a

singleness when all relations are absolved into one perfect state of being. He describes this state in these words,

For there are ultimately only two desires, the desire of life and the desire of death. Beyond these is pure being, where I am absolved from desire and made perfect. This is when I am like a rose, when I balance for a space in pure adjustment and pure understanding. The timeless quality of being is understanding; when I understand fully, flesh and blood and bone, and mind and soul and spirit one rose of unison, then I am. Then I am unrelated and perfect. In true understanding I am always perfect and timeless. In my utterance of that which I have understood I am timeless as a jewel (Herbert, 1988, p. 38).

He then goes on to associate this state of being with Paul and David, which shows the religious connotation of his ideas. But it also reveals his attitude towards his own meditations, which he probably sees as revelations in some form.

Furthermore, in *Women in Love* Birkin meditates on the necessity of destruction for the process of rebirth to begin. At the end of the novel, Birkin speaks as if he expresses some eternal truth out of his own unutterable experiences. He mourns the death of his friend Gerald as if he is mourning a much larger destruction of humanity and in this destruction he seems to seek an understanding of creative forces.

If humanity ran into a cul-de-sac, and expended itself, the timeless creative mystery would bring forth some other being, finer, more wonderful, some new, more lovely race, to carry on the embodiment of creation. The game was never up. The mystery of creation was fathomless, infallible, inexhaustible, forever [. . .] The fountain-head was incorruptible and unsearchable. It had no limits. It could bring forth miracles, create utter new races and new species in its own hour, new forms of consciousness, new forms of body, new units of being. To be man was as nothing compared to the possibilities of the creative mystery. To have one's pulse beating direct from the mystery, this was perfection, unutterable satisfaction (WL, 497).

In the last sentence, Birkin's thoughts wonder back to his own sexual experience with Ursula; when they make love they come into direct connection with this sort of mystery where a feeling of perfect 'unutterable satisfaction' permeates their existence.

For many critics, like Keith Sagar, Birkin's quest for self-fulfilment through sensual consummation in this way is a quest for meaning in a time of war and general dissolution. In his *The Art of D. H. Lawrence* Sagar notes, that '[t]he problem Birkin wrestles with throughout the novel is: what must the individual do to be saved when he finds himself living in an age of renewed chaos, of dissolution?' (Sagar, 1978, p. 78). Sagar's point that Birkin and Ursula save themselves from 'disintegration' by 'coming together' is right in its premises. However, he, as many others, points towards the destruction and death of the Great War for both death as a theme in the novel and also for some of the apocalyptic visions Birkin expresses. Black explains the scenario in which Lawrence is busy revising and writing *Women in Love*, one has to say revising because *Women in Love* is the other part of *The Sisters*, part one having already been published as *The Rainbow*. It means the novel was not conceived during the War, it was conceived soon after finishing *Sons and Lovers* and the basic idea for *The Sisters* is expressed in the 'Foreword' to *Sons and Lovers*.

Lawrence expresses his views about the theme of war and destruction in his letter of July 1917 to Waldo Frank, where he refers to the flood and rebirth imagery in *The Rainbow* and makes a new contrast to the death of the Gadarene swine in the New Testament. The contrast is very clear in the sense that the rainbow image shows rebirth, where destruction has a divine purpose; whereas the swine's death is due to possession by the devil (Mathew 8, 28-32). Lawrence says that there is a 'great consummation in death, or sensual ecstasy, as in *The Rainbow*' and he also mentions futile death, as he continues, 'there is also death which is the rushing of the Gadarene swine down the slope of extinction. And this is the war in Europe. We have chosen our extinction in death, rather than our consummation. So be it'. About *Women in Love*, he says that it 'does contain the results in one's soul of the war' (Boulton, III, 985, p. 143). Another contrasting image with the Gadarene swine is the image of blossoming and the image of the phoenix and Sappho in the *Study of Thomas Hardy*, which Lawrence associates with consummation and love as noted earlier. In his letter he mentions consummation as a different and nobler death than the death we witness in the war, which he implies as devilish and mad.

