

**D. H. LAWRENCE'S DUALISTIC IMPULSES IN  
HIS WRITINGS ABOUT ITALY**

Giovanna Spera

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil  
at the  
University of St Andrews



1996

Full metadata for this item is available in  
St Andrews Research Repository  
at:

<http://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/>

Please use this identifier to cite or link to this item:

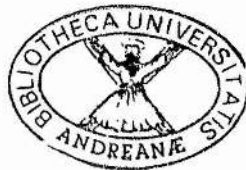
<http://hdl.handle.net/10023/15150>

This item is protected by original copyright

D.H. LAWRENCE'S DUALISTIC IMPULSES IN HIS WRITINGS  
ABOUT ITALY

Giovanna Spera

A thesis submitted for the degree  
of Master of Philosophy  
in the University of St. Andrews  
18th May 1995





ProQuest Number: 10167281

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10167281

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

TR  
B 836

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iv
PREFATORY STATEMENTS.....	v
Introduction: <b>D.H. Lawrence and dualism: the background influences</b> .....	1
i. Lawrence's family: influence on his dualistic view of life .....	1
ii. Lawrence's idea of polarity and old religious form.....	8
iii. Connections with early Greek philosophy .....	14
iv. Lawrence and German philosophical tradition.....	16
Chapter I: <b>The development of Lawrence's "philosophy" of polarity</b> .....	26
i. Relationship between philosophical writings and fiction .....	26
ii. Two different ways of approaching dualism in <i>Twilight in Italy</i> .....	33
iii. Laurentian image of a triangle in "The Crown" and "The Two Principles" .....	40
Chapter II: <b>The poetics of antinomies in Lawrence's Italian travel writings</b> .....	50

i. <i>Sea and Sardinia</i> .....	50
ii. <i>Etruscan Places</i> .....	65
iii. <i>Mornings in Mexico</i> .....	81
<b>Chapter III: A study of “love of conflict” and Italian connection in Lawrence's fiction</b> .....	<b>92</b>
i. <i>The Lost Girl</i> .....	92
ii. <i>Mr Noon</i> .....	120
iii. <i>Aaron's Rod</i> .....	133
iv. “Sun” and other short stories.....	144
<b>Chapter IV: Lawrence's poetry: dualistic views within an Italian context</b> .....	<b>158</b>
i. Lawrence's poetic heritage.....	158
ii. Dualism in <i>Look! We Have Come Through</i> .....	163
iii. Dualism in <i>Birds, Beasts and Flowers</i> .....	168
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>184</b>
<b>SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>189</b>

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the following study is to demonstrate Lawrence's belief that the whole of life is the manifestation of opposite wills always transcended by a *third element* which reconciles them in a dynamic state of equilibrium. His view of polarity is associated with precise spatial coordinates, Italy and England.

The thesis consists of four chapters prefaced by an introduction to the background influences that dualism exerts on the artist, and ended by a conclusion on what Italy means to him. Attention is given to a varied range of Lawrence's works with an Italian element—philosophical writings, travel books, novels and poems— some of which have been given a more extensive analysis than others. His letters are used where appropriate to develop this study.

The first chapter illustrates the development of Lawrence's dualism in his philosophical writings, particularly “philosophical” additions to essays in *Twilight in Italy*. Chapter Two examines his poetics of antinomies in the travel books. Chapter Three explores the evident dual nature rooted in three of Lawrence's novels as well as some of his short stories with an Italian connection. Chapter Four traces his conception of polarity permeating the poetry in an Italian context. The thesis concludes with observations highlighting the basic *traits-d'union* among all Laurentian works taken into consideration, that is, the central idea of *unity in duality* and the Italian connection.

I, Giovanna Spera, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 40,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

18 - 5 - 95  
-----

I was admitted as a research student in October 1993 and as a candidate for the degree of M.Phil. in April 1994; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1994 and 1995.

18 - 5 - 95

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of M.Phil. in the University of St. Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

18 May 1995



In submitting the thesis to the University of St. Andrews I understand that I am giving permission for it to be made available for use in accordance with the regulations of the University Library for the time being in force, subject to any copyright vested in the work not being affected thereby. I also understand that the title and the abstract will be published and that a copy of the work may be made and supplied to any *bona fide* library or research worker.

18-5-95

## Introduction

# **D.H. Lawrence and Dualism: the background influences**

### **i. Lawrence's family: influence on his dualistic view of life**

It is extremely difficult to give a general and complete picture of D.H. Lawrence's art since his aim while writing seems to be to avoid making it easily interpretable and classifiable. In fact, his literary productions are as changeable and contradictory as the characters and the landscapes framing his works.

He is deeply convinced that each word he writes is true, but his attitudes and ideas change according to the circumstances and to his state of mind. In effect, his coherence is strictly linked to Lawrence as man, and to his need for a direct relationship with the reader, it being necessary to involve the latter completely.

Nevertheless, Lawrence is a man affected by a deep inner conflict and, therefore, full of contradictions: he is both realist and mystic, both attached to his native place and hostile to England, Christian and Pagan, feminist and misogynist. His self is divided, his life split into different existences; he is a very self-contradictory person

with two halves always fighting for supremacy. For example, as regards his relationship with Jessie Chambers, the division refers essentially to a conflict between the “spiritual” and the “physical” self:

'The trouble is, you see, I am not one man, but two'... 'It's true, it is so. I am two men inside one skin'... 'One man in me loves you [Jessie], but the other never can love you'... 'One part of my nature needs you deeply'... 'For some things I cannot do without you. But the other side of me wants someone else, someone different'.<sup>1</sup>

It constitutes an element of incompatibility with Jessie who, by contrast, cannot accept both Lawrence's dual nature and his way of conceiving their relationship:

There was a deadlock. I could not acknowledge his dual nature, and he continued to assert it. He was continually trying to find some basis for a relationship between us other than the natural one of love and marriage... Such a foundation for friendship was totally unacceptable to me because I was convinced that so far as I was concerned love was a whole, a synthesis of all that I was.<sup>2</sup>

The structure of this opposition, then, portrays his personality and his literary writings: one side of the man, the “emotional” self, on the one hand; his *alter ego*, the “intellectual” self, on the other hand—these alternate in his different works.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jessie Chambers, *D.H. Lawrence. A Personal Record* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1965, 11nd ed.), pp. 136-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The development of Lawrence's character, however, originates mostly from his family background. Harsh conflicts often happened between his parents because of their belonging to different social classes: his father was a miner, while his mother was a "petit bourgeois". In fact, describing his parents, Lawrence writes:

My father was a collier, and only a collier, nothing praiseworthy about him. He wasn't even respectable, in so far as he got drunk rather frequently, never went a chapel, and was usually rude to his little immediate bosses at the pit... My mother was, I suppose, superior. She came from town, and belonged really to the lower bourgeoisie.<sup>3</sup>

Such a discrepancy leads Lawrence to deal with problems concerning his parents' contrasting social origins in most of his works, and has strong effects on his personality. He feels split between his awareness of the advantages that working-class life style has—a direct connection with nature—and his desire to widen new horizons by embracing modern industrialized reality.

On the other hand, the Lawrence family is certainly an important cultural influence. In particular his mother helps the forming of Lawrence's character as a young writer. As a result, she gets involved in his early writings—*The White Peacock*, for example:

---

<sup>3</sup> "Autobiographical Sketches", in *Phoenix II. Uncollected, Unpublished and Other Prose Works*, ed. by Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore (London: Heinemann, 1968), p. 592. Hereafter *Phoenix II*.

I have mentioned the profound influence his mother had on his whole life. She dominated every side of it, and her one desire was to see him become a great writer... When he was writing *The White Peacock* he and his mother criticized it together, and he re-wrote parts of it until it satisfied them.<sup>4</sup>

Since she is educated, has been a schoolteacher and has written poetry, she really wants her son to mature educationally, socially and financially. Her ambitions are typically bourgeois—she is determined on his becoming a “professional” like a professor or clergyman:

She hoped her son, who was 'clever', might one day be a professor or clergyman or perhaps even a little Mr Gladstone. That would have been rising in the world—on the ladder. Flights of genius were nonsense—you had to be clever and rise in the world, step by step...<sup>5</sup>

By contrast, such cultural training would have been incomprehensible to his father, practically illiterate, and to most of the miners, that is, the traditional working-class culture of Eastwood. With whom is he going to identify—his father, the earthy sensual miner, or his mother, the intelligent, intellectual daughter of an engineer? That is the dilemma which has oppressed Lawrence all his life, and finally solved in his hovering between the “old” and the “new”, between an

---

<sup>4</sup> William Hopkin, in Edward Nehls, *D.H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957-9), 3 vols., p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> D.H. Lawrence, *Phoenix II*, p. 300.

“agricultural” and an “industrial” world, at the end of a crucial century of industrialization and a similarly critical phase in English culture.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, it would appear that the author's view of the world is based upon the fundamental conflict between the two opposing poles of “nature” and “culture”, which constitutes the original nucleus from which the series of dichotomies recurring throughout his works is derived.

According to him, the division of classes in society is an obstacle to a real living and to the acquisition of a definite self. As a result of that, a desperate quest for identity takes possession of him and permeates the whole Laurentian literary art.

Such a focal point of his literary discourse in terms of polarity also shifts to an opposition associated with precise spatial coordinates. On the one hand, there is England, with its industrialization and mass civilization; on the other hand, Italy, with its natural and pure values of a typically agricultural society.

In effect, Lawrence belongs to that group of artists, from Blake to Orwell, characterized by an *anti-industrial* sentiment. His family

---

<sup>6</sup> A fundamental contribution to the subject is Mary Eagleton & David Pierce's "Pressure Points: Forster, Lawrence, Joyce, Woolf", in *Attitudes to Class in the English Novel* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), pp. 101-8.

makes its fortune in industry: his maternal grandfather was a naval engineer, his father a miner and a skilful amateur mechanic, his elder brother George a manager of an engineering company. Nevertheless, Lawrence has never been keen on technology and clearly reflects it in his works. His cultural formation, then, develops a gap between him and the industrial society of the Midlands and leads him, afterwards, to abandon it physically in search of an ideal South.

Moreover, in contrast with a rural society, industry leads to a complete separation of work between the sexes: one sex works at home, the other in a factory or in a mine. Therefore, through his elopement with Frieda, Lawrence chooses to settle his phallic and sensual ideals within a mechanized reality. Clear evidence of it is one of his poems, "The North Country":

In another dark, black poplars shake themselves over a  
pond,  
And rooks and the rising smoke-waves scatter and wheel  
from the works beyond:  
The air is dark with north and sulphur, the grass is  
a darker green,  
And people darkly invested with purple move palpable  
through the scene.

Soundlessly down across the counties, out of the resonant  
gloom  
That wraps the north in stupor and purple travels the deep,  
slow boom  
Of the man-life north imprisoned, shut in the hum of the  
purpled steel  
As it spins to sleep on its motion, drugged dense in the  
sleep of the wheel.

Out of the sleep, from the gloom of motion, soundlessly,  
    sornnambule  
Moans and booms the soul of a people imprisoned, asleep  
    in the rule  
Of the strong machine that runs mesmeric, booming the  
    spell of its word  
Upon them and moving them helpless, mechanic, their will  
    to its will deferred.<sup>7</sup>

It seems worth stressing, in this respect, the existence of two traditions of anti-industrial literature in modern Britain: the “soft”, which praises the country house ideal, and the “hard”, which wavers between the nostalgia for a primitive way of life and a modern vision of reality—Lawrence seems clearly to belong to the latter.<sup>8</sup>

This dichotomy is reflected within himself: although he is aware of the gradual growth of industry and the consequent predominance of English mechanical way of living, he feels affected by Italian peasant culture and primitive identity. A simultaneous feeling of “attraction” and “repulsion” is deep-rooted in Lawrence's soul, and he in vain tries to find a culture in which man is revealed in his double nature, that is, with a “spiritual” and “sensual” being active in him—in spite of his

---

<sup>7</sup> “Rhyming Poems”, in *The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. by Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts, vol. I (London: Heinemann, 1964), pp. 148-9. Hereafter *Complete Poems*.

<sup>8</sup> See, in this connection, “Lawrence and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit”, in *The Challenge of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. by Michael Squires and Keith Cushman (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp. 77-87.



praise of blood, which characterizes the Italian way of thinking, he realises a progressive triumph of mind over body.

## **ii. Lawrence's idea of polarity and old religious form**

The concept of a reality in terms of opposites had been developed for the first time by a religious sect going back to a thousand years before Christianity, Zoroastrianism. According to its religious philosophy, the universe is interpretable if seen in terms of dynamic relationships between light and dark, good and evil. The essence of creation, then, resides in their inter-opposition: the contrasting elements have to balance each other to let creative powers come into being. Man, on the other hand, does not belong both to the “good” side and the “bad” one: he always supports either of them in accordance with his own will.

Although Lawrence disdains eastern philosophies, he follows the statement of Zoroastrian religion in his philosophical writings, such as “The Crown”, which shows a certain affinity with the basic idea of Zoroastrianism:

And there is no rest, no cessation from the conflict. For we are two opposites which exist by virtue of our inter-opposition. Remove the opposition and there is a collapse, a sudden crumbling into universal darkness.<sup>9</sup>

This is best expressed by him in a particular scientific word, "syzygy", which in astronomy denotes the conjunction of two different celestial bodies without the loss of their own identity. In particular, it indicates either the conjunction or the opposition of the moon: the moon is in "syzygy" when the sun, moon and earth are ranged nearly along a straight line. In general terms, it refers in life to a state of fruitful balance of the two opposing forces.<sup>10</sup>

In other words, "syzygy" best describes the ontology which Lawrence inherits from English Puritanism, and his major accomplishment undoubtedly consists in his reworking of the ancient and universal symbols of duality in a modern British context.

A more intense influence on Lawrence certainly dates back to his Puritan background, although he has always rejected the basic Puritan distinction of "good" and "evil".

---

<sup>9</sup> *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays*, ed. by Michael Herbert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.256. Hereafter *Reflections*.

<sup>10</sup> *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* are two clear examples of the constant evidence of duality—the male and female, symbolized by light and dark—finally lead to a balance through the achievement of a "syzygy". For the concept of the Laurentian "syzygy" and its implications, see La Von B. Carroll, "Syzygy: A Study of the Light-Dark Imagery in Five of the Novels of D.H. Lawrence", *Proceedings of the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*, XLIV, 1967, pp. 139-49.

There is a significant comment on this in *Phoenix II*:

I think it was good to be brought up a Protestant: and among Protestants, a Nonconformist, and among Nonconformists, a Congregationalist. Which sounds pharisaic. But I should have missed bitterly a direct knowledge of the Bible, and a direct relation to Galilee and Canaan, Moab and Kedron, those places that never existed on earth. And in the Church of England one would hardly have escaped those snobbish hierarchies of class, which spoil so much for a child. And the Primitive Methodists, when I was a boy, were always having 'revivals' and being 'saved', and I always had a horror of being saved.<sup>11</sup>

He is quite contradictory in his beliefs: on the one hand, he tends to emphasize the traditional aspect of Congregationalism, its sense of the past, and its particular devotion to the Bible; on the other hand, he stresses the tendency of the Chapel to abolish the imaginative power of the Bible—an opinion clearly expressed in *Apocalypse* (1931):

From earliest years, right into manhood, like any other nonconformist child, I had the Bible poured every day into my helpless consciousness, till there came almost a saturation point... Today, although I have 'forgotten' my Bible, I need only begin to read a chapter to realise that I 'know' it with an almost nauseating fixity. And I must confess, my first reaction is one of dislike, repulsion, and even resentment. My very instincts *resent* the Bible.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, the author here traces a precise distinction between Congregationalism and an evangelising movement, Primitive Methodism, and especially focuses on their nature:

---

<sup>11</sup> "Hymns in a Man's Life", in *Phoenix II*, p. 600.

<sup>12</sup> *Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelation*, ed. by Mara Kalnins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 59.

the men especially of the Primitive Methodist Chapels... these colliers who spoke heavy dialect and ran the 'Pentecost'... They came in from the pit and sat down to their dinners with a bang, and their wives and daughters ran to wait on them quite cheerfully, and their sons obeyed them without overmuch resentment...My mother, who was a Congregationalist, never set foot in a Primitive Methodist Chapel in her life, I suppose. And she was certainly not prepared to be humble to her husband.<sup>13</sup>

In other words, if Primitive Methodism is considered by him predominantly proletarian, Congregationalism is neatly a middle-class movement.<sup>14</sup>

However, Lawrence is probably more affected by the tradition of the Congregational Church, a more stable and homogeneous institution, with a democratic organisation. In fact, his religious formation is essentially to be considered in terms of individualism, and this is undoubtedly a central idea of Congregationalism.<sup>15</sup>

As a matter of fact, the Congregationalist Church in Eastwood constitutes the kernel of social life for the Lawrences. In one of his novels, *The Lost Girl* (1920), the author depicts the social life at Eastwood, pointing out his contradictory relationship with that social life . He particularly shows Alvina's girlhood and adolescence at

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>14</sup> Lawrence's opinion corresponds accurately to historical facts. See, in this connection, Graham Holderness, "History and Culture", in *D.H. Lawrence: History, Ideology and Fiction*. (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Humanities Press, 1982), pp. 78-87.

<sup>15</sup> An interesting study of it is A. Wigham Price, "D.H. Lawrence and Congregationalism", *Congregational Quarterly* XXXIV, No.4 (1956), pp. 322-4.

Woodhouse—she is one of the main characters of the novel—which correspond to his own youth at Eastwood:

for social life she [Alvina] went to the Congregational Chapel, and to functions connected with the Chapel... Chapel provided her with a whole social activity, in the course of which she met certain groups of people, made certain friends... It is hard to overestimate the value of Church or Chapel—but particularly Chapel—as a social institution, in places like Woodhouse. The Congregational Chapel provided Alvina with a whole outer life, lacking which she would have been poor indeed.<sup>16</sup>

Although he emphasizes the advantage of an “outer life” which Woodhouse offers her, he also expresses the idea that even with it her “inner life” would not be fulfilled.

Such a situation reflects a crucial phase of Lawrence's life, when he goes to Nottingham University College (1906), and comes across most of the important philosophical, scientific and religious books—Carlyle, Darwin, Huxley, Schopenhauer, and others. At that time he starts questioning orthodox religion, and rebels against Christianity and the authority of the Chapel. However, he eventually comes to a solution by finding an alternative to the crisis of belief. As he writes in one of his letters, this alternative consists in turning to art, which consequently implies a radical split with the Chapel and its religious ideal:

---

<sup>16</sup> Chap.II, “The Rise of Alvina Houghton”, in *The Lost Girl*, ed. by John Worthen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 20-1.

College gave me nothing, even nothing to do. I had a damnable time there, bitter so deep with disappointment that I have lost forever my sincere boyish reverence for men in position... I lost my reverence, my religion rapidly vanished... Three parts of my time I was bored till college boredom became a disease... And lastly I was sore, frightfully raw and sore because I couldn't get the religious conversion, the Holy Ghost business, that I longed for. It was imperative that I should do something, so I began to write a novel.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, Puritanism was one of the few religious forms where dualism had survived after the annihilation of the Cathars by the Albigenses—the Catharist sect inherited the Manichean dualistic philosophy in southern France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Lawrence's hostility to Christianity is also related to dualism. In fact, the Christians rejected the northern Germanic idea of a world in terms of opposites in which man played an active role. On the contrary, they asserted a passive participation of man in nature because of the existence of a fixed divine scheme of things. Consequently, the concept of a man living only by an everlasting conflict upon which creation is based becomes the real motif of Lawrence's being, and dominates all his life.

---

<sup>17</sup> Letter of 4th May 1908 to Blanche Jennings, in *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, i., ed. by James T. Boulton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 48-9. Hereafter *Letters*.

His writings show, then, his desperate search for an essential unity in spite of all human contradictions: the element of *wholeness through conflict* is a pervasive idea in his works.

### **iii. Connections with early Greek philosophy**

Lawrence goes back and revives the cornerstone of early Greek philosophy, in particular the discovery of Herakleitos, flourishing towards the sixth century B.C. According to his thought, the world is at the same time "one and many", and consists of independent and contrasting things. The unity of the "one" and, then, a perfect harmony can be achieved only through the "strife of opposites". Everything is made up of two halves acting in opposite directions, but strictly related each other because of their belonging to the same process.

The strife of opposites is, therefore, a real "attunement": from that it follows that wisdom is but the perception of the underlying unity of the contrasting opposites. As Herakleitos writes it in some fragments of his book:

- 1) Men do not know what is at variance agrees with itself. It is an attunement of opposite tensions, like that of the bow and the lyre.
- 2) It is the opposite which is good for us.