In *Women in Love*, Birkin expresses similar ideas, when he refers to modern civilization with contempt and he hopes that 'our race is destroyed like Sodom' (WL, 58) and again he later tells Ursula, 'they are apples of Sodom, as a matter of fact, Dead Sea fruit, gall-apples' (WL, 130). Birkin seems terrified by his apocalyptic vision of destruction and the dissolution of his world, but he remains positive about his future with Ursula. At the end of the novel he says to

Ursula that 'We shan't have any need to despair, in death' (WL, 499). However, one of the earliest critics, who was also his friend, Murry (1931), thinks that the apocalyptic visions of Lawrence protagonists show that Lawrence is terrified by his passion for love. In the preface to the reader of his *Son of Woman: The Story of D. H. Lawrence* Murry observes that Lawrence is one of the 'greatest lovers the world has known'. Love for Lawrence 'was a devouring flame', a love that 'consumed his soul'. Murry argues that love and the war have had negative effect on Lawrence's art and on his life. For love, as he says, 'threatened his very life' and that the great flame of love 'burned him up', which, for Murry, horrified Lawrence (Murry, 1931, p. 106). Murry affirms the mystical connotation of the 'annihilation of the ego' in Lawrence's work, however, for Murry it is the expression of the horror of death. Murry understands by submission and yielding to the unknown force of love, as we see in Birkin's quest in *Women in Love*, that Lawrence tries to impose 'upon the women a sensual homage to the men' (Murry, 1931, p. 112). Murry identifies Lawrence's experience of the mystical 'annihilation of the ego' in his poems such as 'New Heaven and Earth', 'Elysium', and 'Manifesto'. In the poem 'New Heaven and Earth', for instance, Lawrence says, 'I want her to touch me and last, on the root and quick / of my darkness / and perish on me, as I have perished on her' (Murry, 1931, p. 109). Although Murry gives these mystical longings a negative connotation, a different reading reveals the purest desires of the heart. Another thing to note is that these poems are written between 1915 and 1916, which is the time when Lawrence was working on *Women in Love*.

Like many critics, as noted above, Murry also sees Lawrence's writings in the context of the war and of Lawrence's undefined religious beliefs. However, in *Women in Love*, particularly in the chapter 'Excuse', where for Murry, Lawrence 'enforces a muscular sensual superiority on the woman', I argue that Lawrence presents a mystic consciousness through the sensual relationship between Ursula and Birkin. In the 'Excuse' chapter Ursula progresses from self-determination to self-annihilation in her relationship to Birkin. Birkin's spiritual development lies in his awareness of the other and in the attainment of a more essential connection with transcendent through sexual experience with Ursula. Ursula is not degraded in her submission to the man's sensual attraction; she fulfils the metaphysical purpose of her existence through losing her egotistic self. For Lawrence, as noted in his *Study of Thomas Hardy*, it is wasting in a creative process. Zangenehpour rightly observes that by giving herself in love, Ursula is 'in a transformational moment, with the metaphysical significance of her ego losing its

determination and turning back to its original absolute indetermination' (Zangenehpour, 2005, p. 27).

Lawrence's metaphors and narrative style indicates the mystical nature of Ursula and Birkin's sensual relationship. The 'original absolute indetermination', Zangenehpour maintains, is similar to the Sufi concept of the state of subsistence one can reach through annihilation. However, in Sufism, as mentioned above, it is being one with God, or living in God; whereas for Lawrence annihilation is the process of finding one's living self, in a pre-civilizational consciousness of living. The kinship between the Sufi view of annihilation and Lawrence's vision of passing away lies in the quest for the authenticity and potentiality of our being. In Lawrence, it is quality of being which matters the most and in Sufism the important thing is the divine source of our being.

In order to see the transformation of Birkin and Ursula through their sexual encounter, we need to explore the 'Excuse' chapter a little further. This chapter has attracted many critical views. Thomas H. Miles (1976) using Pryse's *The Apocalypse Unsealed* (1910), which Lawrence read before finishing his last revision of *Women in Love*, offers his reading of bodily moments in the chapter as shown in the topography of yogic centres in Kundalini. Similarly, Gerald Doherty, as already mentioned, in his reading of Birkin and Ursula's sexual experience in 'Excuse' notes that Foucault's thesis about the eastern concept of sexual pleasure explains the transcendent attainment Lawrence attaches to sexual experience in the chapter. However, in another place he argues that the initiatory ritualistic scenes in the chapter reveal a well-known practice in Tantric yoga. He maintains that Lawrence uses yoga rituals as a model of sexual initiation in Birkin and Ursula's love scene, where 'through mysterious strokings and touchings [they] penetrate to the secret somatic basis of consciousness and effect a new consecration of love' (Doherty, 1984, p. 212).

He further argues that love-making scenes in *Women in Love* correlate with primordial Hindu mythology of the coupling between the male god Shiva with the goddess of power (Shakti), as he explains, 'The fundamental topography of these somatic centers of energy (*chakras*) is not complex, though it has no exact correlates with western anatomical systems. The root-center (*muladhara chakra*) corresponds roughly to the sacral plexus, located between the anus and the genitals, and thus 'deeper, further in mystery than the phallic source' as Ursula discovers for herself in her lovemaking with Birkin' (Doherty, 1984, p. 213). These readings have merit given Lawrence's sacral presentation of the erotic body, particularly first

introducing Birkin as an ancient God and Egyptian Pharaoh, where his body is touched by the female to gain strength and knowledge and in the process where she transcends her initial state. However, the contextualization of the chapter and the overall thematic value of the novel does not support the theory of bodily energy as a centre in quite this manner.

The key symbols and imagery in *Women in Love* and other works indicates the Holy Ghost as the centre, which gives a mystical sense of transcendence. Similarly, the imagery of light and darkness in the chapter suggests that the centre of rebirth is through the woman's body, the flesh which is darkness. It is not the woman who goes to the male for her fulfilment, the male, in Lawrence's imagery, has to go to woman for his consummation and flowering. One can also see an association between Lawrence's imagery and meaning in the rings Birkin gives to Ursula. There is one ring, which is a 'round opal, red and fiery, set in a circle of tiny rubies'. Ursula likes the 'red and fiery' one, and says it is 'wonderful' (WL, 314). The ring is a symbol for their relationship but this particular ring is more than that, it is a symbol of life in the outburst of their sensual relationship. The red and fiery qualities of the ring remind us of Lawrence's red of the poppy in his *Study of Thomas Hardy*. The red of the poppy is a symbol of rebirth, and the red of the poppy, Lawrence says is like a phoenix which fulfils its purpose of existence by bursting into being in a concrete show of life and then dies and lives in the seed. Ursula likes the rings, particularly the 'opal' one, and secretly she tries it on her finger and it fits. The same image of flower bursting into life and annihilation is mentioned in 'The Crown'. Lawrence says, that 'the life of man is like a flower that comes into blossom and passes away'. Passing away is the process of life, transformation, which is the main issue of the chapter. In 'The Crown', Lawrence notes:

In the beginning, light touches darkness and darkness touches light. Then life has begun. The light infolds and implicates and involves the dark, the dark receives and interpenetrates the light, they come nearer, they are more finely combined, till they burst into the crisis of oneness, the blossom, the utter being, the transcendent and timeless flame of the iris (Herbert, 1988, p. 264).

For Lawrence, as noted elsewhere, 'woman' is the transcendent being. As he famously says, that he goes to a woman to touch the mystery and to know the 'inhuman', in other words, the creative source, of his existence. He says further in 'The Crown',

It is thus, seeking consummation in the utter darkness, that I come to the woman in desire. She is the doorway, she is the gate to the dark eternity of power, the creator's

power. When I put my hand on her, my heart beats with a passion of fear and ecstasy, for I touch my own passing away, my own ceasing-to-be, I apprehend my own consummation in a darkness which obliterates me in its infinity (Herbert, 1988, pp. 265-6).

Lawrence's rhetoric and imagery suggest that he is doing three things: he begins the first quotation by alluding to the scriptural mythology of creation, then he translates it into his own creation myth and finally in the second quotation he associates the religious image of creation with sexual climax. It is not so much that of touching and finding the centre but rather an unceasing process of creation, a consummation like the burning candle. The sensual union in a 'pure' relationship is a 'mystic conjunction', in which one can consummate into a blissful peace of eternal now. The state of 'ecstasy' and 'passing away' here suggests being conscious of one's living self. Oneness of being is the crisis like the climax. Iris, the Greek goddess who links the divine with human, suggests transformation into another consciousness and a connection with the unknown, the mystery of creation. It is also like a rainbow which unifies the individual colours into oneness. Therefore, this process is overcoming and subsistence at the same time which is the Lawrencean sense of annihilation. For Lawrence, it is not only a momentary or earthly pleasure but one goes to a woman for a pure and sensual contact. It is like travelling to the source of being and the ultimate truth of one's existence. However, for Lawrence, the 'absolute relation is never fully revealed', but the annihilation of light into darkness is the closest one can get to the source of being, a sort of divine consciousness. He continues in this fashion with another image of waves:

I know I am compound of two waves, I, who am temporal and mortal. When I am timeless and absolute, all duality has vanished. But whilst I am temporal and mortal, I am framed in the struggle and embrace of the two opposite waves of darkness and of light (Herbert, 1988, p. 265).

The wave imagery defines the struggle in *Women in Love*. Like the universal imagery of drop and ocean, a wave has both the permanent and temporal qualities. It is part of the immortal sea, but its existence lies in its struggle. Birkin, although he is very much part of the struggle, wants to have a connection with the sea, the eternal state of in-human being, where it is calm. He realises that it is necessary for him to struggle with Ursula for his 'temporal' or immanent being to aspire to become 'timeless and absolute'.