3) Couples are things whole and things not whole, what is drawn together and what is drawn asunder, the harmonious and the discordant. The one is made up of all things, and all things issue from the one.<sup>18</sup>

Previously, the philosopher Anaximander had proclaimed, by contrast, that the existence of the opposites constitutes a wide gap in the unity of the One.

However, it is the opposite tension which maintains a state of balance between the warring polarities, subject to possible, even if temporal, interruptions. Similarly, Herakleitos shows that “day” and “night” are two sides of the same process and that the existence of one depends on its opposite. The same explanation could be applied to many other oppositions: heat-cold, wet-dry, good-evil, all being two inseparable and interdependent halves of the same whole, involved in a sort of dynamic interchange of “strife” and “harmony”.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> The title of the work of Herakleitos is not known, and all the information we have is inferred in the editions of the Stoic commentators. They divided the book into three parts—one dealing with the universe, one political, and one theological—, each one subdivided into fragments.

<sup>19</sup> A good introduction to the history of the early Greek philosophy is provided by John Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy*, a book which Lawrence himself used (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1908, second edition), in particular pp. 143-91.



#### iv. Lawrence and German philosophical tradition

Moreover, the influence that Germany philosophy has exerted over Lawrence is of remarkable importance, especially as regards the strong desire to link flesh with spirit.

The philosophy of antinomies appears in German literature for the first time in the seventeenth century with Jacob Boehme<sup>20</sup> and again half a century later with his compatriot Angelus Silesius.<sup>21</sup> However, it is from the Romantic age onwards—particularly with Goethe—that the notion of *polarity* becomes popular.

Goethe represents the *trait-d'union* between the English and German traditions, although his philosophy goes back to Neo-Platonists like Giordano Bruno and perhaps Plotinus.<sup>22</sup> His attempt to achieve a unity out of these polar contradictions is particularly prominent in his masterpiece, *Faust*, published as a whole in 1831. The first part deals with the speech of Faust, in which a clear conflict between two souls

---

<sup>20</sup> Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) is a German theosophist and mystic. According to him, God is the *Ungrund* or *Urgrund*, the original and undistinguished unity, at once everything and nothing, which, however, has in itself the principle of separation whereby all things come into existence. It is through the principle of negation, which in a way is identified with evil, that creation is explained. Boehme's philosophy is in fact an application of the principle of contradiction to explain the great problems of philosophy and religion.

<sup>21</sup> Angelus Silesius (1624-77), pseudonym of Johannes Scheffler, is a German poet and philosopher. He first practised medicine, but in 1653 joined the Catholic Church. Deeply influenced by Jacob Boehme, he wrote books on mysticism and several hymns.

<sup>22</sup> According to Plotinus, reality is essentially dual, and it seems, therefore, to be necessary to connect the ambivalences in order to create a *single unity*.

within him stands out; the second part, on the other hand, refers to the marriage between Faust and Helen, which symbolizes the union between these two souls: the northern with the southern.

After him, other philosophers follow the poetics of antinomies. Schiller is also affected by Neo-Platonism, and his theory tends to divide all things in two polar categories with the aim of bringing to a unity. Hölderlin's poetry is particularly concerned with a symbolic contrast lying between Christ and Dionysus and the endeavour to reach their fusion—such symbolism recalls the “Apollonian” and “Dionysian” duality in Nietzsche.

In other words, almost everywhere in German literature the polar opposites recur. Moreover, together with the notion of “polarity”, that of “synthesis” often appears among German thinkers and writers, a synthesis essentially consisting in the fusion of the opposites, or in the process leading to it—yet some artists, such as Kant, Kafka, Keller, and others, have not synthesized the antinomies, but have rather resolved the contradictions in some *higher* unity, leaving their worlds individual.

Several English writers, from Coleridge to Lawrence, have inherited the basic German attempt to attain an ultimate “unity of

being".<sup>23</sup> W.B. Yeats, an Anglo-Irish writer, stands out. In one of his writings, *Autobiographies*, he lets the reader understand that the only thing which really matters to him is the "unity of being", so recalling the same kind of synthesis as the Germans'. Nevertheless, later in his work, he also points out a difference within the similarity between the German writer Goethe and him:

but if I seek it [unity of being] as Goethe sought, who was not of that species, I but combine in himself, and perhaps as it now seems, looking backward, in others also, incompatibles. Goethe, in whom objectivity and subjectivity were intermixed, I hold, as the dark is mixed with the light at the eighteenth Lunar Phase, could but seek it... intellectually, critically, and through a multitude of deliberately chosen experiences... whereas true Unity of Being, where all the nature murmurs in response if but a single note be touched, is found emotionally, instinctively...<sup>24</sup>

E.M. Forster is undoubtedly influenced by German philosophy, but he does not succeed in achieving a synthesis. In one of his novels, *Howards End*, he expresses his basic thought through the motto "Only Connect": his main attempt, although unsuccessful, is to fuse the intellectual of Margaret Schlegel with the practical, business-like world of Henry Wilcox—yet Margaret is never totally one with her husband, in spite of her being constantly loyal towards him. Likewise, in *A*

---

<sup>23</sup> See, in this connection, Ronald Gray, "English Resistance to German Literature from Coleridge to Lawrence", (Chap. XVI), in *The German Tradition in Literature 1871-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 327-54.

<sup>24</sup> *Autobiographies* (London: Macmillan Press, 1955), pp. 354-5.

*Passage to India*, his strong attempt to find a link between Indian and Englishmen finally collapses.

Lawrence shows a different and more complete way of approaching dualism, which essentially derives from his closer relationship to Germany than any other English writer in consequence of his marriage with a German woman. Nevertheless, he expresses a certain aversion against German writers, such as Goethe:

I think *Wilhem Meister* is amazing as a book of peculiar immorality, the perversity of intellectualised sex, and the utter incapacity for any development of contact with any other human being, which is peculiarly bourgeois and Goethian. Goethe began millions of intimacies, and never got beyond the how-do-you-do-stage, then fell off into his own boundless ego. He perverted himself into perfection and Godlikeness. But do a book of the grand orthodox perverts. Back of all of them lies ineffable conceits.<sup>25</sup>

He instinctively tends to escape from the German nation as well as from the atmosphere permeating this country. As he writes of a post-war visit:

Out of the very air comes a sense of danger, a queer, bristling feeling of uncanny danger... The northern Germanic impulse is recoiling towards Tartary, the destructive vortex of Tartary... it is a fate; nobody now can alter it. It is a fate.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Letter of 27th March 1928 to Aldous Huxley, in *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, vii., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 342.

<sup>26</sup> "A letter from Germany", in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. by Edward D. McDonald (London: Heinemann, 1961), p. 110. Hereafter *Phoenix*.

He could be considered a pure *explorer* of German literary thought, as he reflects in most of his works. Close connections can be found between Lawrence's *Women in Love* and Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, both emphasizing a polar feeling of "attraction" and "repulsion" between two pairs of lovers, a conventional theme in German literature, but rarely found in English literary culture.

Both novels deal with the same mysterious affinity leading one pair towards a spiritual union, the other towards a less accomplished one. Although they do not come to the same conclusion, they share the basic concept of *hidden magnetism* lying beyond the story of the couples. *Women in Love* particularly focuses on the concept of *diversity within unity*: on the one hand, Rupert Birkin and Ursula Brangwen struggle in search of a vital fulfilment, which is intensely achieved, even if temporarily; on the other hand, the love of Gerald Crich and Gudrun Brangwen never leads to a reciprocal accomplishment.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Although essentially human, the author sometimes seems to write on a superhuman level—clear evidence are the savage descriptions of the mountains and the tender evocations of some flowers. At this point, the name of Nietzsche springs to mind since he has greatly influenced Lawrence's ideas, especially as regards the Apollonian-Dionysian polarity. On the impact of the German philosopher on Lawrence, see chap.III of the thesis.

It should not be undervalued the striking effect of Schopenhauer's philosophy on Lawrence.<sup>28</sup> He probably read Schopenhauer for the first time while being teacher at Ilkeston and, in particular, came across a translation of some excerpts from the philosopher's writings by Mrs. Rudolf Dircks,<sup>29</sup> which summarizes the core of Schopenhauer's thought.

His philosophy is a perfect expression of his unique personality and cannot be fully understood except in connexion with his character. Inner discord is the keynote of his life as in Lawrence's: the "subjective" and the "objective", "feeling" and "reason" are in perpetual conflict within him. He believes, therefore, the tendency of life to be to separate more and more the "heart" and the "head". According to his philosophical creed, the twofold universe is phenomenal and has not real existence but in our individual minds. Consequently, the true essence of the cosmos is the *will*, the active side of our nature, or *impulse*, of which everything in the world is a mere temporary manifestation, the key to the understanding of all things.

---

<sup>28</sup> An interesting contribution to the study of Schopenhauer's philosophy is Eleanor H. Green's article "Lawrence, Schopenhauer, and the Dual Nature of the Universe", *South Atlantic Bulletin* 42 (1977), especially pp. 91-2.

<sup>29</sup> *Essays of Schopenhauer* (Newcastle: Walter Scott, 1897). An essay in this book, which is annotated by Lawrence, is described in detail by Emile Delavenay in Edward Nehls, *D.H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography*, vol. I, pp. 66-70.

The world is through and through *will*, and also through and through *idea*. Will is the creative and the primary, the “thing-in-itself”—as the philosopher says; it is unitary, unchangeable beyond space and time, without causes and purposes. Idea, on the other hand, is the secondary, the receptive factor in things. Time is only in us a form of our thought, so that if you remove the will from life, there will be nothing.

In other words, it is through conflict that the impulse of the will is revealed. More than this, the struggle expressed in the will-to-power that happens between the sexes gives birth to what Schopenhauer calls “polarity”. According to him, polarity is:

sundering of a force into two qualitatively different and opposed activities striving after reunion... [This] is a fundamental type of almost all the phenomena of nature, from the magnet and the crystal to man himself.<sup>30</sup>

As regards man, the philosophy of polarity has this characteristic:

As man is at once impetus and blind striving of will (whose poles or focus lies in the genital organs), and eternal, free, serene subject of pure knowing (whose pole is the brain); so, corresponding to this antithesis, the sun is both the source of light, the condition of the most perfect kind of knowledge, and therefore of the most perfect delightful of things—and the source of warmth, the first condition of life, i.e., of all phenomena of the will in its highest grades.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Wolfgang von Löhneysen (Stuttgart-Frankfurt am Main, 1960), vol.I, p. 214.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289.



On the other hand, Lawrence accepts the idea of polarity in the individual, but focuses more on the sensuous knowledge through the animal body, a knowledge "intuitively" apprehended and lying in the kingdom of primitive and vital impulses, rather than "rationally" comprehended. Although he follows Schopenhauer's premise, according to which the animal body is the immediate object of knowing, he finally chooses, by contrast, to emphasize the dynamic aspects of the process of knowing. He finds the basis of this knowledge in what he calls the "solar plexus":

The solar plexus, the greatest and most important centre of our dynamic consciousness, is a symphatethic centre... it is a dynamic, pre-mental knowledge, such as cannot be transferred into thought...<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out the different dimension that Lawrence gives to his vision of polarity, especially as concerns male and female relationships.

Schopenhauer has a passive idea of the sex:

The growing inclination of two lovers is really already the will to live of the new individual which they can and decide to produce... They feel the longing for an actual union and fusing together into a single being, in order to live on only as this; and this longing receives its fulfilment in the child which is produced by them...<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Chapter III, "Plexuses, Planes and So On", *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (London: Martin Secker, 1930), p. 29.

<sup>33</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, II, p.685.



The will in man is revealed through his domination over a woman, while the will in woman is simply pregnancy. On the other hand, Lawrence tends to concentrate his attention on the idea of dynamism of sexual identity as well as on the "antiperistatic"<sup>34</sup> nature of polarity in general. He particularly stresses the idea of *becoming*, of perpetual change, in which the will fights for higher self-expression through the means by which man and woman reciprocally define each other.<sup>35</sup>

Clear evidence of Lawrence's sense of dynamism in the male-female polarity is *The Rainbow*, and it is openly expressed by his remarks on the relationship between Ursula Brangwen and Skrebensky:

But something was roused in both of them that they could not allay. It intensified and heightened their senses, they were more vivid, and powerful in their being... It was a magnificent self-assertion on the part of both of them, he asserted himself infinitely male and irresistible, she asserted herself before him, and she knew herself infinitely desirable, and hence infinitely strong. And After all, what could either of them get from such a passion but a sense of his or her own maximum self, in contradiction to all the rest of life?<sup>36</sup>

Here, the author also develops and elaborates Schopenhauer's idea of the existence of two simultaneous worlds at two different levels. In

---

<sup>34</sup> "Antiperistasis" is a Greek word expressing the action of two opposite forces which complete and need each other in order to be fulfilled in their wholeness.

<sup>35</sup> For the shared idea of polarity between Lawrence and Schopenhauer, see Allan R. Zoll, "Vitalism and the Metaphysics of Love", *D.H. Lawrence Review*, II, No.1 (1978), pp.1-19. Hereafter *DHLR*.

<sup>36</sup> Chap.XI, "First Love" (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), p.303.

fact, he expands the dichotomy to the split between the artificial industrial world of man—a world of phenomena—and the real life which exists in nature, the vital force of the universe. Moreover, he strengthens the philosopher's belief by attempting to reach a union between the two worlds in another dimension, *beyond* our empirical world of striving.

Nevertheless, however Lawrence modifies the idea of polarity, the basic *metaphysics of being* described by Schopenhauer remains constant in his thinking. The nature of all polarity is essentially *one of conflict* since each individual must be at once “related” and “opposite” to the other. This is best expressed in one of Lawrence's philosophical essays, “The Crown”, where he embodies dualism in the figures of the “lion” and the “unicorn”:

The lion and the unicorn were fighting... Why did the lion fight the unicorn? Why must the one obliterate the other? Was it the *raison d'être* of each of them, to obliterate the other?... They would both cease to be, if either of them really won in the fight which is their sole reason for existing. This is a troublesome thought.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> pp. 253-4.

## Chapter I

# The development of Lawrence's "philosophy" of polarity

### i. Relationship between philosophical writings and fiction

Several corresponding points join Lawrence's philosophical writings and his fiction, as they are concerned with the same problems. In all his works, the author tries to reveal his philosophy: in fact, beyond most of them there is not an attitude simply, but a philosophy.<sup>1</sup> They relate to each other, yet both maintain their own identity, so that they could be compared with two rivers flowing in parallel, but without intersecting.

The novel *The Rainbow*, written in 1915, could be considered the direct continuation of the problems left unsolved in the previous novel *Sons and Lovers* (1913). Afterwards, the author puts aside "The Sisters" for a while, and begins to write *Study of Thomas Hardy* (1914). In 1915 he stops writing "The Crown" with the aim of starting *Twilight in Italy*, consisting of a series of travel sketches written in

---

<sup>1</sup> A.R. Orage, "Twilight in Mr. D.H. Lawrence", in "Part I: The Art of Reading", *Selected Essays and Critical Writings of A.R. Orage*, ed. by Herbert Read and Denis Saurat (London: Stanley Nott, 1935), pp. 65-7.

1912-13. Finally, after reading John Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy*, he inserts another set of terms in *Twilight in Italy*, "The Crown", and the "Reality of Peace". On the whole, they share the same conception, dealing with a metaphysical vision of dualism, but expressed in a different way.

In one of the chapters belonging to the travel book that Lawrence wrote about Italy, *Twilight in Italy*, published in 1916—"The Lemon Gardens"—a series of dualities clearly emerges after revision:<sup>2</sup> tiger and deer, light and darkness, Italians and English, flesh and spirit, Father and Son.

The final solution of such contrasts seems to be *polarity*, that is, a proper relation between the opposites, expressing a state of high tension, where conflict is *transcended*. Therefore, there is neither the predominance of one side on another nor a mingling of them, but a state of interpenetration, a mutual complementary balance. The realisation of being, then, seems to be accomplished in the full awareness of unity in duality: this particular moment is called in

---

<sup>2</sup> The revision of the book comes out in 1913 in *Westminster Gazette* and *English Review*, and is evident in the first five sections, where new sketches are added: "The Crucifix Among the Mountains", "On the Lago di Garda", "The Spinner and the Monks", "The Lemon Gardens", "The Theatre".

different names by Lawrence, each corresponding to a specific writing—the crown, the rainbow, the rose, the Holy Ghost, and so on.

In effect, *Twilight in Italy* symbolizes a state of equilibrium, followed by a feeling of increasing desperation with the writing of “The Crown” and “The Reality of Peace”, as they reflect the dark atmosphere of the First World War; by contrast, the “Foreword” to *Sons and Lovers* and also *Study of Thomas Hardy* seem to be rather cheerful. *Twilight in Italy*, therefore, stands halfway and represents the *transcendent* success.

As a result, the sequence of these books should be seen in relation to Lawrence’s inner development: his mood gets worse and worse, from hope to despair as he carries on writing his works. A change of mental attitude is particularly obvious in *The Rainbow* and “The Crown”. In fact, when Lawrence modifies the latter, he has the redrafting of the former in his mind. Similarly, he has already written the first text of *Twilight in Italy* during the new elaboration of *The Rainbow*.

A similar continuity permeates the wartime philosophical writings: they could be viewed as a constant evolution related to Lawrence’s own consciousness. In this respect, *Twilight in Italy*

represents a fundamental step undertaken by the author in search of a transcending knowledge.

However, Lawrence's major endeavour in all these writings is to seize what is beyond himself and bring it to light. The proper way to follow seems to be the use of a figurative language rather than an analytical and conceptual form of speech.<sup>3</sup> According to him, metaphors can partly express the basic relation between "known" and "unknown". In fact, the main purpose of his art becomes the quest for symbols apt to examine deeply the duality of man's nature, in particular the relationships between the opposite forces of conscious and unconscious, body and mind.

Fighting at once in two worlds, the spiritual and the corporal, man desperately seeks his *wholeness* in the establishment of cordial relations between the two halves of his psyche. This point is clearly revealed in a letter that Lawrence writes to Dorothy Brett:

We are creatures of two halves, spiritual and sensual—and each half is as important as the other. Any relation based on the one half... *inevitably* brings revulsion and betrayal. It is halfness, or partness, which causes Judas...<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> See Michael Black, *D.H. Lawrence: The Philosophical Writings* (London: Macmillan Press, 1991), in particular chap. IV, "The philosophical works", pp. 109-19.

<sup>4</sup> Letter of 26th January 1925, in *Letters*, V., ed. by James T. Boulton and Lindeth Vasey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 203.

Recurring symbolisms aim at showing and emphasizing the persistent dichotomy between senses and intellect. Of remarkable importance is that between “heights”, where—symbolically—the intellect usually takes its place, and “depressions”, where the instinctive nature of the soul is located. The former is also symbolized by the sky, the world of the upper intellectual self, while the latter is symbolized by the image of the sea, the low world of the unconscious.<sup>5</sup>

On the one hand, the world of the spirit is also associated by Lawrence and other Modernists with the icy light of the “moon”, symbol of the female principle. On the other hand, the world of the senses connects with the hot light of the “sun”, symbol of male sexuality.<sup>6</sup> Wholeness seems to be reached when sun and moon become one inextricable beam, which means when the sensual man joins the spiritual woman.

Another obvious proof of these contrasting polarities is Lawrence’s topographical symbolism linked to an ethnical opposition:

---

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence thinks of “heights” and “depressions” as the upper and lower part of the human body in some of his novels like *The Rainbow*. See Daniel Schneider, “The Symbolism of the Soul: D.H. Lawrence and Some Others”, *D.H. Lawrence Review*, VII (1974), especially p. 109.

<sup>6</sup> According to Graham Hough, the “moon” and the “sun” often change rôles: sometimes the sun “is the active masculine intellect and the moon passive feminine comprehension; sometimes the moon is the cold light of abstract knowledge of the flesh”. See *The Dark Sun* (London: Duckworth, 1956), p. 225.



the “North”, the moon-world of intellect and the people living there, as opposed to the “South”, the sun-world of blood and its natives.

Moreover, the author often uses a floral imagery with the aim of stressing the fundamental duality: pure flowers, such as lilies and ivory roses, connote the “spiritual” side of man’s nature, while red lotus and marsh-flowers are associated with the “sensual” will.

Whichever symbolism Lawrence expresses in his works, his principal purpose is, however, to find the third thing uniting the opposites in a perfect dynamic balance. In other words, he desperately tries to discover the “Absolute”<sup>7</sup> within each polarity in order to reach unity and wholeness in the individual:

There are the two eternities fighting the fight of Creation, the light projecting itself into the darkness enveloping herself within the embrace of light. And then there is the consummation of light in darkness and darkness in light, which is absolute: our bodies cast up like foam of two meeting waves, but foam which is absolute, complete, beyond the limitation of either infinity, consummate over both eternities... And the clash and the foam are the Crown, the Absolute.<sup>8</sup>

Among the symbols used by him, the rainbow is likely to be the most effective as it expresses at its best both ideas of the transient length of things and wholeness. The rounded arc, which includes all the

---

<sup>7</sup> D.H. Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy*, in *D.H. Lawrence and Italy: Twilight in Italy, Sea and Sardinia, Etruscan Places* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 46. Hereafter *D.H. Lawrence and Italy*. “The Crown”, p. 259.