Birkin's love for Ursula has a religious dimension. But Ursula does not accept his worship and wants him to serve her human emotions.

He wanted her to come to him. But he was angry at the bottom of his soul, and indifferent. He knew she had a passion for him, really. But it was not finally interesting. There were depths of passion when one became impersonal and indifferent, unemotional. Whereas Ursula was still at the emotional personal level – always so abominably personal. He had taken her as he had never been taken himself. He had taken her at the roots of her darkness and shame – like a demon, laughing over the fountain of mystic corruption which was one of the sources of her being, laughing, shrugging, accepting, accepting finally. As for her, when would she so much go beyond herself as to accept him at the quick of death? (*WL*, 315-316).

The 'quick of death' is a new formation and it is paradoxical as Lawrence generally uses 'quick' for life, or life giving energy as the sun and flame. In another place, for instance, he says 'the quick of the sun is polarized with the living, the sun's quick is polarized in dynamic relation with the quick of life in all living things' (Lawrence, 2005, p. 184). The paradoxical formation of quick and death shows that there is life in death. Birkin wants Ursula to accept him in a final 'pure' conjunction of mystic love.

However, Lawrence through Ursula's reaction to Birkin's dual relationship with Hermione and Ursula, tells the reader that Birkin is not able to receive what he wants Ursula to give him. Ursula tells him, 'You belong to Hermione and her dead show' (*WL*, 317). Birkin himself has been meditating and preaching that before making a pure relationship with a woman, one needs to be 'single in himself' for a 'further conjunction' with the other (*WL*, 205). Here, Lawrence may intend to expose the generality of men in their relationships with women. Lawrence's images are too shocking, which may be intended for the readers, the English middle classes of his time, as many critics have pointed out. For Lawrence, in our degraded modern society, men go to women in a manner as a dog goes to a corpse. There, for Ursula, lies the foulness, the rottenness of men for which she is not ready to make herself available. It also may refer to her previous experiences, as she has already told Birkin about her relationships with other men.

However, now that Birkin knows his foulness, he wonders which way to go, to Hermione's 'abstract spiritual intimacy' or to Ursula's sensual love. He knows what is on offer, the utter 'self-destruction' and the 'depravity' of soul in Hermione's 'perfect Idea', or the absolute

self-annihilation in the 'perfect Womb' if he chooses Ursula's sensual love. His manliness, his muscular ego wants both ends, the spiritual bond and the pleasure of the body. His own preaching of love as both 'freedom together' and 'the path of a star' have now become a reality; he has to choose the single path. Both the women have denied him their availability at his leisure. Earlier in the novel, in the 'Class-Room' chapter, Ursula and Hermione 'jeer' at Birkin, 'jeering him into nothingness' (WL, 42). For Ursula his preaching is agonizing, as she feels 'too much' has been said, when Birkin in a long speech accuses Hermione of false sensuality. The two women, Lawrence shows, are in league in their 'resentment' against his self-imposing views and they are also 'immediate rivals' for his love. Birkin feels this rivalry and comradeship of both the women as a 'tyranny' they want to impose on him.

The transcendent motive Birkin wants is authentic selfhood, which seems impossible in the modern consciousness. Birkin is the Lawrence figure in the novel. By the way of revealing Birkin's own crisis of faith and his confusion in love, Lawrence seeks the authentic experience of his own emotional self in the novel.

Birkin's dilemma is the problem of modern consciousness, which is the lack of mystic or irrational connection with our authentic inner desire. In the 'Moony' chapter Birkin's sexual experience with Ursula reminds him of the 'African fetishes' at Halliday's, which for him represent primitive man's adventure into 'pure sensuality' and gnosis. He wants his sensuality that way as well but the connection between modern society and primitive knowledge has been broken and is now represented by the 'principle of knowledge in dissolution and corruption' (WL, 263). The other confusion in his desire to love is caused by modern European abstracted and mechanical culture. The white races, for Lawrence, know only 'snow-abstract annihilation', whereas the primitive know only 'sun-destruction'. The thought of 'breaking off from the happy creative being' – the creative source – frightens him. He remembers Gerald and realises that if he fails in his mystical and sensual relationship with Ursula, he too will be 'fated to pass away in this knowledge, this one process of frost-knowledge, death by perfect cold' (WL, 264). These thoughts of the destruction of civilization terrify him. However, he finds his own inner constitution as a 'way to freedom' in his love for Ursula.