<sup>8</sup> “The Crown”, p. 259.



colours of the spectrum, from the purest and celestial blue to the bright red of the blood, evokes perfect unity of being. Consequently, it constitutes the point of contact between night and day, moon and sun, conscious self and unconscious impulses:

It is that which comes when night clashes on day, the rainbow... 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...<sup>9</sup> I am founded in the two infinities. But absolute is the rainbow that goes between; the iris of my very being.<sup>10</sup>

The corresponding metaphor, in religious terms, is the *Holy Ghost*,<sup>11</sup> which epitomizes both in fiction and philosophical writings the idea of a divine identified with the contingent, which Lawrence desperately aims at.<sup>12</sup>

Such a varied symbolism, emphasizing the dual nature of things, developed gradually in Lawrence's fiction. Until he wrote *The Rainbow*, in 1915, the figurative language was rather latent, but afterwards it became a basic element of his art, aiming essentially at grasping the world of feelings and thought.

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 266.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 284-5.

<sup>12</sup> See, in this respect, *Twilight in Italy*, p. 46, and "The Crown", pp. 284-5.

Nevertheless, a full understanding of the meaning which lies beyond the symbols is unlikely to be achieved and, thus, there will always be something obscure in Lawrence's writings—it especially happens when he uses a series of personal metaphors or technical terms which he has not defined before. Even Leavis, writing in 1930, finds it still difficult to penetrate the language of *The Rainbow*:

Behind these words we know there are agonies of frustration, deadlock and apprehension, but we see only words.<sup>13</sup>

## ii. **Two different ways of approaching dualism in *Twilight in Italy***

Of striking importance seems to be *Twilight in Italy*, as it includes what both the philosophical writings and fiction have.

The book consists of three travel sketches of different impressions received by the author in three separate dates: 1912, when he has his first experience; 1913, the year of his second experience and corresponding to the last chapter, "The Return Journey"; 1915, when he radically revises the text. On the whole, the travel writing

---

<sup>13</sup> F.R. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence* (New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd, 1972), p. 8.

reproduces the experience of a northerner, as Lawrence is, travelling from a cold and dark country—England—to a warm and sunny one—Italy—and, consequently, from a land praising the “intellect” to another one worshipping the “senses”; from a barren industrialism to a fruitful agriculture. In this respect, the Alps constitutes the border line between one side and another, and, particularly, a crucial point of convergence, implying not only a geographical, but also a spiritual contrast between two different civilizations.

Each sketch, then, reflects a different mental attitude in consequence of the several experiences Lawrence had, and which ripened his self.

Moreover, the final version, written in 1915, follows *Study of Thomas Hardy* and *The Rainbow*, and it is contemporary with “The Crown”, so that they all show the same metaphysical obsessions and preoccupations which worry Lawrence in that period, and which lead to his vain attempt to find a culture where man is revealed in his dual nature, that is, with a creative and sensual side being active in him.

It seems worth taking into consideration the evidence of such a pervading sense of dualism also in prose style: in some chapters there

are suggestive poetic passages, especially in "San Gaudenzio";<sup>14</sup> in others, the language becomes more formal and pompous because of philosophical matters. A clear example is "The Theatre":

What is really Absolute is the mystic Reason which connects both Infinities, the Holy Ghost that relates both natures of God.<sup>15</sup>

As a result, the philosophical section of *Twilight in Italy* is easily comparable with "The Crown" and "The Two Principles", all of them demonstrating Lawrence's desire to order his dualistic ideas coherently.

*Twilight in Italy* is composed of a series of sketches, full of philosophising and struggling "to show things real".<sup>16</sup> The first philosophical excursus is in "The Lemon Gardens":

The two Infinities, negative and positive, they are always related, but they are never identical. They are always opposite, but there exists a relation between them. This is the Holy Ghost of the Christian Trinity... The two are related, by the intervention of the Third, into a Oneness.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> See the opening paragraph of "San Gaudenzio", *Twilight in Italy*, p. 81.

<sup>15</sup> *Twilight in Italy*, p. 73.

<sup>16</sup> The sentence implies that the travel book "shows things real" in the invisible and transcendent world. See, in this respect, David Ellis & Howard Mills, *D.H. Lawrence's Non-Fiction*, in particular chap. 2, "Full of philosophising and struggling to show things real: *Twilight in Italy*" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 40-66.

<sup>17</sup> D.H. Lawrence, *Twilight in Italy*, p. 46.

During a first reading, some of Lawrence's opposites could seem to destroy each other, but finally the triad keeps its balance:

It is past the time to cease seeking one Infinite, ignoring, striving to eliminate the other... To neutralize the one with the other is unthinkable, an abomination... There are two ways, there is not only One... But that which relates them, like the base of the triangle, this is the constant, the Absolute... And in the Holy Spirit I know the two Ways... And Knowing the two, I admit the Whole.<sup>18</sup>

Here, the tone is lighter than in the chapters preceding it—"The Crucifix Among the Mountains" and "The Spinner and the Monks". It appears less transcendental because it is, partly, a vivid description of an actual peasant Italian family, Di Paoli, partly, a more ecstatic piece of writing concerning with dualism.

On the whole, the core of the book is centred on the dichotomy between Italy and England, but the key-word is *transcendence*, particularly discussed in "The Crucifix Among the Mountains" and "The Spinner and the Monks".

By expressing that state of being overcoming any distinction between one side and another, whether heaven and earth, light and dark, me and not-me, not above, and apart from the below, transcendence is powerfully embodied by the figure of the spinner,

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 46-7.

which expresses Lawrence's unmatched ability to communicate the "otherness" of different forms of life. In fact, she is described sitting on the terrace of San Tommaso:

Turning round, on the other side of the terrace... stood a little grey woman whose fingers were busy... She was like a fragment of earth, she was a living stone of the terrace... She took no notice of me, who was hesitating looking down at the earth beneath... And she was spinning.<sup>19</sup>

When she talks to Lawrence, she is not conscious of him as another mind outside her; by contrast, he is acutely self-conscious and experiences intensely her otherness:

I became to her merely a transient circumstance, a man, part of the surroundings... She was herself the core and the centre to the world, the sun, and the single firmament... She *was* the substance of the knowledge...<sup>20</sup>

Even when she looks at him, "her eyes were clear as the sky, blue, empyrean, transcendent",<sup>21</sup> belonging to the purest reach of the height.

A symbol of transcendence seems also to be represented by the image of the two monks, walking up and down, with a strange mental regularity:

---

<sup>19</sup> "The Spinner and the Monks", *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Neither the flare of day nor the completeness of night reached them, they paced the narrow path of the twilight...<sup>22</sup>

They differ from the old spinner, who contains all she does not know.

They ignore the world which is other, and go on walking:

the monks were pacing backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, with a strange, neutral regularity. The shadows were coming across everything, because of the mountains in the west... This was the world of the monks, the rim of pallor between night and day.<sup>23</sup>

As they pace the path of the twilight, they seem to abstract themselves from reality and represent, therefore, neutrality:

they paced the narrow path of the twilight, treading in the neutrality of the law. Neither the blood nor the spirit spoke in them, only the law, the abstraction of the average.<sup>24</sup>

Through the figure of the monks, Lawrence evokes another third term which links, but does not merge opposites:

the dark-skinned Italian ecstatic in the night and the moon, the blue-eyed ecstatic old woman in the busy sunshine, the monks in the garden below, who are supposed to unite both, passing slowly in the neutrality of the average.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out the twofold meaning of the twilight as border-line between night and day:

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-30.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

Night and day are one, light and dark are one, both the same in the origin and in the issue, both the same in the moment of ecstasy, light fused in darkness and darkness fused in light, as in the rosy snow above the twilight.<sup>26</sup>

More than that, the transcendent figure of the rosy snow opposes the neutralising image of the twilight:

Transcendent, above the shadowed, twilit earth was the rosy snow of ecstasy. But spreading far over us, down below, was the neutrality of the twilight...<sup>27</sup>

It also involves a conflict within Lawrence himself. The concluding paragraph does not give any solution, but goes on asking questions:

Where is the transcendent knowledge in our hearts, uniting sun and darkness, day and night, spirit and senses? Why do we not know that the two in consummation are one; that each is only part; partial and alone for ever; but that the two in consummation are perfect, beyond the range of loneliness or solitude?<sup>28</sup>

These unsolved questions perfectly reflect the doubts which assail Lawrence: he will fear to be partial and alone forever if his "transcendent knowledge" is an illusion.

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 31.



### iii. Laurentian image of a triangle in "The Crown" and "The Two Principles"

In "The Crown", Lawrence tries to give the reader a clear vision of man and universe through his creation of a myth in which animals stand for basic principles. A fundamental example is the conflict between two eternal opposites, the "lion" and the "unicorn". On the one hand, the former symbolizes blood consciousness and, consequently, flesh, darkness, God the Father. His bird sign is the eagle, or the hawk, which stands for power. On the other hand, the latter, as traditional defender of virgins, is the symbol of spirit, self-consciousness, light, God the Son. His sky sign is, therefore, the dove of peace:

the unicorn of virtue and virgin spontaneity, he got the Crown slipped over the eyes, like a circle of utter light, and has gone mad with the extremity of light: whilst the lion of power, and splendour, his own Crown of supreme night settled down upon it, roars in agony of imprisoned darkness.<sup>29</sup>

A clear parallel could be traced with *Twilight in Italy* as regards the dichotomy between two animal tropes.<sup>30</sup> In the chapter "The Spinner and the Monks", the author makes a distinction between two

---

<sup>29</sup> *Reflections*, p. 259.

<sup>30</sup> An interesting study of Lawrence's use of animal tropes and symbols is provided by Kenneth Inniss, *D.H. Lawrence's Bestiary. A Study of His Use of Animal Trope and Symbol*, especially "Fighting for the Crown. *The Rainbow*", in Chapter III, "The Animals in Fiction" (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1971), pp. 118-36.

churches, the church of San Tommaso and the church of San Francesco, symbolized respectively by the figures of an eagle and a dove:

there are, standing over the Christian world, the Churches of the Dove and the Churches of the Eagle... The Churches of the Dove are shy and hidden... The Churches of the Eagle stand high... as if they challenged the world below... The Church of San Francesco was a Church of the Dove. I passed it several times, in the dark, silent, little square... But the Church of San Tommaso perched over the village... the thin old church standing above in the light...<sup>31</sup>

It is worth noting that this dualism is not a mere dichotomy, but rather a conflict: the two sides are not merely contrasted with each other, but they are active in opposition. The very *raison d'être* of each of them is to obliterate the other: it is in the struggle itself, therefore, not in its end, that the opponents find their consummation.

Although Lawrence attempts to abolish such a dual conception of things, he afterwards realises both the existence of dualism and the necessity of a mutual exchange, the need for what the other has. As he expresses it in one of his essays, "The Two Principles", the cosmos is twofold and works through the mutual union and opposition of the basic polarities of "fire" and "water":

---

<sup>31</sup> *Twilight in Italy*, p. 19.

We know that in its essence the living plasm is twofold. In the same way the dynamic elements of material existence are dual, the fire and the water. These two cosmic elements are pure mutual opposites, and on their opposition the material universal is established.<sup>32</sup>

Consequently, all creation, the entire world finds its meaning, that is, order and balance, in paired opposites because “in the tension of opposites all things have their being”:<sup>33</sup>

all creation, even life itself, exists within the strange and incalculable balance of the two elements. In the living creature, fire and water must exquisitely balance, commingle and consummate, this in continued mysterious process.<sup>34</sup>

An effective comparison between two seas within “The Crown” draws very well this kind of relationship:

There are two seas which eternally attract and oppose each other, two tides which eternally advance to repel each other, which foam on the land, and the land rushes down into the sea.<sup>35</sup>

According to Lawrence’s system, the concept of relationship is of fundamental importance. God, for instance, is revealed only in a relationship:

Behind me there is time stretching back for ever... This is eternity. Ahead of me, where I do not know, there is time stretching on infinitely, to eternity.

---

<sup>32</sup> p. 231.

<sup>33</sup> “Birds, Beasts and Flowers”, in *Phoenix*, p. 164.

<sup>34</sup> “The Two Principles”, in *Phoenix II*, p. 231.

<sup>35</sup> “The Crown”, p. 260.

These are the two eternities... They are two and utterly different... They are only *one* in their mutual relation, which relation is timeless and absolute.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, all the opposite forces do not fuse with each other since they must maintain their separate identities. It is a relation complementing one by the other, and this concept is also obviously expressed in *Twilight in Italy*:

The two Infinities, negative and positive, they are always related, but never identical. They are always opposites, but there exists a relation between them. This is the Holy Ghost of the Christian Trinity.<sup>37</sup>

As observed above, the author fully accepts the existence of a dual nature and a relation between the two extremes which, like the base of a triangle, establishes unity and order.<sup>38</sup> It is what Lawrence symbolically calls the Holy Ghost, a third thing which acts as a connective agent:

is the Holy Ghost which relates the dual Infinities into One Whole, which relates and keeps distinct the dual natures of God. To say that the two are one, this is the inadmissible lie. The two are related, by the intervention of the Third, into Oneness.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>37</sup> "The Lemon Gardens", *Twilight in Italy*, pp. 46.

<sup>38</sup> "We are tigers, we are lambs. Yet are we also neither tigers nor lambs, nor immune sluggish sheep. We are beyond all this, this relative life of uneasy balancing... Because we are both these, because we are lambs, frail and exposed, because we are lions furious and devouring, because we are both, and have the courage to be both, in our separate hour, therefore we transcend both, we pass into a beyond... (p.48) I am only half, complemented by my opposite...(p. 49) The lion is but a lion, half and half separate. But we are the two halves together... They live in one wide landscape of my soul (p. 51)." See "The Reality of Peace", in *Reflections*.

<sup>39</sup> "The Lemon Gardens", *Twilight in Italy*, p. 46.

This kind of relation is also expressed by the author through the interpolation of the crown, metaphor of eternal and perfect balance between the two forces: it stands alone, between and upon the constituents of this dual reality. The lion and the unicorn, therefore, fight “beneath” the crown, but neither of them must prevail, otherwise it would kill them:

The lion and the unicorn are not fighting for the Crown. They are fighting beneath it. And the Crown is upon their fight. If they made friends and lay down side by side, the Crown would fall on them both and kill them. If the lion really beats the unicorn, then the Crown... would destroy him...<sup>40</sup>

The belief in a third thing, the absolute of “the Dove that hovered incandescent from heaven”<sup>41</sup> called the Holy Ghost, is also mentioned in “The Crown”:

While we live, we are balanced between the flux of life and the flux of death... But while every man fully lives, all the time the two streams keep fusing into the third reality, of real creation. Every new gesture, every fresh smile of a child is a new emergence into creative being: a glimpse of the Holy Ghost.<sup>42</sup>

And then:

---

<sup>40</sup> “The Crown”, p. 259.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 263.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 285.

God is the utter relation between the two eternities... It is in the Beginning and the End, just the same... It is the Unrevealed God: what Jesus called the Holy Ghost.<sup>43</sup>

In "The Two Principles", it is called "the Spirit of God" which, moving between the contrasting cosmic elements of "water" and "fire", gives birth to light:

Between the two great valves of the primordial universe, moved "the Spirit of God", one unbroken and indivisible heart of creative being... The Spirit of God, moving between the two great cosmic principles, the mysterious universal dark Waters and the invisible, unnameable cosmic Fire, brought forth the first created apparition, Light. From the darkness of primordial fire, and the darkness of primordial waters, light is born, through the intermediacy of creative presence.<sup>44</sup>

A fundamental polarity, of "light" and "darkness", is also related to the image of the two rampant beasts:

we are incomplete, we stand upon one side of the shield, or on the other. On the one side we are in darkness... we say, 'Yes, I am a lion, my *raison d'être* is to devour that unicorn...' Gleaming bright, we see ourselves reflected upon the surface of the darkness and we say: 'I am the pure unicorn... We are enveloped in the darkness, like the lion: or like the unicorn, enveloped in the light'.<sup>45</sup>

The new leading motif, here, is the representation of the womb, but, particularly, its darkness and the light which enters it:

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 300.

<sup>44</sup> "The Two Principles", pp. 227-8.

<sup>45</sup> "The Crown", p. 255.

the womb is full of darkness, and also flooded with the strange white light of eternity. And we, the peoples of the world, we are enclosed within the womb of our era...<sup>46</sup>

The evolution within the womb takes place slowly, and generates, in sequence, three elements: flesh, mind, and consciousness. It is preceded, however, by antiphonal cries of the two opposites articulated in a real struggle inside the womb:

All the time these cries take place within the womb... cry after cry as the darkness develops itself over the sea of light, and flesh is born, and limbs; cry after cry as the light develops within the darkness, and mind is born, and the consciousness of that which is outside my flesh and limbs, and the desire for everlasting life grows more insistent... These are the cries of the two adversaries, the two opposites.<sup>47</sup>

The unicorn is implicitly associated with consciousness, the third term, the closest to the final light, while the lion is identified with flesh, and is nearest to darkness. In other words, two opposite triads exist and are made perfect within the womb: flesh-lion-darkness, on the one hand; mind-unicorn-light, on the other hand. They evoke the darkness of the beginning and the light of the end, but they are kept close in an endless conflict:

they are eternally opposite... And there is no reconciliation, save in negation.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 258.

Likewise, the idea of eternity and dualism, expressed in "The Crown", penetrates *Twilight in Italy*:

The Infinite is twofold... The consummation of man is twofold, in the Self and in Selflessness... They are two Infinities, twofold approach to God. And man must know both.<sup>49</sup>

In "The Crown", the absolute lion and unicorn, polar opposites, dissolve into other symbolic figures, the "tiger" and the "deer", embodying the power to transcend polarity.<sup>50</sup> When a deer moves towards a tiger, an incorporation of one into the other seems to happen:

when the opposition is complete on either side, there is perfection. It is the perfect opposition of dark and light that brindles the tiger with gold flame and dark flame... It is the perfect balance of light and darkness that flickers in the stepping of a deer.<sup>51</sup>

The tiger differs from both the lion and the unicorn because it does not have enemies, but only prey. What connotes it better, and distinguishes it from the other two animals is the verb "brindles", which resolves the duality into oneness, and especially suggests the idea that it incorporates

---

<sup>49</sup> "The Lemon Gardens", *Twilight in Italy*, p. 46.

<sup>50</sup> See, in this connection, Michael Black, "The Crown", in *D.H. Lawrence: The Philosophical Writings*, pp. 331-43.

<sup>51</sup> "The Crown", pp. 258-9.



within itself the opposite which the lion gets by conflict. The tiger is like Blake's "Tyger" mentioned in *Twilight in Italy*, even if with a stronger connotation:

The tiger is the supreme manifestation of the senses made absolute. This is the  
Tiger, tiger, burning bright  
In the forests of the night  
of Blake.<sup>52</sup>

On the whole, we are not identified with one of the two conflicting sides: a third element expresses that they are *relative* to each other and *necessary* to each other. It is not a sequential third state since it has always been there, transcendent and suspended over the conflict. Nevertheless, it has not been understood, and the lion and the unicorn have become mad:

now, in Europe, both the lion and the unicorn are gone mad, each with a crown tumbled on his bound-in head.<sup>53</sup>

It is precisely what is happening in Lawrence's present, where the war could be compared to "a frenzy of blind things dashing themselves and each other to pieces".<sup>54</sup> It is but something leading exclusively to death:

---

<sup>52</sup> "The Lemon Gardens", *Twilight in Italy*, p. 36.

<sup>53</sup> "The Crown", p. 259.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

as far as there is any passion in the war, it is a passion for the embrace with death.<sup>55</sup>

In other words, the author moves from fiction to reality. According to him, the real obstacle to the achievement of a *crown*, that is, a life in a state of activity is the increase of egoism within the individual, which contributes to the dissolution of life:

Mortality has usurped the Crown...<sup>56</sup> We live with the pure flux of death, it is part of us all the time. But our blossoming is transcendent, beyond death and life. Only when we fall into egoism do we lose all chance of blossoming, and then the flux of corruption is the breath of our experience...<sup>57</sup> Once we fall into the state of egoism, we cannot change the ego, the self-conscious ego remains fixed, a final envelope around us. And we are then safe inside the mundane egg of our own self-consciousness and self-esteem... Safe within the everlasting walls of the egg-shell we have not the courage, or the energy, to crack, we fall, like the shut-up chicken, into a pure flux of corruption, and the worms are our angels.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 290.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 279.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 286.

## Chapter II

# The poetics of antinomies in Lawrence's Italian dimension

### i. *Sea and Sardinia*

As in the previous travel book *Twilight in Italy*, Lawrence goes on to explore the hot and fruitful Italy as opposed to the cold and barren England in *Sea and Sardinia*, published in 1921. In particular, he attempts to look for the *Other* and to fuse with the *Other* in order to discover himself. The core of the Laurentian quest, already promoted in *Twilight in Italy*,<sup>1</sup> is, therefore, developed more in *Sea and Sardinia*.

A manifest sense of weariness and disappointment permeates Lawrence as a result of the immediate post-war period. Even Italy does not seem to him to be a *fabulous* country anymore:

Romantic, poetic, cypress-and-orange tree Italy is gone. Remains an Italy smothered in the filthy smother of innumerable lira notes: ragged, unsavoury paper money so thick upon the air that one breathes it like some greasy fog. Behind this greasy fog some people may still see the Italian sun... I find it hard work.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "Where is the transcendent knowledge in our hearts, uniting sun and darkness, day and night, spirit and senses? Why do we not know the two in consummation are one; that each is only part; partial and alone for ever, but that the two in consummation are perfect, beyond the range of loneliness or solitude?". See "The Spinner and the Monks, *Twilight in Italy*, in *D.H.Lawrence and Italy*, p.31.

<sup>2</sup> "The Sea", *Sea and Sardinia*, in *D.H.Lawrence and Italy*, pp. 29.

He has almost become misanthropic, if not misogynist: travelling by sea is, therefore, a great relief to him since it is also a way of avoiding human relationships.

To find three masculine, world-lost souls and, world-lost, saunter and saunter on along with them, across the dithering space, as long as life lasts!... Give me a little ship, kind gods, and three world-lost comrades.<sup>3</sup>

The voyage across Sicily and Sardinia takes ten days, mostly accomplished by train from Fontana Vecchia to Palermo and following embarking for Sardinia. It is a short but intense journey, during which Lawrence and Frieda make the most varied friends: hosts, vagrants, occasional tourists, and so on.

Of impressive effect is Lawrence's love of nature: clear evidence is, for example, the depiction of Etna, which strongly emphasizes the power of the volcano and, therefore, of nature as opposed to man's impotence in front of it:

I must look away from earth, into the ether, into the low empyrean. And there... Etna is alone... Pedestal of heaven!... Ah, what a mistress, this Etna!... She makes men mad... Not many men can really stand her, without losing their souls. She is like Circe.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> "As Far As Palermo", *ibid.*, p. 1-2.

The spontaneous blossoming of life around him is undoubtedly a source of wonderful inspiration:

A light in the Capucin convent...Very dark under the great carob tree...Dark still the garden. Scent of mimosa, and then of jasmine...Dark the stony path... This is the dawn-coast of Sicily... The dawn is angry red, and yellow above, the sea takes strange colours... The almond blossom is already out...bits of snow, bits of blossom...Only blossom.<sup>5</sup>

Frequent similes, with a similar striking intensity, permeate the book, and especially highlight the relationship between man and nature. Clear evidence is one particular analogy that the author traces between the Italians and the lemon trees, both being happy when they are in touch with their fellows:

Lemon trees, like Italians, seem to be happiest when they are touching one another all round.<sup>6</sup>

Although Lawrence considers Sicily a backward region, he also admires the people living there, who are genuine and gentle:

They are lively, they throw their arms round one another's necks, they all but kiss... I have found the people kind almost feverishly so, as if they knew the awful need for kindness.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 7; p. 10.

As in *Twilight in Italy*, but in a more incisive way, one of the Laurentian central themes stands out here: a great desire to escape from all the institutions. It is essentially a deep sense of revulsion against the mechanised society which leads him to approach anything relating to the primitive, and uncontaminated by civilization—that is, Italy. By staring at Mount Eryx, he finds an answer to such a new, but strong necessity of his spirit:

the hill near us was Mount Eryx... But why in the name of heaven should my heart stand still as I watch that hill which rises above the sea?... To men it must have had a magic almost greater than Etna's. Watching Africa!... I confess my heart stood still... It seems to me from the darkest recesses of my blood comes a terrible echo at the name of Mount Eryx: something quite unaccountable.<sup>8</sup>

Hence, a vivid longing for freedom flourishes within him. The changing movement of the ship highly fosters this desire:

To tell the truth there is something in the long, slow lift of the ship, and her long, slow slide forwards which makes my heart beat with joy. It is the motion of freedom... Oh, God, to be free of all the hemmed-in life—the horror of human tension, the absolute insanity of machine persistence... I wished in my soul the voyage might last forever, that the sea had no end...<sup>9</sup>

He even dreams of flying across the unknown space with the aim of clarifying his own soul:<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> "The Sea", *ibid.*, p. 33-4.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-7.

<sup>10</sup> The yearning for absolute freedom, here expressed through the desire to explore the unknown space, is one of the leading points of Lawrence's travel books. See, in this connection, Mary Corsani, *D.H.Lawrence e l'Italia* (Milan: Mursia, 1965), pp. 76-7.

Ah, the trembling of never-ended space, as one moves in flight!... Not to be clogged to the land any more... that has no answer now. But to be off.<sup>11</sup>

Lawrence sadly realises that Italy is also gradually being devoured by the lust of money. Nevertheless, he discovers that Sardinia is still an uncontaminated region. Different from the landscapes of both Sicily and Italian peninsula, Sardinia looks impenetrable and remote, spreading a deep sense of mystery and infinite:

The land passes slowly... It is hilly, but barren looking, with a few trees. And it is not spikey and rather splendid, like Sicily... suddenly there is Cagliari: a naked town... The air is cold, blowing bleak and bitter, the sky is all curd... It has that curious look, as if it could seen, but not entered...<sup>12</sup> It is a strange, strange landscape: as if here the world left off.<sup>13</sup>

While the peninsula is defiled by industrialization, with serious effects on the whole environment, Sardinia is essentially rural, rich in green areas where it is likely to find cows, sheep, as well as peasants working the land:

Italy is almost always dramatic , and perhaps invariably romantic. There is drama in the plains of Lombardy and romance in the Venetian lagoons, and sheer scenic excitement in nearly all the hilly parts of the peninsula... Italian landscape is really eighteen-century landscape, to be represented in that romantic-classic manner which makes everything rather marvellous and very topical: aqueducts, and ruins upon sugar-loaf mountains, and craggy ravines and Wilhelm Meister water-falls: all up and down... Sardinia is another thing. Much wider, much more ordinary... low, rolling upland hills...stone fences,

---

<sup>11</sup> "The Sea", *Sea and Sardinia*, *ibid.*, pp. 45-6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-2.

<sup>13</sup> "Cagliari", *ibid.*, p. 55.

fields, grey-arable land: a man slowly, slowly ploughing with a pony and a dark-red cow...<sup>14</sup>

The author sometimes gets the impression that he is seeing a typically Cornish landscape, which makes him feel nostalgia for the Celtic regions and, therefore, for the past:

I could hardly believe my eyes, it was so like England, like Cornwall in the bleak parts, or Derbyshire uplands... There were several forlorn-looking-buildings, very like Cornwall... the old nostalgia for the Celtic regions began to spring up in me... this Celtic bareness and sombreness and *air*.<sup>15</sup>

However, he also realises how different the modern English and the mediaeval Sardinian worlds are:

there is a gulf between oneself and them [the Sardinians]... Each of them is pivoted and limited to himself, as the wild animals are... 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' has never entered their souls at all... One feels for the first time the real old mediaeval life, which is enclosed in itself and has no interest in the world outside.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, English society tends to destroy the *ego* rooted in each of us because it is not guided by the sensual being, but by a mere product of intellect.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> "Mandas", *ibid.*, pp. 71-2; p. 84.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 82-3.

<sup>16</sup> "To Sorgono", *ibid.*, pp. 90-1.

<sup>17</sup> See, in this respect, Barbara Bates Bonadeo, "D.H. Lawrence's View of the Italians", in *English Miscellany*, Rome, XXIV (1973-74), pp. 294-5.



In this connection, it seems worth paying attention to the Italians' feelings towards the English: the former undoubtedly bears the latter a grudge since England has played the role of hegemonic country for years, getting high profits by a favourable exchange rate.<sup>18</sup> Of significant interest is the conversation of a travelling carpenter which essentially deals with the specific topics of war and money and, particularly, with the disadvantages of Italy compared to England:

Italy won the war and now can't even have coal. Because why! The price. The exchange! *Il cambio*... The English and the Americans flocked to Italy, with their *sterline* and their *dollari*, and they bought what they wanted for nothing... Whereas we poor Italians—we are in a state of ruination...<sup>19</sup>

On the way back by sea, an intrusive Italian passenger talks similarly about his own race:

The bouncer had once more resumed his theme of l'Inghilterra, l'Italia, la Germania... The Germans were down. But the English—what could be better for them than Italy now: they had sun, they had warmth, they had abundance of everything, they had a charming people to deal with, and they had the *cambio*!<sup>20</sup>

Although at first the author attacks Italy:

'Oh yes' said I, 'it's very nice to be in Italy: especially if you are not living in a hotel, and you have to attend to things for yourself. It is very nice to be overcharged every time and then insulted if you say a word... It's very nice to

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 282-4.

<sup>19</sup> "The Sea", *Sea and Sardinia*, p. 48.

<sup>20</sup> "Back", *ibid.*, pp. 194-5.

have waiters and shop-people and railway porters sneering in a bad temper and being insulting in small, mean ways all the time. It's very nice to feel what they all feel against you.<sup>21</sup>

he finally tries to justify the hostile Italians' behaviour towards the English by showing his innate sense of equilibrium and justice:

the Italians are not to blame for their spite against us. We, England, have taken upon ourselves for so long the rôle of leading nation. And if now, in the war or after the war, we have led them all into a real old swinery... then they have a legitimate grudge against us.<sup>22</sup>

Even if quite reserved, the Sardinians, mostly peasants, are, however, very sensitive, kind and generous:

It is extraordinary how generous... well-bred these men were... They were quite, and kind, and sensitive to the natural flow of life, and quite without airs. I liked them extremely.<sup>23</sup>

In effect, what Lawrence admires most in Italy are that savage primitiveness, typical of a virgin land pervaded by a powerful sunshine, the spontaneity, the hospitality and the profound human warmth of the natives:

I cannot tell how the sight of the grass and bushes, heavy with frost, and wild—in their own primitive wildness charmed me... the *essential* courtesy in all of them was quite perfect, so manly and utterly simple.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>23</sup> "To Nuoro", *ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.122; p. 134.

He is also fascinated by the Sardinian costumes, in particular by those of some peasants, extraordinary in their beauty and "maleness":

He is an elderly, upright, handsome man, beautiful in the black-and-white costume... On his head he has the long black stocking cap... How handsome he is, and so beautifully male!... How beautiful maleness is, if it finds its right expression... And how perfectly ridiculous it is made in modern clothes... One realises, with horror, that the race of men is almost extinct in Europe... The old, hardy, indomitable male is gone.<sup>25</sup>

Another basic theme, already emphasized in *Twilight in Italy*, is the sharp division between men and women, given their belonging to two opposite and, therefore, incommunicable mental worlds.<sup>26</sup> However, here, in contradistinction to the previous travel book, the author tends to exalt such dualism in nature:

In these women there is something shy and defiant and un-get-atable. The defiant, splendid split between the sexes, each absolutely determined to defend his side, her side, from assault. So the meeting has a certain wild, salty savour, each the deadly unknown to the other.<sup>27</sup>

By contrast, in *Twilight in Italy* he asserts:

There is no comradeship between men and women, none whatsoever, but rather a condition of battle, reserve, hostility.<sup>28</sup>

---

25 "Cagliari", *ibid.*, pp. 61-2.

26 See M. Corsani, *D.H. Lawrence e l'Italia*, pp. 75-6.

27 "Cagliari", *Sea and Sardinia*, p. 67.

28 "The Theatre", *Twilight in Italy*, p. 57.

In other words, the man-woman relationship marks one of the main differences between Italians and Sardinians. In fact, the latter do not know the “grovelling Madonna-worship”<sup>29</sup> at all, as the former do, since they essentially tend to take care of themselves—their motto is “Mind yourself”.<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, their modern lifestyle is gradually spoiling the Sardinians' destiny: the peasants tend to leave their lands for the town. As in *Twilight in Italy*, the symbolic opposites of “darkness” and “light” play a significant role, the former having negative effects on the people living there:<sup>31</sup>

It is curious what a difference there is between the high, fresh, proud villages and the valley villages. Those that crown the world have a bright, flashing air, as Tonara had. Those that lie down below, infolded in the shadow, have a gloomy, sordid feeling and a repellent population, like Sorgono and other places...<sup>32</sup>

By contemplating the Sardinian landscape and studying carefully the peasants' way of life and their costumes, Lawrence finally succeeds

---

<sup>29</sup> “Cagliari”, *Sea and Sardinia*, p. 66.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> This key dualism, corresponding to two contrasting way of living—a “sensual” life as opposed to an “intellectual” one—is the leitmotif of Lawrence's whole travel output. See, in this connection, Jennifer Michaels-Tonks, *The Polarity of North and South: Germany and Italy in His Prose Works* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1976), pp.159-71. Hereafter *Polarity of North and South*.

<sup>32</sup> “To Nuoro”, *Sea and Sardinia*, p. 131.

in understanding the kind of discovery he has made in Italy, and openly declares what he has been able to extrapolate:

One begins to realise how old the real Italy is... Life is so primitive, so pagan, so strangely heathen and half-savage. And yet it is human life... Wherever one is in Italy, either one is conscious of the present, or of the mediaeval influences, or of the far, mysterious gods of the early Mediterranean. Wherever one is, the place has its conscious genus. Man has lived there and brought forth his consciousness there... back, back down the old ways of time.<sup>33</sup>

On the one hand, the peninsula is threatened by the progressive developing of industrialization; on the other hand, it is to be considered a *humanized* country in consequence of a past succession of different cultures which makes Italy imbued with history and culture. By contrast, his experience in the primitive island of Sardinia lets the author grasp the importance of a process leading him to face towards the future:

But this morning in the omnibus I realise that, apart from the great rediscovery backwards, there is a move forwards. There are unknown, unworked lands where the salt has not lost its savour. But one must have perfected in the great past first.<sup>34</sup>

On the whole, therefore, the predominant symbol is the *dawn*, which clearly expresses the primitive, vital and energetic life, typical of the

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 122-3.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

Sardinians, and, at the same time, shows an increasing hope for the future, yet constantly undermined by the usurping menace of industry.

It is essentially the human landscape rather than the cultural movements which stand out in *Sea and Sardinia*.<sup>35</sup> As Lawrence explicitly expresses it:

Life is then life, not museum-stuffing... Life is life and things are things. I am sick of gaping *things*, even Peruginos. I have had my thrills from Carpaccio and Botticelli. But now I've had enough. But I can always look at an old, grey-bearded pleasant in his earthy white drawers and his black waist-frill, wearing no coat or over-garment, but just crooking along beside his little ox-wagon.<sup>36</sup>

But for a traveller like Lawrence, who is always on the alert, the act of observing and identifying the *Other* is also an act of self-discovery, an act of self-consciousness, which constitutes the leitmotif of the book.<sup>37</sup> Clear evidence is the representation of some workmen travelling by train to Sorgono. The minute study of their personalities implies an analysis of his *ego*:

---

<sup>35</sup> The protagonist of Lawrence's travel books is the landscape and, particularly, the relationship between man and landscape. His originality lies in his tendency to reveal the characters' inner life through the natural descriptions. Of significant interest is an aphorism by Henri-Frédéric Amiel: "Un paysage est un état de l'âme". See, in this connection, John Alcorn, "The Spirit of Place" and "Epilogue: Is Great Pan Dead?", in *The Nature Novel from Hardy to Lawrence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), pp. 42-59; pp. 112-123.

<sup>36</sup> "To Terranova and the Steamer", *Sea and Sardinia*, p. 150.

<sup>37</sup> An interesting reading in this connection is David Ellis, "Reading D.H. Lawrence: The Case of *Sea and Sardinia*", in *DHLR*, 10 (1977), pp. 58-9.

An unexpected irruption of men... They talk and are very lively. And they have mediæval faces...noisy, assertive, vigorous presences... They have no inkling of our crucifixion, our universal consciousness.<sup>38</sup>

If the ordinary events and the inter-personal relationships are carefully described, the brief and sporadic moments of Lawrence's detachment from reality arouse the reader's attention even more. It seems worth quoting, for example, the scene of the ship leaving Palermo, which gives both Frieda and Lawrence an illusion, yet fugitive, of escape.<sup>39</sup>

"Andiamo" could represent the key-word of the whole book: in effect, Lawrence's voyages clearly reflect his inner state of anxiety, stemming from a strong desire to evade any kind of constraint

Again, the old, first-hand indifference, the rich, untamed male blood rocked down my veins. What does one care? What does one care for precept and mental dictation? Is there not the massive, brilliant, outflinging recklessness in the male soul, summed up in the sudden word: *Andiamo!* *Andiamo!* Let us go on. *Andiamo!*... It is the reckless blood which achieves all...<sup>40</sup>

His cannot be considered, therefore, an idyllic sojourn among untainted peasants, cut off from the commercial corruption spreading all over Europe. Indeed, he is always in search of uncorrupted Sardinian peasants and finds some of them, but he is not enchanted by their

---

<sup>38</sup> "To Sorgono", *Sea and Sardinia*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>39</sup> See "The Sea", *ibid.*, p. 26, already quoted at p. 54 of this chapter.

<sup>40</sup> "Back", *ibid.*, p. 203.



meanness and greed. More than that, he easily gets bored with anybody, as, for example, with an Italian teacher and a fat man:

'Ah', she said, 'we Italians, we are so nice, we are so good. Noi, siamo così buoni. We are so good-natured. But others, they are not buoni, they are not good-natured to us'... And truly, I did not feel all good-natured towards her: which she knew.... And the fat man murmured bitterly *già! già!*—ay! ay! Her impertinence and the fat man's quite bitterness stirred my bile.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, what Lawrence appreciates most among the Sardinians is that sense of pride and integrity which lets them lead an intense and lively life. Although it is a region in process of renewal, Sardinia seems still to retain the traces of an ancient way of life which has tenaciously braved modernity, and has given the island a more positive image than modern Italy, corrupted by the greed for money.

Despite his essentially negative depiction of the Italian, the author eventually interpolates a puppet show with the aim of showing how that sensual spirit, deep-rooted in the southern people, still exists, even if under the oppressive burden of a mechanised life:<sup>42</sup>

the generous, hot southern blood, so subtle and spontaneous, that asks for blood contact, not for mental communion or spirit sympathy. I was sorry to leave them [southern people].<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.188; p. 187.

<sup>42</sup>The puppet show that Lawrence attends in Sicily reawakens in him the importance of being related to the blood—the voices themselves of the actors are so sharp and loud that they affect directly the blood. See J. Michaels-Tonks, *Polarity of North and South*, p.166.

<sup>43</sup> "Back", *Sea and Sardinia*, p. 205.



In other words, at first, it seems as if a gradual collapse in society was occurring, but by the end of the book the atmosphere pervading it is better than in *Twilight in Italy* . As a result, Lawrence, although he is aware that the Sardinians' life is changing, also believes that it will not be completely contaminated. If, on the one hand, they are partly tight-fisted men, on the other hand, the blood still beats in their veins. And it is essentially this strong belief which leads Lawrence to trust in a more prosperous future.

## ii. *Etruscan Places*

After his second sojourn in Italy, Lawrence becomes aware that the Italian rural life is gradually succumbing to the modern process of mechanization, although there are still some small uncontaminated spots, such as Sardinia. According to him, modern man is moving towards his self-annihilation: hence, his longing for seeking refuge in the past with the aim of regaining the traces of an extinct race.

After years of wandering all around the world, the author realises that Italy is his real home, the Mediterranean his sea, the gods of wine and olive-tree the only ones who would never betray him. It is exactly here, then, that he believes he can find a race in perfect harmony with the cosmos.

In his last travel book, *Etruscan Places*, written in 1927, but published posthumously in 1932, Lawrence analyses certain aspects already expressed in *Twilight in Italy* and *Sea and Sardinia*, yet adding something new. He starts with a strong attack on corrupted English society, ruled by the rational mentality of the industrial age, and goes on to search for an *absolute truth* coming from the reconciliation between two polarities—"senses" and "mind"—yet, such a synthesis is

proved to be unreachable. Finally, he examines the relations between man and the universe by deeply exploring the past of the old and mysterious Mediterranean civilization of Etruria in order to grasp the full meaning of the origin of life—in fact, he considers the Etruscans the holders of that instinctive consciousness which we have lost and which the author himself is desperately looking for.