Mystic experience may be an escape, or a real possibility; Lawrence does not offer a final answer, as Birkin's meditations at the end suggest when he wonders whether the human being is the creative mystery's final expression or not. In contrast to *The Rainbow* where we

can see a clear indication of rebirth at the end of the novel, in *Women in Love*, the mystic experience in 'Excuse' is followed by the destructive world of snow, where Gerald dies and Birkin and Ursula escape by going south. Thus, mystic conjunction remains only a possibility, a hope to escape the modern civilization and the mechanical death it offers.

In contrast to Birkin's misgivings about humanity as the final expression of creative mystery, Sufis do not doubt whether humanity is the final creation. However, for them the world is a temporal place. Therefore, for the Sufis, mystical annihilation gives them access to a more permanent world, the world of unity or divine self. As noted by Schimmel, 'The last stations on the mystical path are love and gnosis, *mahabba* and *ma'rifa*'. Love and knowledge of the ultimate reality become the same thing when the mystic reaches the last station. Schimmel further illustrates the meaning of annihilation in Sufism,

The only means of drawing near to the divine beloved is by constant purification and, in exchange, qualification with God's attributes. Junayd has defined this change brought forth by love: 'Love is the annihilation of the lover in His attributes and the confirmation of the Beloved in His essence' (Schimmel, 1975, p. 134).

In *The Mathnawi*, Rumi describes annihilation as a state in which one can remain connected with God by dying to the world, or to the corruption of the world. The divine presence is described as a scent (musk of the deer, or scent of Joseph's shirt), which is present in the clay (clay refers to the world of appearances, the bodily presence of the beloved). In this way of presenting the idea of God in the world, he narrates the story of the lover and the beloved. The lover sees something different and especial in the beloved, everybody can see the beloved but not in the lover's eyes who can see something beyond what the ordinary senses can perceive. The real hunter (here this means the Sufi, or the lover) follows the 'scent' of the 'deer' and finds her, while the common 'hunter' follows the footprint of the previous hunters and loses himself in the desert (M. II, 162). Sufis see the 'attributes' of the divine in the earthly beloved and say that the true lover can see 'the wine' in the 'heart of the grape', and in 'absolute *fana*, they have seen the object'. The lover, for Rumi, finds his divine reality after annihilating his false identities or attributes.

Moreover, the image of the veil (opacity of the world) shows the false consciousness which is based on appearances. Therefore, dying to the world of the false consciousness is the state of *fana* and ascending to another consciousness, the divine consciousness, is the state of *a'rifeen* (Gnostics) and *a'shiqeen* (lovers). The veil image is presented in different ways in *The*

Mathnawi: it represents the false consciousness of the orthodox theologian, or *zahid*, who as Rumi puts it above, follows the other hunters and loses his way. But its most frequent use is in the description of attaining the state of *fana*; as we have seen in Ahmad Ghazali's explanation of the veil image, Rumi also presents the *fana* as the unveiling of the bride. He says that unveiling can be witnessed by all the guests at the wedding but in the 'bridal chamber' the lover is alone and single with the bride (M. I, 1435). Rumi associates the state of being alone with the bride as the 'flight of *Simurgh*' (the mythical bride), whose abode is the legendary place called the mountain *kaf*. In Farid ud-Din Attar's allegorical poem *The Conference of the Birds*, where the birds of the world take a journey to find the *Simurgh* who would decide their king, at the end only thirty birds survive and reach *Kaf*, where the legendary bird lives. What they find there is meaningful, because all they find is a lake in which they see their own reflection on the water (Darbandi, 1984). *Simurgh*, which literally means *si* – thirty and *murgh* – bird, is none other than the birds themselves in the story. Therefore, the journey is presented as the trial during which the birds are transformed by dying to their base selves and meet their essential selves at the end. William C. Chittick (1983) in his *Sufi Path of Love* explains the concept of annihilation, which helps us understand Rumi's description of the 'flight of *Simurgh*' and Attar's allegory of the birds. He says,

In the path of love and spiritual realization, the lover undergoes two fundamental experiences: union with the Beloved and separation from Him. Like all sets of opposites, these two terms are relative. In practice this means that there are an infinite number of degrees of each [...] Moreover, until the traveller reaches the very highest stages of sanctity, the station of union will be temporary, followed by at least a relative separation [...] At the highest stages, union is equivalent to 'subsistence' in God. Subsistence in turn is the other side of annihilation: Annihilation, or the negation of self, results in subsistence, or the affirmation of self. Union with God is self-annihilation, so separation from Him is self-existence [...] since true existence and true life lie in subsistence and union, separation is death (Chittick, 1983, pp. 232-233).