The book gives a wonderful vision of the reviving Etruscan world: the author is able to get to the heart of the mysterious Etruscan life devoid of that neat division, typically modern, between body and mind, instinct and reason. Of fundamental importance for him is also the Etruscan conception of the after-life as a mere and natural continuance of the survival of both body and soul after death.<sup>44</sup>

The book partly describes Lawrence's visit to the Etruscan places in Italy—Cerveteri, Tarquinia, Vulci and Volterra—together with an American friend, Earl Brewster, and partly explains the author's metaphysics of his last period. His first intention was to set out on a second journey to those places in order to write another volume, but he could not carry out his plan because of a worsening of his illness.

---

<sup>44</sup> The vision of death is the leitmotif of some of Lawrence's later works—*The Man Who Died* (1928), *Last Poems* (1929) and *Apocalypse* (1929)—which constitute the core of the Laurentian theory about the mysteries of existence.

The author essentially attempts to show how modern Italy appears twenty years back in those places rather than to meditate deeply on the old Etruria. He is particularly interested, for example, in a baker he meets in a café before getting to Vulci, at Montalto di Castro:

A dusty little baker, a small man full of energy, as little Italians often are, came in and asked for a drink... the baker's mare and the baker's youth were our only hope.<sup>45</sup>

Likewise, he gets involved while depicting Luigi, the boy who drives Lawrence and his friend to Vulci:

The driver, Luigi, told me his father had been also a *guardiano*, a herdsman in this district, his five sons following him. And he was so glad to get out again, out of Montalto. The father, however, had died, a brother had married and lived in the family house, and Luigi had gone to help the baker in Montalto. But he was not happy: caged. He revived and became alert once more out in the Maremma spaces. He had lived more or less alone all his life... and loneliness, space, was precious to him, as it is to a moorland bird.<sup>46</sup>

A similar feeling of attraction is manifest in him when he refers to ancient times:

There are references to them [the Etruscans] in Latin writers. But of first-hand knowledge we have nothing except what the tombs offer. So to the tombs we must go: or to the museums containing the things that have been rifled from the tombs... I was instinctively attracted to them... Either there is instant sympathy, or instant contempt and indifference.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> "Vulci", *Etruscan Places*, in *D.H. Lawrence and Italy*, pp. 81-2.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>47</sup> "Cerveteri", *ibid.*, p. 1.

By contrast, the author is bewildered by the behaviour of a German archaeologist who takes his friend and him to the tombs of Tarquinia. He is the prototype of the modern man, interested in German studies about the Etruscans, yet considering them as good as worthless, but for the fact that this research would allow him to earn his living:

[He] doesn't think much of any place; doesn't think much of the Etruscans...knows the tombs of Tarquinia very well, having been here, and stayed here, twice before; doesn't think much of them... is staying in the other hotel, not Gentile's, because it is still cheaper... Not much worth—doesn't amount to anything—seems to be his favourite phrase, as it is the favourite place of almost all young people to-day. Nothing amounts to anything for the young.<sup>48</sup>

Whenever Lawrence gives a subtle interpretation of the symbols of the Etruscan paintings, the young scientist asserts that they do not have any meaning:

I asked the German boy about the Etruscan places along the coast: Volci, Vetulonia, Populonia. His answer was always the same: 'Nothing! Nothing! There is nothing there!'<sup>49</sup>

Even while describing the picture of a lion with the second head, he asserts:

---

<sup>48</sup> "The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia", *ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>49</sup> "Vulci", *ibid.*, p. 80.

'What is the meaning of this lion with the second head and neck?' I asked the German. He shrugged his shoulders and said: 'Nothing'. It meant nothing to him, because nothing except the A B C of facts means anything to him. He is a scientist, and when he doesn't want a thing to have a meaning it is, *ipso facto*, meaningless.<sup>50</sup>

Another leading point developed here is the "sense of touch" between man and woman—it will be strongly stressed also in the later novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*:

one of the charms of the Etruscan paintings: they really have the sense of touch; the people and the creatures are really in touch. It is one of the rarest qualities, in life as well as in art... Here, in this faded Etruscan painting, there is a quiet flow of touch that unites the man and the woman on the couch...<sup>51</sup>

Clear evidence are the Etruscan sculptures, many of them representing two fundamental symbols of sex, the "phallus" and the "arx":

By the doorway of some tombs there is a carved stone house... The guide boy... mutters that every woman's tomb had one of these stone houses or chests over it... and every man's tomb had one of the phallic stones, or lingams... The stone house, as the boy calls it, suggests the Noah's Ark without the boat part: the Noah's Ark box we had as children, full of animals. And that is what it is, the Ark, the *arx*, the womb... The womb, the ark of the covenant, in which lies the mystery of eternal life... The Etruscan consciousness was rooted quite blithely in these symbols, the phallus and the arx.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> "The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia", *ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45-6.

<sup>52</sup> "Cerveteri", *ibid.*, pp. 13-4.

However, the kernel of the book deals with the annihilation of a civilization which, although guided by natural instinct and a complete identity with the cosmos, must be wiped out by the gods of Puritanism, embodied in the figure of the Romans. As Lawrence expresses it at the very beginning of the book:

The Etruscans, as everyone knows, were the people who occupied the middle of Italy in early Roman days, and whom the Romans, in their usual neighbourly fashion, wiped out entirely in order to make room for Rome with a very big R... They did wipe out the Etruscan existence as a nation and a people. However, this seems to be the inevitable result of expansion with a big E, which is the sole *raison d'être* of people like the Romans.<sup>53</sup>

In contrast with the Romans' greed for power, the Etruscans mainly aim at achieving a "full" life: Etruscan figurative art, including vases, sarcophagi, urns and painted tombs, carries evidence of such an intense physical life which Lawrence aspires to. Of significant interest are the remarks he makes on his visit to Cerveteri:

The things they did, in their easy centuries, are as natural and easy as breathing. They leave the breast breathing freely and pleasantly, with a certain fullness of life. Even the tombs. And that is the true Etruscan quality: ease, naturalness, and an abundance of life, no need to force the mind or the soul in any direction... Everything was in terms of life, of living.<sup>54</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

He feels mysteriously attracted by them as soon as he enters the museum of Perugia:

Myself, the first time I consciously saw Etruscan things, in the museum at Perugia I was instinctively attracted to them.<sup>55</sup>

While visiting the necropolis, he is fascinated by the sight of the tombs of men symbolized by the “phallus” and those of women by the “arx”. This is the reason why the Etruscans are accused of immorality by the Romans: the love of life is considered “vicious” by the great imperialists

The Etruscans were vicious! The only vicious people on the face of the earth presumably. You and I, dear reader, we are two unsullied snowflakes, aren't we? We have every right to judge.<sup>56</sup>

The Etruscans also become relentless pirates, and the Romans did not tolerate that:

And we know that the Etruscans, all except those of Caere, became ruthless pirates... This was part of their viciousness, a great annoyance to their loving and harmless neighbours, the law-abiding Romans—who believed in the supreme love of conquest.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> "Tarquinia", *ibid.*, p. 21.



Lawrence goes on to compare the Etruscans' lifestyle with the modern Italian one, and particularly highlights the deleterious effects of the Roman spirit on the present Italian sensitivity:

Brute force and overbearing may make a terrific effect. But in the end, that which lives lives by delicate sensitiveness... It is the grass of the field, most frail of all things, that supports all life all the time. But for the green grass, no empire would rise, no man would eat bread... Because the Roman took the life out of the Etruscan, was he therefore greater than the Etruscan?... The Etruscan element is like the grass of the field and the sprouting of corn, in Italy; it will always be so. Why try to revert to the Latin-Roman mechanism and suppression?<sup>58</sup>

He emphasizes how much more Etruscan than Roman the Italian of today is:

Italy today is far more Etruscan in its pulse than Roman, and will always be so...<sup>59</sup> sensitive, diffident, craving really for symbols and mysteries, able to be delighted with true delight over small things, violent in spasms, and altogether without sternness or natural will-to-power.<sup>60</sup>

It is worth noting the Etruscan sense of warm cordiality as opposed to the typically cold and indifferent Latin spirit:

that soft Italian familiarity which seems so very different from the spirit of Rome, the strong-willed Latin.<sup>61</sup>

They are similar even in their physical appearance:

---

<sup>58</sup> "The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia", *ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> "Volterra", *ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>61</sup> "The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia", *ibid.*, p. 37.

When the Italian to-day goes almost naked on the beach he becomes a lovely dark ruddy colour, dark as any Indian. And the Etruscan went a good deal naked.<sup>62</sup>

One afternoon, while observing a bus surrounded by women saying hello to a friend, Lawrence perceives a certain similarity with the ancestors in the way of conceiving life:

And in the full, dark, handsome, jovial faces surely you see the lustre still of life-loving Etruscans!... warm faces still jovial with Etruscan vitality, beautiful with the mystery of unrifled ark, ripe with the phallic knowledge and the Etruscan carelessness!<sup>63</sup>

The Italian seems also to have inherited the agricultural system from the Etruscans:

The Etruscans, though they grew rich as traders and metalworkers, seem to have lived chiefly by the land. The intense culture of the land by the Italian peasant of to-day seems like the remains of the Etruscan system...The Romans changed it all. They did not like the country.<sup>64</sup>

In other words, the author firmly believes that something of the old Etruscan spirit is still alive in Italy, mainly in those places where the Etruscan tombs are, but also in the people's souls. In fact, it is in the tombs that the two friends find the secret of eternal life:

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>63</sup> "Cerveteri", *ibid.*, pp. 16-7.

<sup>64</sup> "The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia", *ibid.*, p. 77.

a pleasant continuance of life, with jewels and wines and flutes playing for the dance. It was neither an ecstasy of bliss, a heaven, nor a purgatory of torment. It was just a natural continuance of the fullness of life.<sup>65</sup>

The Etruscan paintings on the tombs convey to Lawrence the “fullness of life” that this race has enjoyed. For example, while describing the Tomb of Hunting and Fishing at Tarquinia, he highlights the presence of such a quality of life in the movement and in the colour:

One dolphin is diving down into the sea, one is leaping out. The birds fly, and the garlands hang from the border. It is all small and gay and quick with life, spontaneous as only young life can be... here is the real Etruscan liveliness and naturalness.<sup>66</sup>

Of great efficacy is the symbolism characterizing the paintings. For example, in the *Tomba delle Leonesse* —Tomb of the Lionesses— there is an egg painted in the right hand of a man, obvious emblem of procreation and, therefore, of life:

He [a dark red man] holds up the egg of resurrection, within which the germ sleeps as the soul sleeps in the tomb, before it breaks the shell and emerges again.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> "Cerveteri", *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>66</sup> "The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia", *ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

In effect, it is a rather simple and primitive symbolism, yet qualitatively deep:

the symbolism goes all through the Etruscan tombs... But here it is not exact and scientific, as in Egypt. It is simple and rudimentary... Nevertheless, it is the symbolic element which rouses the deeper emotion, and gives the peculiarly satisfying quality to the dancing figures and the creatures.<sup>68</sup>

More than that, the key-symbol of the book stands out here: the *darkness* of the tombs, emblem of the lively and sensual Etruscan life.<sup>69</sup>

On the whole, the Etruscan conception of life is essentially dualistic, and it is clearly expressed in the animal symbolism of the painted tombs:

The leopard and the deer, the lion and the bull, the cat and the dove, or the partridge, these are part of the great duality... But they do not represent good action and evil action... The deer or lamb or goat or cow is the gentle creature... These are the creatures of prolific, boundless procreation, the beasts of peace and increase.<sup>70</sup>

Similarly, Lawrence believes that the world is dual and that it is also necessary to set a balance within such duality. Significant, in this respect, is the description of lionesses and leopards lying in a parallel direction with a deer:

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>69</sup> An effective reading on the symbolism implicit in the light-dark opposition is J. Michaels-Tonks, *Polarity of North and South*, pp. 159-171.

<sup>70</sup> "The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia", *ibid.*, pp. 56-7.

on the other hand from the deer, we have lionesses and leopards... So these fierce ones guard the treasure and the gateway, which the prolific ones would squander or close up with too much gendering.<sup>71</sup>

In the Etruscan universe each single soul is dual: it essentially represents a creature with two souls being in mutual equilibrium

The treasure of treasures is the soul, which, in every creature, in every tree or pool, means that mysterious conscious point of balance or equilibrium between the two halves of duality, the fiery and the watery.<sup>72</sup>

Hence, Lawrence's urge to accomplish a synthesis:

But the soul itself, the conscious spark of every creature, is not dual; and being the immortal, it is also the altar on which our immortality and our duality is at last sacrificed.<sup>73</sup>

According to him, it is necessary to regain a connection with the cosmos in order to achieve a complete fusion—it is a notion which dates back to the essence of the old pagan religions.<sup>74</sup> It is a form of animism, which is undoubtedly more vital than the cold mechanization of western civilization:

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>74</sup> This conception derives from Lawrence's sojourn in America in 1922 and, above all, from his relationship with the primitive religions in New Mexico.

To the Etruscans all was alive... the whole thing was alive, and had a great soul, or *anima*... every man, every creature and tree and lake and mountain and stream, was animate, had its own peculiar consciousness. And has it to-day.<sup>75</sup>

The Etruscans, therefore, represent a real model society; even though faded, the tombs of Tarquinia infuse a clear "religion of life" into Lawrence, which essentially lies in a relation of perfect harmony among all the living creatures:

The natural flowering of life!... Behind all the Etruscan liveliness was a religion of life, which the chief men were seriously responsible for.<sup>76</sup>

It is not by chance that the author tends to mingle natural elements and traces of human industriousness: rocks, vegetation, old ruins and modern hovels, all fused in a single oneness. This interpretation of a bond between nature and history is particularly powerful in Lawrence's *poetic* prose. Clear evidence is the atmosphere surrounding the necropolis of Cerveteri:

There is a stillness and a softness in those great grassy mounds...<sup>77</sup>

The same harmonious setting is also discernible on *Le Balze*—the cliffs—of Volterra:

---

<sup>75</sup> "The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia", *ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> "Cerveteri", *ibid.*, p. 9.

From time to time, going up to the town homewards, we come to the edge of the walls and look out into the vast glow of gold, which is sunset marvellous, the steep ravines sinking in darkness, the farther valley silently, greenly gold, with hills breathing luminously up...<sup>78</sup>

It seems worth pointing out another peculiarity of Lawrence's philosophy which is easily perceivable between the lines: his contempt for the scientists, obtuse and prosaic profaners of a poetic world they cannot fully understand. They are neatly embodied, for example, in the figure of the young German archaeologist, whose profile is impressive: pale face, old velvet jacket, thick boots and a big camera...

a pale young fellow in old corduroy velveteen knee-breeches and an old hat and thick boots: most obviously German. We go over, make proper salutes, nod to the German boy, who looks if he'd had vinegar for breakfast...<sup>79</sup>

He has got that barren scepticism of someone who knows a lot: everything does not represent much to him, and, in fact, his favourite motto is *Nicht viel wert* —not much worth:

[He] is going to be an archaeologist, is travelling doing archaeology... be a famous professor in a science he doesn't think much of... Not much worth— doesn't amount to anything...<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> "Volterra", *ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>79</sup> "The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia", *ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

When Lawrence asks for his personal opinion about the meaning of a painted lion with a second head and neck of the Tomb of the Bulls, the young man answers:

'Nothing!' It meant nothing to him... He is a scientist, and when he doesn't want a thing to have a meaning it is, *ipso facto*, meaningless.<sup>81</sup>

In other words, an open conflict between the representatives of two worlds—research and intuition—stands out since they embody two opposite points of view:

The garden of the Florence museum is vastly instructive, if you want object-lessons about the Etruscans. But who wants object-lessons about vanished races? What one wants is a contact. The Etruscans are not a theory or a thesis. If they are anything, they are an *experience*.<sup>82</sup>

In fact, most of the cultural and artistic remains belonging to the Etruscans of Vulci and Volterra can be only found at the Vatican or at the museums of Florence and London:

If we want to see what the Etruscans buried there [Vulci] we must go to the Vatican, or to the Florence museum, or to the British Museum in London, and see vases and statues, bronzes, sarcophagi and jewels.<sup>83</sup>

---

81 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

82 "Volterra", *ibid.*, p. 114.

83 "Vulci", *ibid.*, p. 97.



Hence, Lawrence's polemic starts: he would like to establish a different and vital connection between readers and Etruscan civilization rather than to give mere theoretical explanations, as it is possible to find in a museum:

A museum is not a first-hand contact: it is an illustrated lecture. And what one wants is the actual vital touch. I don't want to be 'instructed'; nor do many other people.<sup>84</sup>

In effect, the scientific method of an archaeologist seems appropriate as long as the main purpose is to discover the meaning of the remains of old necropolises, and so far as the when and the how are concerned this method is entirely satisfactory. But if the man of science turned his attention to the inner why he would need the help of another kind of dowser, a dowser working on feelings and beliefs rather than on water, minerals or metals—a dowser of the psyche rather than of matter.<sup>85</sup>

Lawrence fully embodies such a psychological diviner. He is extraordinarily sensitive to the life pulsing within each fragment of matter and is able to perceive its quality and intensity, as the dowser

---

<sup>84</sup> "Volterra", *ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>85</sup> Such an appropriate comparison is well-constructed by Aldous Huxley in his article "Lawrence in Etruria", *Spectator*, CXLIX, 4 November 1932, p. 629.

feels the quantity and the depth of underground water or minerals by using his divining rod of hazel. He gives evidence about it through the results he gets by his dowsing expeditions in the tombs of Cerveteri, Tarquinia and Vulci, among the vases and the carved sarcophagi of Volterra and the painted tombs of Tarquinia.

Lawrence loves the Etruscans' whole-hearted acceptance of the universe and their respect for the "natural flowering of life"<sup>86</sup> to such an extent that he deeply feels the right way leading to the heart of the Etruscans.

### iii. *Mornings in Mexico*

Lawrence's separation from Europe and the journey towards America is undoubtedly the outward expression of his deep interior conflict. Once Sardinia brings him evidence of being less liveable than Capri or Sicily, the author feels disappointed and starts thinking that Europe has nearly finished all its resources:

We went to Sardinia—it was an exciting little trip—but one couldn't live there—one would be weary-dreary. I was very disappointed. So much so that I have been planning to go to America...Italy begins to tire.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> "The Painted Tombs of Tarquinia", *Etruscan Places*, p. 49.

<sup>87</sup> Letter of 2 March to Rosalind Baynes, in *Letters*, iii., pp. 676-7.

According to him, Europe would soon enter a deadly phase, while America has moved towards rebirth:<sup>88</sup>

I must see America: here the autumn of all life has set in, the fall: we are hardly more than the ghosts in the haze, we who stand apart from the flux of death. I must see America...<sup>89</sup> I am still thinking of going soon to America. I feel if I stay in Europe now I shall die.<sup>90</sup>

The unsuccessful Sardinian trip, therefore, leads Lawrence to search for a final resolution by gaining experiences in the new continent.

He leaves Sicily in February 1922 and encounters the reality of America, which at first causes him a certain disorientation.<sup>91</sup> As opposed to Europe agonizing beneath the weight of culture, America seems to be a young country, whose only tradition is discernible in the obscure, yet vital spirit of its native races: the mysterious Maya, Aztecs, the Red Indians tribes. The only way of salvation, therefore, seems to reside in the abandonment of the old, sterile civilization of the West and the quest for the recovery of a relationship with the aboriginal Americans:

---

<sup>88</sup> A full understanding of this theory is well expressed in the collection of essays *Movements in European History*, published in 1921.

<sup>89</sup> Letter of 26 October 1915 to Harriet Monroe, in *Letters*, ii., ed. by George I. Zytaruk and James T. Boulton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 417.

<sup>90</sup> Letter of 26 October 1915 to J.B. Pinker, *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> For the problems of Lawrence and America, see Armin Arnold, *D.H. Lawrence and America* (London: Linden, 1958); David Cavitch, *D.H. Lawrence and the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

I have decided to go to Taos in New Mexico. There are Indians there, and an old sun magic.<sup>92</sup>

For the first time, his experience in New Mexico goes beyond all his expectations and makes him particularly happy:

I think New Mexico was the greatest experience from the outside world that I have ever had. It certainly changed me forever. Curious as it may sound, it was New Mexico that liberated me from the present era of civilization, the great era of material and mechanical development.<sup>93</sup>

The travel book *Mornings in Mexico*, published in 1927, gives a detailed reflection of Lawrence's attraction towards the indigenous cultures of America and praises the discoveries he makes here.

Unlike the similar, yet separate essays of *Twilight in Italy*, *Sea and Sardinia* and *Etruscan Places*, which follow the order of the trip that the Lawrences undertake, *Mornings in Mexico* describes a quite unchronological journey, where psychological time has priority on chronological time. In fact, the first four chapters of the volume, "Corasmin and Parrots", "Walk to Huayapa", "The Mozo" and "Market Day", portray four mornings in Oaxaca, place full of sunshine and

---

<sup>92</sup> Letter of 2 January 1922 to Earl Brewster, in *Letters*, iv., ed. by Warren Roberts, James T. Boulton and Elizabeth Mansfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 154.

<sup>93</sup> "New Mexico", in *Phoenix*, p. 142.

carnations, where Lawrence and Frieda stay for a while in December 1924:

it is morning, and it is Mexico. The sun shines. But then, during the winter, it always shines... There is a little smell of carnations, because they are the nearest thing. And there is a resinous smell of ocote wood, and a smell of coffee, and a faint smell of leaves, and of Morning, and even of Mexico.<sup>94</sup>

On the other hand, the remaining four chapters include three on the Indian dance of New Mexico and Arizona—"Indians and Entertainment", "Dance of the Sprouting Corn", "The Hopi Snake Dance"—and one, "A Little Moonshine with Lemon", which is a brief retrospective daydream, written much later by the Italian shores of the Mediterranean, all of them relating to events in the spring and summer of 1924. Moreover, in this last section, the structure is of great effect: the first three parts are explored by a curve towards the centre which focuses on Indian religion as a ritual means of achieving a cosmic accomplishment. By contrast, the last one completes the year by presenting a curve outward through an Italian recollection: it also draws our attention more since Lawrence traces a significant symbolic comparison between Italy and New Mexico.

---

<sup>94</sup> "Corasmin and Parrots", "Mornings In Mexico", in *Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places* (London: Heinemann, 1965), p. 1.

The whole books reveals a clear dichotomy between the Indians and European civilization. As regards money, Lawrence notices that the Mexicans are not materialistically attached to money at all like, for example, the Italian peasants in San Gaudenzio and in Sardinia,<sup>95</sup> which pleases him immensely:

They [the Indians] are also good, can be gentle and honest, are very quiet, and are not all greedy for money and to me that is marvellous, they care so little for possessions, here in America where the whites care for nothing else. But not the *peons*.<sup>96</sup>

If European people live ruled by money, the Mexican *peon*<sup>97</sup> thinks very little of it because he lives in a continual present:

He [the Indian] is not naturally avaricious, has not even any innate cupidity. In this he is unlike the old people of the Mediterranean, to whom possessions have a mystic meaning, and a silver coin a mystic white halo, a *lieu* of magic... His deep instinct is to spend it at once, so that he hadn't have it. He doesn't really want to keep anything... Strip, strip, strip away the past and the future, leave the naked moment of the present disentangled. Strip away memory, strip away forethought and care; leave the moment, stark and sharp without consciousness... The instant moment is forever keen with a razor-edge of oblivion...<sup>98</sup>

However, what particularly affects Lawrence while travelling in the American Southwest is the Indians' religious life. It essentially

---

<sup>95</sup> See "San Gaudenzio", in *Twilight in Italy*, pp. 87-8; "The Sea", in *Sea and Sardinia*, pp.48-9.

<sup>96</sup> Letter of 31 May 1923 to Baroness Anna von Richtofen, in *Letters*, iv., p. 452.

<sup>97</sup> A Spanish word for "unskilled workman".

<sup>98</sup> "The Mozo", *Mornings in Mexico*, p. 26.

consists in establishing a direct connection with the natural elements of the universe, so giving the vision of a cosmos brimming with life:

In the oldest religion, everything was alive, not supernaturally but naturally alive... the whole life-effort of man was to get his life into direct contact with the elemental life of the cosmos, mountain-life, cloud-life, thunder-life, air-life, earth-life, sun-life. To come into immediate *felt* contact, and so derive energy, power, and a sort of joy.<sup>99</sup>

The Europeans, on the other hand, consider the cosmos a dead mechanism in consequence of their scientific cultural upbringing:

We [Europeans] make lightning conductors, and build vast electric plants. We say it is a matter of science, energy, force... We made the conquest [of nature] by dams and reservoirs and wind-mills.<sup>100</sup>

In other words, Lawrence discovers that the indigenous Americans have maintained the contact with the natural rhythms of life by practising their daily and seasonal rituals, and also becomes aware that the only way of letting modern man re-establish a direct communion with the vital universe is to turn his life into a ritual:

We *must* get back into relation, vivid and nourishing relation to the cosmos and the universe. The way is through daily ritual, and the re-awakening. We *must* once more practice the ritual of dawn and noon and sunset, the ritual of the kindling fire and pouring water, the ritual of the first breath, and the last... For the truth is, we are perishing for lack of fulfilment of our greater needs, we are cut off from the great sources of our inward nourishment and renewal, sources which flow externally in the universe.<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> "New Mexico", in *Phoenix*, pp. 146-7.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>101</sup> "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover", in *Phoenix*, p. 150.

In this connection, it is worth analysing the last sketch, "A Little Moonshine with Lemon", which clearly shows Lawrence's desire to go back to a less tense past. He believes that his wish is likely to come true only by relearning from the Indians the savage mysteries in order to live their natural life.

As a nostalgic fantasy of his return to Italy, the chapter brings evidence of the possibility of encounter between the two realities by re-establishing the *old ego*.

The initial epigraph, which recalls Cassius' bitter comment upon Caesar, clearly represents Lawrence's meditations upon himself: he has gone back to Italy, but he has really gone *beyond*.

'Ye Gods, he doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a Colossus... !<sup>102</sup>

However, rather than possessing the "little Ghost",<sup>103</sup> he seems to be possessed and confused by it:

*Sono io!* say the Italians. I am I! Which sounds simpler than it is.  
Because which I am I, after all, now that I have drunk a glass also to St. Catherine, and the moon shines over the sea, And my thoughts, just because

---

<sup>102</sup> "A Little Moonshine with Lemon", *Mornings in Mexico*, p. 80.

<sup>103</sup> In "Indians and Entertainment", Lawrence writes: "The only thing you can do is to take a little Ghost inside you which uses both ways, or even many ways", *ibid.*, p. 46.



they are fleetingly occupied by the moon on the Mediterranean, and ringing with the last farewell: *Dunque, Signore! di nuovo!*—must needs follow the moon-track south-west, to the great South-West where the ranch is.<sup>104</sup>

Manifest is the double identity and double location combining the youth of Mediterranean and Italy with the future-like view of America:

The Mediterranean, so eternally young, the very symbol of youth! And Italy, so reputedly old, yet forever so child-like and naïve! Never, never for a moment able to comprehend the wonderful, hoary age of America, the continent of the afterwards.<sup>105</sup>

This aspect of America is reflected in the vision of a small ranch in New Mexico on a winter night:

the horses are gone away, and it is snow, and the moon shines on the alfalfa slope, between the pines, and the cabins are blind. There is nobody there. Everything shut up. Only the pine tree in front of the house, standing still and unconcerned, alive.<sup>106</sup>

Of striking importance is Lawrence's stress on astral influences: the moon and the stars, the former lighting the mountains, and on the figure of the pine-trees, another significant key-symbol:

And beyond, you see them even if you don't see them, the circling mountains, since there is a moon... In a cold like this, the stars snap like distant coyotes, beyond the moon... And the pine-trees make little noises, sudden and stealthy, as if they were walking about.<sup>107</sup>

---

104 Ibid.

105 Ibid., p. 81.

106 Ibid., p. 80.

107 Ibid., pp. 81-2.

It is particularly the “ghosts” of the mountains which he misses most:

And the last places with the ghosts... It is the ghosts one misses most, the ghosts there, of the Rocky Mountains...<sup>108</sup>

But they also blame him for departing from them:

I know them, they know me: we go well together. But they reproach me for going away. They are resentful too.<sup>109</sup>

Before going to bed—it is pretty cold at the ranch—he gets something to drink. The moonshine transforms itself into a drink:

I should have moonshine, not very good moonshine, but still warming: with hot water and lemon, and sugar, and a bit of cinnamon from one of those little red Schilling's tins.<sup>110</sup>

The coldness of the early morning makes him wake up, but something has changed. Some inanimate objects have become personified:

Waking, I shall look at once through the glass panels of the bedroom door, and see the trunk of the great pine-tree, like a person on guard, and a low star just coming over the mountain, very brilliant like someone swinging and electric lantern.<sup>111</sup>

The two basic images clearly suggest the meaning of Lawrence's experience: he thinks that, although modern man has completely

---

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

detached from nature, he might regather the "savage mysteries" in order to reconnect himself with the living universe.<sup>112</sup>

The star of the reverie, the morning star, is comparable with the evening star since they both represent the third element standing above the two realities and uniting them in a state of balance:

Like the evening star, when it is neither night nor day. Like the evening star, between the sun and the moon, and swayed by neither of them. The flashing intermediary, the evening star that is seen only at the dividing of the day and night, but then is more wonderful than either.<sup>113</sup>

In other words, the star embodies that "spark of contact"<sup>114</sup> between conflicting dualities, whether day and night, mind and body, or Europeans and Indians. But more than that, in the very last paragraph, clear evidence of the fusion of the two opposite realities, Italian and American, is the mere artifice of a literal translation:

Ah, well, let it be vermouth, since there's no moonshine with lemon and cinnamon. Supposing I called Giovanni, and told him I wanted:  
"Un poco di chiar' di luna, con cannella e limone..."<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Of particular interest, in this connection, could be the feeling of "pure relatedness" that Lawrence perceives towards the tree: "I have become conscious of the tree, and of its interpretation into my life... I am conscious that it helps to change me, vitally. I am even conscious that shivers of energy cross my living plasm, from the tree, more bustling and turpentiney, in Pan. And the tree gets a certain shade and alertness of my life, within itself". See "Pan in America", *Phoenix*, pp. 24-5.

<sup>113</sup> "Market Day", *Mornings in Mexico*, pp. 42-3.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>115</sup> "A Little Moonshine with Lemon", p. 82.

Nevertheless, Lawrence finally realises that a synthesis is impossible to be achieved, and the separation between nature—the remaining indigenous civilizations—and culture—the white men—will last forever:

The consciousness of one branch of humanity is the annihilation of the consciousness of another branch. That is, the life of the Indian, his stream of conscious being, is just death to the white man... a man cannot *belong* to both ways, or to many ways. One man can belong to one great way of consciousness only... But he cannot go both ways at once.<sup>116</sup>

As a result, after his return from America, he changes his mind radically as regards not only this specific experience, but also the function of the journey.<sup>117</sup> As he writes it in 1926:

America is a great continent; it won't suddenly cease to be. Some part of me will always be conscious of America. But probably some part greater still in me will always be conscious of Europe, since I am a European... I've been a fool myself, saying: 'Europe is finished for me... Now, back in Europe, I feel a real relief'.<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>117</sup> Lawrence perceives the illusory nature of the journey as he had believed in it till then: he becomes aware that there is not necessarily a direct connection between place and state of mind, and it is not necessary to change place in order to alter one's self and vice versa. See, in this connection, O. De Zordo, "America and the End of the Journey", in *The Parable of Transition. A Study on D. H. Lawrence and Modernism* (Pisa: ETS Editrice, 1987), pp. 27-32.

<sup>118</sup> "Europe versus America", in *Sketches of Etruscan Places and Other Italian Essays*, ed. by Simonetta De Filippis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 199-200.

## Chapter III

### A study of “love of conflict” and the Italian connection in Lawrence’s fiction

#### i. *The Lost Girl*

*The Lost Girl* is a very significant novel among Lawrence's works, especially with regard to his relationship with Italy. It consists of two different sections: the former is set in Woodhouse, England; the latter in Italy. The leitmotif of the whole novel is the flourishing and evolving of a relationship between an English girl, Alvina, daughter of a businessman, and an Italian mountebank, Ciccio.

The author shows himself particularly interested in examining carefully the man-woman relationships through the analysis of his own love affair with Frieda. Clear evidence of his enthusiasm in dealing with such problems dates back to the first version of *The Lost Girl*, called *The Insurrection of Miss Houghton*, and to *The Sisters*. In fact, in one of his letters, written in 1913, he asserts:

I can only write what I feel pretty strongly about: and that, at present, is the relation between men and women. After all, it is *the* problem of today, the

establishment of a new relation, or the readjustment of the old one, between men and women.<sup>1</sup>

In *The Lost Girl* this problem seems to be developed by tracing step by step the story of Alvina, whose ambition is to reach full self-independence, but whose womanly nature and whose primitive need for sex lead her to relinquish her fancies of emancipation.

The first chapter, "The Decline of Manchester House", is devoted to James Houghton, Alvina's father, with the aim of demonstrating that they resemble each other. Nevertheless, James has confined himself to reading George Macdonald's novels about a "magic" world all his life and, therefore, dies unsatisfied:

James Houghton was a dreamer, and something of a poet: commercial, be it understood. He liked the novels of George Macdonald, and the fantasies of the author... We cannot say why James Houghton failed to become the *Liberty* or the *Snelgrove* of his day. Perhaps he had too much imagination.<sup>2</sup>

By contrast, his daughter Alvina wants to cut off the stifling menage of her father and, therefore, rebels against the tradespeople milieu by following an Italian boy into a primitive, yet vital world.

---

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Edward Garnett, probably dated 2nd May, in *Letters*, i., p. 546.

<sup>2</sup> "The Decline of Manchester House", *The Lost Girl*, p. 3.

The character of Alvina clearly reflects Lawrence himself: it is in connection with nature, and particularly in the solar vitality of the Mediterranean, that the author endeavours to escape from the conformism and the prejudices of northern English society.

At the beginning, during her adolescence in Woodhouse, Alvina looks like a “puppet” since she acts at the bidding of other people, especially her governess Miss Frost:

Miss Frost taught Alvina thoroughly the qualities of her own true nature, and Alvina believed what she was taught. She remained for twenty years the demure, refined creature of her governess' desire. But there was an odd, derisive look at the back of her eyes, a look of old knowledge and deliberate derision. She was herself unconscious of it. But it was there. And this it was, perhaps, that scared away the young men.<sup>3</sup>

Even in her first love affair with an Australian, Alexander Graham, she is not able to manage the relationship by herself because of her upbringing being so strongly influenced by Miss Frost and, therefore, is unconsciously led to follow the governess' way of thinking:

*'Do you love him, dear?'* said Miss Frost with emphasis...  
*'Do you love him sufficiently? That's the point.'*  
The way Miss Frost put the question implied that Alvina did not and could not love him—because Miss Frost could not...<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> "The Rise of Alvina Houghton", *ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

As regards her job, she is also persuaded by Miss Frost to become a piano teacher, but she does not really like that kind of work:

Miss Frost, with anxious foreseeing, persuaded the girl to take over some pupils, to teach them the piano. The work was distasteful to Alvina. She was not a good teacher. She persisted in an off-hand way, somewhat indifferent, albeit dutiful.<sup>5</sup>

However, Alvina's behaviour of submission progressively starts moderating itself and she no longer finds her way of living in Woodhouse tolerable. She is, therefore, determined to leave that place for a training course in Islington as a maternity nurse, in spite of her family's disagreement. After it, following unsuccessfully in her father's track, she decides to go back to Woodhouse to make her fortune. As the miners' wives did not appreciate the refined fabrics put up for sale by James, they themselves considered strange the idea of being confined through Alvina's help:

They [ the people of Woodhouse] all knew her as Miss Houghton, with a stress on the Miss, and they could not conceive of her as Nurse Houghton... They all preferred either a simple mid-wife, or a nurse procured out of the unknown by the doctor.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>6</sup> "Two Women Die", *ibid.*, p. 40.



In fact, as Lawrence himself expresses it in *Study of Thomas*

*Hardy*:

for the mass, for 99,9 per cent of mankind, work is a form of non-living, of non-existence, of submergence.<sup>7</sup>

After a while, James' business breaks down, but he does not give in. Together with Mr May, he opens a sort of cinema-music-hall, yet not at Woodhouse, but at Lumley. Here, it is worth noting how the author emphasizes the contrast between the factory-like landscape of Lumley—which he hates—and the more bucolic scenery of Woodhouse, with a church surrounded by green and standing on high ground:

And he [Mr May] found it [Lumley] a dam god-forsaken hell of a hole. It was a long straggle of a dusty road down in the valley, with a pale-grey dust... and big chimneys bellying forth black smoke right by the road. Then there was a short cross-way, up which one saw the iron foundry, a black and rusty place... Compared with Lumley, Woodhouse, whose church could be seen sticking up proudly and vulgarly on an eminence, above trees and meadow-slopes, was an idyllic heaven.<sup>8</sup>

Although Miss Pinnegar does not agree, James, together with Mr May as his manager, buys a cinema show with a travelling theatre as its

---

<sup>7</sup> Chap.IV, "An Attack on Work and the Money Appetite and on the State", *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays* ed. by Bruce Steele (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> "Houghton's Last Endeavour", *The Lost Girl*, p. 87.

building. They start, therefore, to organize a series of cinematographic shows and are fairly successful.

In the meanwhile, a “curious” interchange seems to flourish between Alvina and Mr May, as it consists of a purely “verbal” intimacy:

Curious the intimacy Mr May established with Alvina at once. But it was all purely verbal, descriptive. He made no physical advances... If he had seen the least sign of coming-on-ness in her, he would have fluttered off in a great dither... He liked the angel, and particularly the angel mother in woman.<sup>9</sup>

Mr May clearly explains his way of conceiving a relationship by making a distinction between two kinds of attraction in a woman, physical and mental:

'There are two kinds of friendships', he said, 'physical and mental. The physical is a thing of the moment... It may last a week or two, or a month or two. But you know from the beginning it is going to end... But it's so different with the mental friendships. They are lasting. They are eternal—if anything human (he said yuman) ever is eternal, ever can be eternal.'<sup>10</sup>

He mostly appreciates Alvina for the mental component prevailing in her—which is, in fact, the noblest compliment he pays to her:

'She's not physical, she's mental.'<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>10</sup> "Natcha-Kee-Tawara", *ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

In this respect, it is worth noting how Lawrence reveals one of the cornerstones of his dualistic philosophy, though not in a direct way. The opposing poles of mind and senses which, according to the author, underlie the behavioural codes of the individual, are associated initially with two different cultures, the English and the Italian—such an opposition constituting the focal point of his literary discourse.

Later, the “Endeavour” set up by James gives Alvina her chance, for she falls in with an Indian troupe of travelling players. In fact, she enjoys the life the cinema brings her, although it would mean giving up belonging to her class of respectable tradespeople:

On the whole, Alvina enjoyed the cinema... She accepted it. And she became somewhat vulgarised in her bearing. She was *déclassée*: she had lost her class altogether... Alvina didn't care. She rather liked it. She liked being *déclassée*.<sup>12</sup>

She also starts getting bored with Mr May, a man of austere and arrogant manners, and prefers the genuine naturalness of the navvies:

she would cheerfully have gone along with the navy. She was getting tired of Mr May's quiet prance.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

She finds the travelling artistes odd, but interesting to observe and to become acquainted with. They are quite different from the people of Woodhouse, as they are much more spontaneous and natural:

It was so different from Woodhouse, where everything was priced and ticketed. These people were nomads. They didn't care a straw who you were or who you weren't... It was most odd to watch them. They weren't very squeamish.<sup>14</sup>

Alvina is particularly attracted by this group of bizarre artistes, called Natcha-Kee-Tawara, disguised as redskins and consisting of a Frenchman, two Swiss and an Italian, because of their full praise for an instinctual life that the respectable people of Woodhouse have lost.

Of significant importance is Lawrence's stress on the public's preference for films rather than for the variety theatre because it seems to be clear evidence of the destructive consequences of machines on the human beings:

The film is only pictures...And pictures don't have any feelings apart from their own feelings... Pictures don't have any life except in the people who watch them. And that's why they like them... They can spread themselves over a film, and they can't over a living performer.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

However, this represents only one among many cases where the author makes a forthright attack on industrialized society in England and, especially, on the pressures that such a society exerts on the nature of man.

As a result, he seems to reflect Alvina's personality mostly with regard to his strong quest for primitivism. In fact, it constitutes one of the distinctive points of his poetics, with its desire for a return to pre-industrialized ways of life and the exaltation of the emotional sides of man that modern civilization has tried to repress.<sup>16</sup>

The way in which the author conceives the characters of his works is highly indicative. In one of his letters, he says he is not interested in "the old stable *ego*"<sup>17</sup> and, in fact, his protagonists are not object of an inner analysis, but rather appear more as sources of primordial vital energy and, therefore, react to sudden impulses.