In *Women in Love*, one cannot notice a station by station progression to spiritual and mystic maturity, as implied in the Sufi concept of annihilation. The opposites and paradoxes in Lawrence's novel seem to work in a similar fashion to the Sufi formation of self-affirmation in self-negation. More significantly, however, in Lawrence's imagery of light and darkness as we saw in the 'Foreword' to *Sons and Lovers* onward, work in opposition to what is implied in Sufi mystical poetry. In Lawrence, as in Rumi, the darkness symbolises the flesh, human

passion and emotions; for Lawrence it is in going to the flesh in desire and in pure sensual emotion that one can transcend the ordinary self and attain the living self. In Rumi's poetry, however, the darkness of fleshly existence has to be overcome at the end. In Lawrence, the overcoming also takes place but it is the consciousness of self-preservation not one's passionate existence which needs yielding and submission to the spontaneous and authentic self. In contrast, Rumi in a way announces the death of passion after the unveiling in the 'bridal chamber', 'Every single flight thereof (being) greater than the horizons and greater than the hope and greed of the longing lover' (M. I, 1442).

Conclusion

In this thesis I have looked at the literary writings of two different writers. Rumi's writings are accepted within his traditions as having a significant mystical aspect. In Lawrence's writings the mystical element appears as a metaphysical gesture towards the mystery of being. However, his writings are not accepted within Christian tradition as having a significant mystical content similar to Rumi, who is accepted as a mystic within Islamic tradition. Lawrence and Rumi belong to two widely divergent ages and cultural background. However, the religious sensibility in their poetic imagination poses comparable challenges to the reader in comprehending the meaning of their depiction of the theme of love. This study has undertaken to compare and contrast the presentation of the theme of love in their writings. Keeping in view the vastly divergent nature and background of their writings, I have restricted my study to a literary analysis of their works.

The question I asked in the beginning was whether a parallel reading of Lawrence's *Women in Love* and Rumi's poetry would illuminate certain mystical aspects of Lawrence's novel in relation to the theme of love. In the course of reading Lawrence's *Women in Love* and his philosophical writings from his the 'Foreword' to *Sons and Lovers* to the 'Reality of Peace', I have shown that in his use of symbols and images Lawrence uses a mystical language and phrases such as 'mystic' and 'mystical', particularly in the episodes where Lawrence suggests some sort of sacred meaning to sexual experience.

However, the meaning of mystical experience is not always the same. It differs from culture to culture and religion to religion. I have defined mysticism as a desire for and an endeavour towards some essential reality. This reality is understood in Sufism as *mari'fa*, which is the

intimate knowledge of God. In Christianity it is understood as gnosis, which is the immediate apprehension of ‘Godhead itself’ (Otto, 1932, p. 12). Rumi’s writings belong to both in the broadest sense of mystical meaning, as defined by Otto that is speculation and meditation about “Ultimate Truth”, and also to the understanding of mysticism which Otto calls ‘naturalistic’, or pantheistic, in which God, who mystic wants to reach, is one part of natural phenomena. The discussions in the thesis and the reading of Rumi’s poetry, however, show that Otto’s classification is not entirely sufficient. We have seen in the Sufis’ paradoxical discourse of divine reality as *tashbih* (immanence) and *tanzih* (transcendent) that this position is more complex than the pantheistic view. Ultimate reality, or God in Sufi discourse, cannot be reached outside physical form, but it still retains a suggestion of the Holy Ghost that is a transcendent and unreachable God. This view of divine reality provides a religious and mystic sensibility to one’s cosmic relations and one’s existence in the world. In other words, this idea of God puts God in one’s proximity and into the reality of the material world but also retains the aspiration of a transcendent reality.

By insisting on *batin*, which means both body and one’s inner self, or heart in Persian, Rumi provides a sensual basis for knowing the transcendent. He distinguishes between the ‘realiser’, who depends on *ilm-i batin* (inward knowledge, or a sensual and experiential knowledge of the divine), and the ‘imitator’, one who follows the word, or what he calls ‘echo’. In *The Mathnawi*, Rumi says ‘[b]etween the realizer and the imitator, / there are many differences. / The former is like David and the imitator / is only an echo (not a song, not a singer)’ (M. II, 496). In the Quranic tradition, David was gifted with song and also with physical strength; when he sings God’s praise all nature joins him (Quran, 38:17), therefore, David is a symbol of palpable faith and physical strength in Sufi literature. In Rumi’s poetry David’s ‘glow’, Jesus’s ‘breath’ and Joseph’s ‘scent’ and his physical beauty are the metaphors he uses to describe the sacred nature and phenomenology of love. In chapter one and later in the comparative study, I have discussed that in Rumi’s poetry the transgressive and antinomian imagery of *kharabath* is associated with these religious symbols of divine love. In this metaphoric shift and collapsing of images, Rumi’s poetry presents love both as sacred and profane phenomena relating to the spiritual development of one’s individuality through sensual awareness.