Alvina, pianist at the cinema show, falls in with the Italian member of the troupe, Ciccio. He is from the South, precisely, a village near Naples, and is a typically Laurentian male, black eyed, dominant, muscular, blood-conscious:

---

<sup>16</sup> This message is clear and powerful in one of the travel books that Lawrence wrote about Italy, *Etruscan Places*, analysed in the previous chapter.

<sup>17</sup> Letter of 5th June 1914 to Edward Garnett, in *Letters*, ii., p. 183.

He was dark, rather tall and loose, with yellow-tawny eyes... Alvina noticed the brown, slender Mediterranean hand...It was such as she did not know, prehensile and tender and dusky<sup>18</sup>... What physical, muscular force there was in him.<sup>19</sup>

As a man from a small, provincial village, he is also rather reserved:

He didn't say a word, but held aloof as he walked with Alvina... Ciccio vouchsafed no answer, walked with his hands in the pockets of his water-proof, wincing from the weather.<sup>20</sup>

The girl joins the group and, on occasion of a ceremony during which she is accepted as a member of the Natcha-Kee-Tawara Troupe, she is also baptized "Allaye". She tries to have direct contacts with Ciccio and, in a conversation between them, he talks about himself and also expresses his opinion on Alvina's native country, England, by focusing on the prevailing sense of industrialization which renders barren and corrupted a whole society—an opinion fully shared by the author himself:

'In England'—he answered suddenly, 'horses live a long time, because they don't live—never alive—see? In England railway—engines are alive, and horses go on wheels.'<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> "Natcha-Kee-Tawara", *The Lost Girl*, p. 122; p. 127.

<sup>19</sup> "Ciccio", *ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

It is the “physical” and “instinctive” relationship that the Italians—Ciccio included—have with the cosmos that strikes Lawrence as it opposes the “mechanical” consciousness of the English people to which he belongs, but from which he wishes to get free. As Madame Rochard, the Natchas’ chief, expresses while talking to Alvina:

'You are an Englishwoman, severe and materialist', she said... 'Ah, you English women', said Madame, watching with black eyes. 'I think you like to have your own way. And over all people. You are so good to have your own way.'<sup>22</sup>

And later on:

'Englishwomen', said Madame, 'are so practical ...' '...you are very kind to me, and I thank you. But it is from the head... Of course you wouldn't be a good business woman. Because you are kind from the head... I am not kind from the head. From the head I am business-woman...when the heart speaks—then I listen with the heart. I do not listen with the head. The heart hears the heart. The head—that is another thing.'<sup>23</sup>

Although different, Alvina and Ciccio gradually become a couple and, after many adventures, get married. They decide to go off to Italy to be in communion with the southern mountain solitude, but, afterwards, he will have to go to war, and will leave her alone and pregnant.

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 130-1.

<sup>23</sup> "Ciccio", *ibid.*, pp. 145-6.

Through Ciccio, Alvina penetrates an enchanting world by which she is spellbound:

The forward drop of his head was curiously beautiful to her straight, powerful nape of the neck, the delicate shape of the back of the head, the black hair. There was something mindless but intent about the forward reach of his head.<sup>24</sup>

He is a sort of demon-lover to her. Like Proserpina,<sup>25</sup> Alvina keeps herself tied to the underworld as she has eaten the fruit given to her by one of the inhabitants (the fruit is the *morello*, which corresponds to the full name of Ciccio, Francesco Marasca)— it is not by chance that, at first, Lawrence thought of giving the title *The Bitter Cherry* to the novel. Their relationship is rather “visual” than “verbal” : it consists essentially of an exchange of looks which shows alternating impulses of “approach” and “removal”:

He looked at her sideways, furtively, but persistently. And yet he did not want to meet her glance. He avoided her, and watched her... Alvina could not guess. She wanted to meet his eye, to have an open understanding with him. But he would not... Obstinate he held away from her... Alvina had avoided Madame as Ciccio had avoided Alvina—elusive and yet conscious, a distance, and yet a connection.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

<sup>25</sup> Proserpina, the Roman goddess of the wheat, is the equivalent of the Greek Persephone, queen of hell. Of great importance is her abduction from Pluto, king of hell. At the end, when Persephone is on the point of setting free, Pluto lets her eat a seed of pomegranate. Because she has tasted food in the kingdom of darkness, she is destined to stay definitely in Hades, the nether world.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 160-1.



As is easily discernible from the above excerpt, other examples of antinomies stand out: Ciccio at the same time “avoids” and “looks round” for her; they both establish a “distance” and a “connection”. It clearly reflects the deep inner conflict by which Lawrence himself is affected: his self is divided, his life split into different existences; he is a very self-contradictory person with two halves always fighting for supremacy. For example, as regards his relationship with Jessie Chambers, the division refers to a conflict between the “spiritual” and the “physical” self:

The trouble is, you see, I am not but two. It's true, it is so, I am two men inside one skin... One man in me loves you [Jessie], but the other never can love you...<sup>27</sup>

Likewise, he feels split between his awareness of the advantages that working class life style has—a direct communion with nature—and his desire to widen his horizons by embracing the modern industrial society.

Nevertheless, Alvina becomes more and more involved in her relationship with Ciccio mostly because of his belonging to the Natcha-Kee-Tawara Troupe, by which she is particularly fascinated:

---

<sup>27</sup> Jessie Chambers, *D.H. Lawrence: A Personal Record.*, p. 47.

Alvina wept when the Natchas had gone. She loved them so much, she wanted to be with them. Even Ciccio she regarded as only one of the Natchas. She looked forward to his coming as to a visit from the Troupe... She was if hypnotized. She longed to be with them. Her soul gravitated towards them all the time.<sup>28</sup>

On the occasion of James Houghton's death, their relationship starts consolidating:

Involuntarily he turned and lifted his face again towards Alvina, as if studying her curiously. She remained there on the doorstep, neutral, blanched, with wide, still, neutral eyes...His face too was closed and expressionless. But in his eyes, which kept hers, there was a dark flicker of ascendancy. He was going to triumph over her. She knew it. And her soul sank as if it sank out of her body. It sank away out of her body, left her there powerless, soulless.<sup>29</sup>

In spite of that, he feels quite uncomfortable with all the people living at Woodhouse, as he perceives a strong dichotomy between the English people, Alvina included, and him:

how alien and uncouth he felt them. Impressed by their fine clothes, the English working-classes were none the less barbarians to him, uncivilised: just as he was to them an uncivilised animal. Uncouth they seemed to him, all raw angles and harshness, like their own weather... And Alvina was one of them. As she stood there by the grave, pale and pinched and reserved looking, she was of a piece with the hideous cold grey discomfort of the whole scene.<sup>30</sup>

In reality, Alvina is led to be bewitched by Ciccio to the extent that she throws herself into his arms as if under animal fascination:

---

<sup>28</sup> D.H. Lawrence, "Alvina becomes Allaye", *The Lost Girl*, p. 169; p. 171.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

She moaned in spirit, in his arms, felt herself dead, dead... She locked the door and kneeled down on the floor, bowing down her head to her knees in a paroxysm on the floor. In a paroxysm—because she loved him... She swayed herself to and fro in a paroxysm of unbearable sensation, because she loved him.<sup>31</sup>

Although she is the daughter of a man greedy for money and, therefore, her social regression could be influenced by her father's economic decline, she is led on the path of regression by her strong need for sex. In effect, at first, she tries to make herself known not through the common aspirations of a woman, that is, a love relationship and consequent marriage. Unfortunately, she does not succeed and has to retreat from the status of total independence that she had maintained till then. So, Alvina, who would have been able to marry a student, then a doctor, if she wanted, in the end marries beneath herself, an Italian peasant.

She is enraptured by Ciccio. In a letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith,<sup>32</sup> Lawrence explains that Alvina's "being lost" does not have a moral connotation, but is rather a mere consequence of an overwhelming sexual relationship:

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>32</sup> As Lawrence writes: "I've actually finished my new novel, *The Lost Girl*: not morally lost, I assure you". Letter of 7th May 1920, in *Letters*, iii., p. 517.

She felt his heavy, muscular predominance. So he took her in both arms, powerful, mysterious, horrible in the pitch dark. Yet the sense of the unknown beauty of him weighed her down like some force... But the spell was on her, of his darkness and unfathomed handsomeness. And he killed her... He intended her to be his slave, she knew... But she lay inert, as if envenomed.<sup>33</sup>

She is offended by his frequent behaviour of indifference towards her—she would like him to pay her some attention—and, sometimes, she despises him and the Natcha-Kee-Tawaras:

In her own heart she wanted attention and public recognition from Ciccio—none of which she got ... After all, they [The Natcha-Kee-Tawaras] were very common people... And look what an uncouth lout Ciccio was! After all, she had been bred up different from that. They had horribly low standards—such low standards—not only of morality, but of life altogether.<sup>34</sup>

Yet her senses completely rout her mind, and an inner conflict between her desire for him and scorn for him haunts her:

And her heart burned when she thought of him, partly with anger and mortification, partly, alas, with undeniable and unsatisfied love. Let her bridle as she might, her heart burned, and she wanted to look at him, she wanted him to notice her. And instinct told her that he might ignore her forever.<sup>35</sup>

She is impudently accused of “being lost” by Miss Pinnegar, who bursts into tears when she hears from Alvina that she still does not know if she will marry Ciccio or not, but she is determined to leave Woodhouse forever:

---

<sup>33</sup> "Alvina becomes Allaye", *The Lost Girl*, pp. 202-3.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

'And are you going to marry him?'  
'I don't know'  
'How can you say I don't know!  
It's incredible! Simply incredible! I believe you're out of your senses... You  
need to be looked after'.  
'You're a lost girl!' cried Miss Pinnegar.<sup>36</sup>

The condemnation is repeated when Alvina, instead of going to church  
on Sunday, stays at home and plays cards with Ciccio and Mr May:

Alvina flirted with the two men, played the piano to them, and suggested a  
game of cards...  
'What would your father say to this' she said sternly.  
'You lost girl!' said Miss Pinnegar, backing out and closing the door.<sup>37</sup>

Later, after James' death, Alvina realizes herself to be without  
any property and, therefore, decides to leave Woodhouse and  
everybody to work again as a maternity nurse in another town. She  
knows that Ciccio is particularly aware of money and is convinced that  
he would abandon her if he knew that she has not inherited anything:

She wanted to go away from them all—from them all—for ever. Even from  
Ciccio. For she felt he insulted her too... Ciccio would have had a lifelong  
respect for her, if she had come with even so paltry a sum as two hundred  
pounds. Now she had nothing, he would coolly withhold this respect. She felt  
he might jeer at her.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> "The Fall of Manchester House", *ibid.*, p. 217.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

But once Alvina is well settled in Lancaster, where she enjoys her new work and the local gentry, Ciccio reappears singing her a serenade with the mandolin. The situation is now reversed: it is Ciccio who declares himself to her and tries to persuade Alvina to marry him and go to Italy:

'Allaye!' he said 'I love you, Allaye, my beautiful, Allaye, I love you, Allaye!' He held her fast to his breast and began to walk away with her...<sup>39</sup> His eyes had a curious yellow fire, beseeching, plaintive, with a demon quality of yearning compulsion. 'Yes, come with me, Allaye. You come with me, to Italy.'<sup>40</sup>

If, at first, she shows herself rooted in her position of distance from him, after a while, she submits to him completely as he exerts a strong "mesmeric power" on her:

He smiled, a fine, subtle smile, like a demon's, but inexpressibly gentle. He made her shiver if she was mesmerised. And he was reaching forward to her as a snake reaches, nor could she recoil... She was as if bewitched. She couldn't fight against her bewitchment. Why? Because he seemed so beautiful, so beautiful.<sup>41</sup>

The last part of the book, which is devoted to the couple's journey towards Italy, has some of that *travelogue* quality recurring in some of Lawrence's later novels. The last three chapters are, then, set

---

<sup>39</sup> "Allaye Also is Engaged", *ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>40</sup> "The Wedded Wife", *ibid.*, p. 287.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 288-9.

in the South of Italy, and reflect the return journey of the Lawrences to Italy after the war which had obliged them to stay in England longer. They had left from there with the intention of stopping for a while—only two weeks—in a farm in the Campania region. This farm, located in a hamlet of Picinisco, a little village among the Appennines, is on the same route as the places where the novel ends, the hamlet Califano and the village Pescocalascio.

Of striking effect is the description of the difference between England and Italy while they travel across the sea:

there behind, behind all the sunshine, was England. England, was England, England, beyond the water, rising with ash-grey, corpse-grey cliffs, and streaks of snow on the downs above... She watched it, fascinated and terrified. It seemed to repudiate the sunshine, to remain unilluminated, long and ash-grey and dead...that was England!.. she saw the golden dawn, a golden sun coming out of level country. She loved it. She loved being in Italy. She loved the lounging carelessness of the train, she liked having Italian money, hearing the Italians round her... She loved watching the glowing, antique landscape.<sup>42</sup>

Again, contrasting feelings characterize Alvina. On the one hand, she is enthusiastic and excited to approach Italy:

She watched spell-bound: spell-bound by the magic of the world itself. And she thought to herself: 'Whatever life may be, and whatever horror men have made of it, the world is a lovely place, a magic place...'<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> "The Journey Across", *ibid.*, p. 294.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

She is fascinated by the remoteness, the wildness of the majesty of the mountain landscape of southern Italy, so different from the sterile industrialized scenery of England:

And slowly the hills approached...mountains rose straight up of the level plain...wild, rocky places, it all seemed ancient and shaggy, savage still, under all its remote civilisation, this region of the Alban mountains south of Rome... To her there was magnificence in the lustrous stars and the steepnesses, magic, rather terrible and grand.<sup>44</sup>

On the other hand, she feels “lost” in going away from England, a cold and degrading land, yet her own country, and moving to Italy, a place of mystery:

Alvina could make out the darkness of the slopes. Overhead she saw the brilliance of Orion. She felt she was quite, quite lost. She had gone out of the world, over the border, into some place of mystery. She was lost to Woodhouse, to Lancaster, to England—all lost...<sup>45</sup> At Pescocalascio it was the mysterious influence of the mountains and valleys themselves which seemed always to be annihilating the Englishwoman...<sup>46</sup>

Not only is she a “lost girl” because she is cut off from her native world. Her personality is also annihilated by Ciccio's overflowing passionate power and, therefore, she is “lost” into him:

She was lost—lost—lost utterly... He was horrible and frightening, but he was warm. She felt his power and his warmth invade her and extinguish her.

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 301; p. 306.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>46</sup> "The Place Called Califano", *ibid.*, p. 314.



The mad and desperate passion that was in him sent her completely unconscious again, completely unconscious.<sup>47</sup>

Nevertheless, as soon as the couple arrives at the house in Califano, a tiny village consisting of three buildings, a pervading sense of nothingness and, consequently, of discomfort, fills their heart. A deserted state reigns over the village and the house and, inevitably, Alvina starts feeling a sense of aversion from that place:

Alvina began to feel she would die, in the awful comfortless meaninglessness of it all... So that even in the sunshine the crude comfortlessness and inferior savagery of the place only repelled her.<sup>48</sup>

Alvina's state of desolation undoubtedly is reflected in her feelings towards Ciccio, although she is persistently—and inexplicably—haunted by his strong passion:

And even as he turned to look for her, she felt a strange thrilling in her bowels: a sort of trill strangely within her, yet extraneous to her... He could not bear it if he lost her. She knew how he loved her—almost inhumanly, elementally, without communication... She hardly noticed him... How far off was his being from her! What was the terrible man's passion that haunted her like a dark angel? Why was she so much beyond herself?<sup>49</sup>

She becomes gradually aware that Ciccio has a few affinities with the Englishmen:

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 313.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 319.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 321.

A certain weariness possessed her. She was beginning to realise something about him: how he had no sense of home and domestic life, as an Englishman has... His home was nothing to him but a possession... He didn't live in it. He lived in the open air, and in the community.<sup>50</sup>

Even Pancrazio, one of Ciccio's uncles, attests such a difference between the two worlds to Alvina, stressing the provincialism of the Italians as opposed to the open-mindedness of the English, and tries to put her on her guard:

'they are not good people here. All saying bad things, and all jealous... Oh, they are bad people, envious, you cannot have anything to do with them.' Alvina felt the curious passion in Pancrazio's voice, the passion of a man who has lived for many years in England and who, coming back, is deeply injured by the ancient malevolence of the remote, somewhat gloomy hill-peasantry... He seemed to see a fairness, a luminousness in the northern soul, something free, touched with divinity such as 'these people here' lacked entirely.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, when Ciccio informs Alvina about his going to war, she is overcome by despair. Although she tries to convince herself that she will be able to live alone in Pescocalascio, she becomes aware that she would die there. The only things which could link her to that place are the flowers, which enrapture her soul, rather than the people living there:

she felt she would die in this valley, wither and go to powder... It was the flowers that brought back to Alvina the passionate nostalgia for the place. The

---

<sup>50</sup> "Suspense", *ibid.*, p. 330.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 324-5.

human influence was a bit horrible to her. But the flowers that came out and uttered the earth in magical expression, they cast a spell on her, bewitched her and stole her own soul away from her.<sup>52</sup>

In effect, two key points of Lawrence's art are examined here: the first is centred on the dichotomy between England and Italy (Eastwood-southern Italy), the second emphasizes the man-woman relationship.

As regards the first and basic point, Lawrence aims at highlighting the gap between English civilization and the peasant world of southern Italy, but at the same time tries in vain to make them converge.

In fact, a clear antinomy between a country like Italy, deep-rooted in a form of wild primitivism, and the vision of England "black and foul and dry, with her soul worn down, almost worn away"<sup>53</sup>, stands out.

Italy is for the author a model of complete harmony between men and nature and, therefore, of balance between body and spirit. Above all, he likes the physical exuberance in a still retrograde people. He loves Italy as opposed to the Puritan industrialized Anglo-Saxon

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>53</sup> "Twilight in Italy", in *D.H. Lawrence and Italy*, p. 53.

world, which he has always objected to and detested. He feels the need for Italy to get rid of the phantom of a too oppressive Puritan past. According to Lawrence, only by plunging into a world in communion with nature and the senses, will the artist be able to give birth to what ferments inside him.

Two realities, then, form a comparison: the world of Woodhouse, typified by a humorous presentation, especially as regards the characters, and the world of Italy, more realistic in the representation of the characters. Ciccio, in particular, shows a clear sense of lack of confidence since he has to participate in war; he also falls victim to a certain sense of apathy that the peasants of the past conveyed him.

Of great effect, here, is the final vision of extraordinary fascination in front of the wild majesty of the landscape. The end of the novel was also influenced by the Lawrences' sojourn in Sicily (Fontana Vecchia, near Taormina) in 1920—the setting of the novel is a hamlet of Picinisco. However, in both places, what strikes the reader particularly is the surrounding nature, with close ups of primitive beauty which are beyond one's imagination:

What a bigness, an unbreakable power was in the mountains!... The glistening peaks of snow in the blue heaven, the hollow valley with fir trees and low-roofed houses...<sup>54</sup> It seemed dark between the closing-in mountains... Sometimes there was a house, sometimes a wood of oak-trees, sometimes the glimpse of a ravine, then the tall white glisten of snow above the earthly blackness...<sup>55</sup> And slowly the hills approached—they passed the vines of the foothills, the reeds, and were among the mountains. Wonderful little towns perched fortified on rocks and peaks, mountains rose straight up off the level plain, like old topographical prints, rivers wandered in the wild, rocky places, it all seemed ancient and shaggy, savage, still under all its remote civilization...<sup>56</sup>

On the whole, Lawrence's stress on the very difference between these two contrasting cultural identities mostly testifies his strong desire to find what, according to his existential paradigm, is represented by the *Other*, and to achieve a fusion with it with the aim of becoming completely fulfilled.<sup>57</sup>

“Only Connect” is the leitmotif of E.M.Forster's novels: considering that the contrast between two polarities has a negative result, there will always be an attempt of reconciliation between them, sometimes resolving positively.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> “The Journey Across”, *The Lost Girl*, p.298.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p.304.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p.301.

<sup>57</sup> Already in *Twilight in Italy* the author clearly shows his dilemma and his search for ‘transcendent knowledge’: “Where is the transcendent knowledge in our hearts, uniting sun and darkness, day and night, spirit and senses? Why do we not know the two in consummation are one; that each is only part; partial and alone for ever; but that the two in consummation are perfect, beyond the range of loneliness or solitude?”, p.31.

<sup>58</sup> See E.M. Forster, Introduction to *Camera con vista—A Room with a View*—(Milan: Mondadori, 1991), pp. 5-7.