Rumi’s mystical vision includes worldly experience or the experience of being in the world not just for meditational purposes but also for consummation and creative energy, this informs his poetic response to the mystery of creation. This is an involvement in the world

which Otto considers as naturalistic, as contemplation of God in nature, or of as living experience, which later R. C Zaehner (1961) identifies as 'Panentheistic', or 'nature mysticism'. Rumi can best be described as a theistic mystic in Zaehner's categorisation. However, as later shown by Ninian Smart (1965) and others, such categorisations often fail to capture the true spirit of many mystical experiences. For my purpose, a study concerned with the literary analysis of the mystical writings of Rumi in comparison to Lawrence, I have emphasised the poetic and imaginative nature of contemplation in Rumi, which enables him to take pleasure in the sensual perceptions of his intuition, for instance, the conception of the earthly beloved. Love in this sensual meaning, which Otto considers physical ecstasy, plays a major part in Rumi's mystic poetry. In Rumi's poetry, this can be seen as the departure point from purely intuitive meditation.

I have further elaborated the poetic and imaginative response to mystic experience in Rumi and Lawrence's work by comparing the antinomian tendency and conception of love in their respective poetic traditions. In the course of this discussion, I have argued that body consciousness defines both Lawrence's antinomian approach to Christian love, as in his 'Foreword' to *Sons and Lovers* and the 'intoxicated' and *malamatiyya* school of Sufism in Persian mystic traditions. The rebellious nature of this antinomian tendency is instrumental in demolishing doctrinal conceptions of purity and conformity. I have noted that Blake and Lawrence see it as a mode of writing and experiencing the world, which allows them to challenge the Christian notion of the sinful body and the basis of modern rational thinking and the compartmentalization of human experience.

Therefore, the body consciousness and antinomian attitudes that we find in the writings of Lawrence and Rumi broadly provide the basis of the comparison presented in the thesis. However, despite the affinity between their vision of paradisaic bliss, their conception of a pre-human creation myth and their adherence to the sacred desire of love in their writings, my comparative analysis has made it obvious that their ultimate mystic aim is not the same. At the end for Rumi authenticity lies in substantive unity, whereas in Lawrence the metaphoric beyond refers to a quality of being in the world.

Lawrence creates his imagery from a point of disagreement with the theological conception of creation, not in a theological fashion, but he starts building his metaphysics in opposition to doctrinal faith. I have analysed the development of Lawrence's exclusive use of imagery, which creates a mystical dimension for his metaphysics of love. We have seen how he

develops his philosophy of love in his discursive writings by metaphorically using Biblical language. He applies the same images in his fictions, which relate to the human emotion of love. I have followed the development of Lawrence's imagery from his philosophical writings before and at the time when he was engaged in writing *Women in Love*'s final drafts. In his vision, he remains focused on the theme of love and the mystery of creation.

I have emphasised the fact that the image of dissolution and destructive relationships on the one hand and the aspiration for a state of paradisaal bliss on the other remain the focus of *Women in Love*. This shows Lawrence's acute awareness of his age: a general lack of spirituality, or faith in life, isolation and ego-consciousness due to self-centred individualism and modern man's relationship with the cosmos, are dictated by mechanical and rational insinuations rather than by organic and living relations as we see in the natural world. I have referred to many critical views that try to understand the relationship between Lawrence's art and his metaphysics. For instance, the insistence on an organic or a living relationship with the cosmos in Lawrence's writings is discussed by Michael Black in his reading of the philosophical essays and major fictions. Black proposes an evolutionary biological conception of the individual's growth and becoming in Lawrence's work. Similarly, Robert Montgomery has suggested that the 'living sense of being' and mythic consciousness in *Women in Love* is like Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in the sense that Montgomery considers Birkin's quest for a blissful state of 'delight' and 'peace' to be like the search for the 'furthering of the evolution of man' into an individuality like Nietzsche's 'god-like overmen' (Montgomery, 1994, p. 112). Furthermore, I state in the beginning that this thesis is an addition to Zangenehpour's similar reading of *The Rainbow*. In her reading Zangenehpour puts forward the idea that characters in Lawrence's fiction go through a similar spiritual growth and attain the status of gathering and mystic nothingness that we see in the Sufi tradition. I have, however, emphasised the sexual consummation through which characters, such as Birkin and Ursula, find their essential living selves. Their mystic forgetfulness is part of this new consciousness and the state of blissful delight in the other is the harmony which can be attained through overcoming modern self-consciousness.

In *Women in Love*, Lawrence proposes a new meaning for love and sensual intimacy; for him this provides a holistic conception of sensual awareness and knowledge of one's spontaneous being. I have structured the subsequent comparative reading into four sections in which I have focused on many episodes of intense emotions in the novel.

In the four sections, which consist of a reading of Lawrence and Rumi, I have explored the theme of love and its mystical connotation. In the course of this discussion I argue that Lawrence attaches a problematically mystical aspiration to the sexual relationship between a man and a woman. Problematically in the sense that Lawrence uses a poetic and mystical language without a clear cut concept of God as transcendent reality. The comparative analysis with Rumi, a true mystic, in the thesis has clearly revealed this paradoxical attitude in Lawrence writings.

Given the fact that Lawrence was a thinker and understood the intellectual and philosophical debates about the ideas of his time, one does wonder why Lawrence concern himself so much with sexual relationships and the theme of love. The answer lies in his beliefs about the harmony between one's mental and bodily existence. Lawrence is afraid of man losing his vital connection with his own bodily existence and with the cosmic reality of his being. He later says in his 'A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover', 'Let us prepare now for the death of our present "little" life, and the re-emergence in a bigger life, in touch with the moving cosmos. It is a question, practically, of relationship. We must get back into relation, vivid and nourishing relation to the cosmos and the universe [...] For the truth is, we are perishing for lack of fulfilment of our greater needs, we are cut off from the greater sources, sources which flow eternally in the universe [...] We must plant ourselves again in the universe' (Squires, 2002, pp. 329-330). Lawrence's great concern is that in our modern life, we have disconnected ourselves from our source of being, which is the bodily and impulsive relation with the universe.

Similarly, in the last chapter of 'The Crown' he says, 'Our souls are established upon all the revelations, upon all the timeless achieved relationships, as the seed contains a convoluted memory of all the revelation in the plant it represents. The flower is the burning of God in the bush [...] The true God is created every time a pure relationship, or a consummation out of twoness into oneness takes place' (Herbert, 1988, p. 302-303). Relationship in this cosmic sense is the mystical aspiration in *Women in Love*. Lawrence's seed and plant analogy and the images of light and darkness for the consummation of this relationship imply what I have argued is his creation myth in *Women in Love*. The pre-human heavenly state of paradisaal bliss is alluded to in many places as an aspiration for Birkin and Ursula's love relationship. Paradisaal bliss, for Lawrence, is what he says in 'The Crown' is 'absolute being', or the 'peace' one can find in blossoming, or fulfilling one's ultimate desire and purpose of existence. This, Lawrence maintains, needs real courage and truthfulness to one's bodily

existence. In our modern objectification of the universe, our body and our own needs and desires, we have lost contact with our real self, or what he calls the 'living self'.

I have argued that though one can observe a sacral treatment of the erotic body in the writings of Lawrence and Rumi, the metaphysical nature of their subject matter is not always the same. Lawrence emphasises the nature of man-woman relationships and greater emotional fulfilment is his fundamental theme. For Rumi, however, rapture in love provides a vision of what is real, the source of one's existence. Therefore, the issue is the meaning and recognition of love's final flight where the lover comes face to face with the reality of his self-realisation in the greater being. Rumi describes this state of awareness, which is not only a physical and spiritual fulfilment but a final recognition of the unseen in the visible.

The Caravan of the Unseen enters the visible World, / but it remains hidden from all these ugly people. / How should lovely women come to ugly men? / The nightingale always comes to the rosebush. / The jasmine grows next to the narcissus, the / rose comes to the sweet-mouthed bud. / All of these are symbols – I mean that the other / world keeps coming into this world. / Like cream hidden in the soul of milk, No-place / keeps coming into place. / Like intellect concealed in blood and skin, the / Traceless keeps entering into traces. / And from beyond the intellect, beautiful Love, / comes dragging its skirts, a cup of wine in its hand. / And from beyond Love, that indescribable one / who can only be called 'That' keeps coming (D. 30789-96, Chittick's translation, quoted in his *Sufi Path of Love*, 1983, p. 197)

The poetic spirits of Rumi and Lawrence come very close in their appreciation of the wonder of creation and in their erotic attachment to living nature of being. However, Rumi, true to his monothestic belief in God, sees an independent cosmic source behind the wonder of creation. Whereas, for Lawrence the cosmic source is not outside our real human experience as such.

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