Such a motto could be very suitable for Lawrence himself. The core of most of his novels, the travel books included, deals with the antithesis between two different cultures, which coexist and between which the author tries to realize a synthesis. Beyond such contrast, which is central, the leading idea of the two artists is their unrestrained desire for a full plunging into nature and a harmonious communication with it, with the aim of discovering themselves.<sup>59</sup>

In *The Lost Girl*, a vain attempt is made to fill the gap between the industrial English civilization and the peasant world of southern Italy. This task is attributed to the protagonist of the novel, Alvina, through her journey towards the Mediterranean. However, she succeeds only in part: her relationship with Ciccio, who fosters an instinctive and vital dimension in her, nevertheless, does not contribute significantly to the rebirth of the woman. At the end, Alvina appears a "lost girl" for she is not able to establish a perfect balance between "sun and darkness, day and night, spirit and senses",<sup>60</sup> which is Lawrence's main aim, and abandons herself to a restless solitude. But she can be

---

<sup>59</sup> For a satisfactory understanding of the relationship between Lawrence and Forster, see Calvin Bernard Bedient, *Architects of the Self: G. Eliot, D.H. Lawrence, and E.M. Forster* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1972), in particular the chapter "Lawrence and Forster in Italy", pp. 183-95.

<sup>60</sup> "Twilight in Italy", in *D.H. Lawrence and Italy*, p. 31.

considered “lost” also because she starts a relationship with a man who does not give anything to her either materially or morally. Theirs is merely an overwhelming sexual affair, and the love between them is but the result of the submission of the girl to a primitive man.

In effect, Lawrence's attitude towards women has been changing while composing *The Lost Girl*, so that a clear difference between its beginning and its epilogue is noticeable.

In 1912, in one of his letters, the author writes:

I think folk have got sceptic about love—that's because nearly everybody fails. But if they do fail, they needn't doubt love... I'll do my life work, sticking up for the love between man and woman... I shall always be a priest of love... I'll preach my heart out...<sup>61</sup>

However, Lawrence tends to reserve more disappointments than satisfactions for most of his female protagonists, such as Ursula in *The Rainbow* and Alvina in *The Lost Girl*, who manage to get in the male working world. In *Studies of Classic American Literature*, he openly expresses his grudge against the women who work:

Woman is a strange and rather terrible phenomenon, to man... The woman herself may be as nice as milk, to all appearance... But she is sending out waves of silent destruction of the faltering spirit in men, all the same... These women-doctors, these nurses, these educationalists, these public-spirited women, these female saviours: they are all from the inside, sending out waves

---

<sup>61</sup> Letter of Christmas Day 1912 to Mrs Sallie Hopkin, in *Letters*, i., pp. 492-3.

of destructive malevolence which eat out the inner life of a man, like a cancer.<sup>62</sup>

Alvina's destiny, for example, seems to consist in a restless waiting and submitting:

When she tried to make him discuss, in the masculine way, he shut obstinately against her, something like a child... Instinctively he shut off all masculine communication from her, particularly politics and religion. He would discuss both, violently, with other men... But all this had nothing to do with Alvina.<sup>63</sup>

Lawrence's utopia considers all art and creation as a perfect union between man and woman,<sup>64</sup> yet he proposes a new kind of man-woman relationship, based on the "submission" of the woman rather than on a "mutual love",<sup>65</sup> especially in his novels written during the last decade—*The Lost Girl* included.

On the whole, as Piero Nardi observes in his biography of Lawrence, *The Lost Girl* could be considered a typical novel of the regression towards primitive identities.<sup>66</sup> As a matter of fact, Alvina,

---

<sup>62</sup> (London: Heinemann, 1924), pp. 87-8.

<sup>63</sup> "Suspense", *The Lost Girl*, p. 331.

<sup>64</sup> "That is the only way for art and civilisation to get a new life, a new start—by bringing themselves together, men and women—revealing themselves each to the other, gaining great blind knowledge and suffering and joy..." See the letter of 2nd June 1914 to Arthur McLeod, in *Letters*, ii., p. 181.

<sup>65</sup> It constitutes one of the *traits-d'union* between Lawrence and Italian Futurism, which shows a forthright scorn for women—it is not by chance that the movement consists only of men. See, in this respect, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifest of Futurism", in *Selected Writings*, ed. by R.W. Flint. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1971), p. 42.

<sup>66</sup> See Piero Nardi, *La vita di D.H. Lawrence—The Life of D.H. Lawrence—* (Milan: Mondadori, 1947), p. 417.



daughter of a tradesman, once a well-off person, then impoverished, rejects different professional men who court her in favour of a Neapolitan strolling player, son of two peasants.

More than this, her journey towards Italy effectively consists in her moving nearer to the *sun*, which seems to hypnotize her and make her indifferent to everything but Ciccio.

## ii. *Mr Noon*

*Mr Noon* is divided into two different sections, the former being published together with other writings shortly after Lawrence's death (1934), the latter only in 1984, and both essentially reflect Lawrence's personal experiences, his deepest feelings and beliefs.

Of stronger interest is the second part, which expresses the story of the author's love affair with Frieda from its very beginning, when the couple meet for the first time, to their subsequent elopement. Therefore, if the first part is set in Woodhouse, as it is in *The Lost Girl*, the fictional version of Eastwood, the second one follows the steps of Gilbert Noon and Johanna Keighley's elopement around Europe—Italy included.

The former deals with the unsuccessful relationship between the protagonist, Gilbert Noon—corresponding to one of Lawrence's friends, George Henry Neville—and an elementary school teacher, Emmie Bostock. It ends with Emmie marrying her boyfriend Walter George and Noon deciding to go to Germany to study for his doctorate.

The latter begins with Mr Noon living in Munich, but now his connotations change since he is modelled on Lawrence himself rather than on George Neville, and the author relates the love story between the Englishman Noon and the German noblewoman Johanna, begun as soon as they meet, although she is already married to an English doctor. Lawrence goes on describing their escape and their journey through the Bavarian Tyrol to Austria and the threshold of Italy, a decision taken in consequence of the hostility of Johanna's parents who want her to stay with her husband and children. The woman, Frieda-like, cannot tolerate any more a conventional way of life, typical of the middle-class, and, therefore, accepts without regret what Noon offers her. Together with another couple, Terry and Stanley, they walk across the Brennero, but then they take their way southwards alone, since their friends decide to go back to Munich. The novel breaks off with

them being at Riva sul Garda, in the North of Italy, precisely in the middle of a sentence describing their life in that place.

Apart from the coincidence of location, some scenes being set in Woodhouse in both *The Lost Girl* and *Mr Noon*, the protagonist of the former, Alvina Houghton, also briefly appears in the latter. Unable to find a natural place in Woodhouse, she undertakes a journey directed towards Italy in search of the *Other*, seen as a means of achieving the desired renewal: this implies a journey into the unknown with a man who is also an unknown. Although finally the author himself does not know if the situation the girl finds in Italy will be better or not, at least it represents a departure and merging into the unknown.

Likewise, Gilbert Noon in *Mr Noon*, after giving up an academic career at Cambridge, goes back home, yet feels unstable in his ordinary marriage.

In the next novel, *Aaron's Rod*, the protagonist, Aaron Sisson, like Gilbert, has got a particular musical talent, but he cannot leave his home district in consequence of the education he has received. Nevertheless, one day, as expression of an instinctive revolt, he decides to leave and, like Alvina Houghton, abandons England altogether.

In other words, by 1920 , when the war is over and life begins again, Lawrence goes through a crucial time of deep reflection on love relationships of his own generation.<sup>67</sup> Particularly, in *The Lost Girl*, *Aaron's Rod* and *Mr Noon*, he develops the theme of detachment and, then, of departure, as the only means for the characters to solve their problems with extraordinary relief. Alvina, unmarried, gets away to Italy with her Italian lover in search of something different. Aaron Sisson, unable to tolerate any more the contrasting relationship with his wife, decides to leave for Italy and meet his friend Lilly. Like Alvina and Aaron, Gilbert Noon is determined to abandon the stifling English life which seems to be all that England offers him, and finally becomes “unEnglished”.

It can be clearly inferred that *Mr Noon* is linked to Lawrence's writings up to 1921 in three different ways: the central theme of sexual relationships; a typical depiction of English provincial life; and, particularly, the structure of the novel, common to all the books

---

<sup>67</sup> This constitutes, for example, the basic theme of the novel *The White Peacock* (1911), which deals with a contrasting love affair between George and Lettie, object of clear opposing poles: body and mind, instinct and consciousness, nature and culture. In *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1921), Lawrence works on this theme through generation in the same setting.

written between the 1920 and 1921, set in two different and opposite places, England against another country.<sup>68</sup>

In other words, a similar structure unites the three novels: a pivotal *combination in opposition* of England and Italy in *The Lost Girl* and *Aaron's Rod*, and England and Germany—towards the unfinished end also Italy—in *Mr Noon*, a new alternative from which the characters may notice the deficiencies of the old country.<sup>69</sup>

Alvina looks back on England as “long and ash-grey and dead”<sup>70</sup> and, even though her journey towards the South—Italy—succeeds only in part, she finally sinks into a restless solitude, her lover Ciccio leaving her and going to war, where the two polar realities coexist, yet distinct and divided. She feels that

she had gone beyond the world into the pre-world, she had reopened on the old eternity... No-one would ever find her.<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> These three topics seem to converge in a central metaphor of travel, which denotes an authentic search for an existential alternative to an unacceptable reality. A brilliant analysis of this important theme is L.D. Clark's *The Minoan Distance : The Symbolism of Travel in D.H. Lawrence* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980).

<sup>69</sup> It clearly reflects Lawrence's inner dissatisfaction with northern Europe, with its industrialism and sterile middle-class values, which prompt him to leave his homeland and discover a better alternative to life than in England. A good understanding of the motif of the journey for Lawrence and his relationship with the travel book tradition is Billy T. Tracy's *D.H. Lawrence and the Literature of Travel* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1983).

<sup>70</sup> *The Lost Girl*, p. 294.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316.

Similarly, Gilbert Noon, while staying in Bavaria, is enchanted by the vastness and openness of the German landscape:

The sense of space was an intoxication for him. He felt he could walk without stopping on to the far north-eastern magic of Russia, or south to Italy. All the big, spreading glamour of mediaeval Europe seemed to envelop him.<sup>72</sup>

What he admires most is the infinite multiplicity of connections which unite to form the vast lands of Europe:

The bigness that was what he loved so much... There seemed to run gleams and shadows from the great Alps - Knot from Italy, magical Italy, while from the north, from the massive lands of Germany, and from far-off Scandinavia one could feel a whiteness, a northern, sub-arctic whiteness. Many magical lands, many magical people, all magnetic and strange, uniting to form the vast patchwork of Europe... This seemed to break his soul like a chrysalis into a new life.<sup>73</sup>

By contrast, England now seems to him to small, and he realises that English ideas and values are too limiting:

For the first time he saw England from the outside: tiny she seemed, and tight, and so partial. Such a little bit among all the vast rest... Her marvellous truths and standards and ideals were just local, not universal.<sup>74</sup>

He, therefore, becomes “unEnglished” and shifts towards the *manyness* of European life, which enriches him immensely:

---

<sup>72</sup> Chap. XII, "High Germany", *Mr Noon*, ed. by Lindeth Vasey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 107.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

His tight and exclusive nationality seemed to break down in his heart. He loved the world in its multiplicity, not in its horrible oneness, uniformity, homogeneity... His old obtuseness, which saw everything alike, in one term, fell from his eyes and from his soul, and he felt rich... He seemed to feel a new salt running vital in his veins, a new, free vibration in all his nerves, like a bird that has got out of a cage.<sup>75</sup>

His new inclination for openness, essentially prompted by his experience abroad, undoubtedly fosters his encounter with Johanna, after which he feels totally committed to her. In fact, what he wants to realise is a conflicting marriage with her, achievable by matching a complementary opposite, a "meet adversary",<sup>76</sup> which he finds in the person of Johanna:

Dear Gilbert, he had found his mate and his match...the love of two splendid opposites...all life and splendour is made up out of the union of indomitable opposites.<sup>77</sup>

Gilbert and Johanna, therefore, start a highly passionate relationship, consisting simply in a nomadic way of life in rented bedrooms; it essentially expresses what the author sees as the path to a fulfilling and mature relationship between man and woman. True marriage for Lawrence is, then, a real fight:

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp. 107-8.

<sup>76</sup> Chap.XIX, *ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>77</sup> "The First Round", *ibid.*, p. 186.

It [marriage] is a terrible adjustment of two fearful opposites, their approach to a final crisis of contact, and then the flash and explosion as when lightening is released. And then, the two man and woman quiver in a newness.<sup>78</sup>

It is through the sexual contact with a woman that the meaning of life for a man lies, through the coming together of polarities: the keynote, then, is *opposites*. It seems that he can only think in terms of couples male and female, either lovers or father-daughter or mother-son relationships, each element remaining at the one pole, the fearful opposite:

That is the real creation: not the accident of childbirth, but the miracle of man-birth and woman-birth.<sup>79</sup>

In such a philosophy of life, women certainly have a powerful position. It is not by chance that Gilbert alternates moments of “attraction” and “fear” towards the male world:

The deep longing and far off desire to be with men, with men alone, active, reckless, dangerous on the brink of death: to be away from woman, beyond her, on the borders.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Chap.XIX, *ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.



Although he strongly desires friendship with men, he never attains it, and finally feels isolated and excluded from other men—a negative conclusion about men is, therefore, obvious:

He knew what they were... He knew they were like ants, that toil automatically in concert because they have no meaning singly. Singly, men had no meaning. In their concerted activities, soldier or labor, they had all their significance.<sup>81</sup>

What is easily discernible in the novel is also Lawrence's talent in natural descriptions, wonderfully poetic even though they seem lucidly veracious. While going southwards, the two couples pass through astonishing settings, where vegetation dominates:

Dusk had well fallen... Part of a moon was low in the sky, and a smell of snow... No living creatures were in sight—nor cows nor human habitation. Only the slopes beyond, the shallow, shorn meadow near, the rocky bridle-path and a little stream between rocks and marshy places.<sup>82</sup>

Of extraordinary vividness is also the Italian scenery, brimming with purity and wildness:

It [ the bridle-path] climbed under trees from one side to the other of the valley... High up on the opposite mountain flank, beyond the trees... a little village clustered like stones... The air became wilder, the mountain hamlets more desolate: just little bunches of houses set down manure heaps and grassy springs and stones, without any semblance of street, any unity... Nothing, but the bareness of rock masses, and a sort of savage world away below.<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>82</sup> "Over the Gemserjoch", *ibid.*, p. 261; p. 265.

<sup>83</sup> "A Setback", *ibid.*, pp. 274-5.

Nevertheless, the author becomes aware that the barren mechanised world of the North is contaminating Italy:

Also here was the first ripening touch of the south-Italy, the warring Italy of Popes and Emperors. He [Gilbert] felt how glamorous, how blood-rich it had been—But alas, walk towards the station you saw the new, thin-spirited scientific world: the big new tenements buildings, the gasometer, the factory. You felt the North German with his inhuman cold-blooded theorising and mechanising.<sup>84</sup>

Equally impressive are Lawrence's descriptions of local people, mostly peasants:

Shy, wildish, wondering mountains peasants went along the road, queer thin men... And the peasants up here, always tall, thin, somewhat bird-like, inhuman creatures, stared hard at two travellers, and gave no greeting.<sup>85</sup>

The strange indifference of the people, together with a mysterious, dead-seeming atmosphere which pervades the southern towns, gives Johanna a negative impression of Italy, but, differently, fascinates Gilbert:

The streets had that dark, furtive air, as if everybody were watching like suspicious animals from the depths of cavernous houses... And Gilbert was thrilled, and Johanna all at once felt homeless, like a waif... The indefinable slackness, the sense that nobody is on the spot, and nobody cares, and life trails on, nobody ever taking it in hand, was rather fascinating to him...To Johanna it was a new experience: but she recoiled.<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 272.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 274.

<sup>86</sup> Chap.XXIII, *ibid.*, p. 281; p. 283.

Quite willing to move from Trento, which she considers abhorrent, Johanna happily accepts Gilbert's idea to go to Riva del Garda. While travelling towards it, approximately near Verona, a marked sense of nature stands out:

The sun was shining brightly outside, from a blue sky. Unnumerable clusters of black grapes—miles and miles—dangled under leaves of the vines, and men in broad straw hats, and women with their heads bound in coloured kerchiefs looked up at the train... Ah it was all nice, so pleasant!... What an escape from hell into a sort of sweet, sunny, roaming heaven.<sup>87</sup>

It looks so different and much nicer than the northern landscape, and attracts both of them:

It all seemed so luxuriant, almost tropical—and all so sun-tissued. The leaves, the earth, the plant stems, all seemed rather like heat-fabrications: whereas in England and Germany all nature is built of water, transfigured water... He loved it, and they were both inordinately happy.<sup>88</sup>

So does Riva, where the lake glimmers in the sun:

To him [Gilbert] Riva was lovely. In the first place, near the quay of the lake rose the wide ancient tower with its great blue clock-face that showed the hours up to twenty-four. There was the rippling, living lake, with its darkish, black-blue pellucid water, so alive... And there was a friendliness, a glitter, an easiness that was delightful beyond words, southern in its easiness, and northern in its alert charm... If Johanna had not been extinguished in that burberry she would have been blissfully happy. Gilbert was blissfully happy.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 286.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 287.

Everything in Riva seems lovely to them, either the setting or the people:

So clean, so fresh, so airy and sweet, so northern in all this. And then a lovely medallion of flowers, on the ceiling just over the beds. This was the real Italy... The rich, ripe beauty of this Italian, sub-Alpine world, its remoteness and its big indifference... Moreover everybody treated them with respect, everybody was charming in Riva. Perhaps it was because they were happy, but at any rate things seemed to go well.<sup>90</sup>

Gilbert, in particular, feels fulfilled as he faces a liberation, a sort of *rebirth* by sojourning there:

For the time, in Riva, he was not only happy, but he has a new creature in a new world.<sup>91</sup>

The novel ends here, and perhaps Lawrence never completed nor published it because he considered it a mere record of insoluble problems. It essentially expresses either a moral or an existential conflict deep-rooted in Lawrence himself, which prevents the book from being fully successful.<sup>92</sup> As a result, he identifies closely with Christ—it is not by chance that by the end of the book there are

---

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 288-9.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 292.

<sup>92</sup> An interesting reading, in this connection, seems to be David Holbrook's "Sons & Mothers: D.H. Lawrence & *Mr Noon*", *Encounter* 70:3 (1988), especially pp. 49-50.

different images of crucified figures of Christ, some broken and dilapidated:<sup>93</sup>

startling frequent in the gloomy valleys and on the steep path-slopes were the Christs, old and young. Some were ancient Christs, of grey-silvery aged wood. Some were new, and horrible: life-sized, realistic, powerful young men, on the cross, in a death agony: white and distorted.<sup>94</sup>

When depressed, Lawrence tends to sit with his head bowed, so forming a broken hanging figure which depicts his inner soul: Frieda's infidelity has crucified him. Consequently, he also shows here a deep fear of women, particularly evident after Johanna and Gilbert have an argument about a postcard he is writing to a previous girlfriend:

The sudden dark, hairy ravines in which he was trapped: all made him feel he was caught, shut in down below there. He felt tiny, like a dwarf among the great thighs and ravines of the mountains. There is a Baudelaire poem which tells of Nature, like a vast woman lying spread, and man, a tiny insect, creeping between her knees and under her thighs, fascinated. Gilbert felt a powerful revulsion against the great slopes and particularly against the tree—dark, hairy ravines in which he was caught.<sup>95</sup>

It is the combination of fear and pain together with the “dark, hairy ravines” which do not let Lawrence finish *Mr Noon*. Nevertheless, since the narrative style is rather poor—it is not by chance that the

---

<sup>93</sup> Clear references to the Christ figures and their symbolism are in *Twilight in Italy*, particularly in the chapter “The Crucifix Among the Mountains”, which describes the journey of the author and Frieda to Italy, from Munich across the Tyrol. See *Twilight in Italy*, pp. 1-15.

<sup>94</sup> “Over the Hills”, *Mr Noon*, p. 249.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

author often appeals to the “gentle reader”—it is possible to infer that Lawrence is about to change his own ideas while writing the novel: the conception of marriage based on the submission of the woman, which starts springing in his mind, clearly opposes the relationship between Johanna and Gilbert. In 1922, therefore, the author decided not to complete *Mr Noon*.

### iii. *Aaron's Rod*

Lawrence's attempt to make two different realities converge, partly successful in *The Lost Girl*, clearly appears in *Aaron's rod*, published in 1922, and owing a good deal to the Italian journey he was able to make in late 1919. The author, here, chooses as its central theme the relationship between man and woman and the strong conflict of will deep-rooted in the protagonist, Aaron Sisson, who, although he is married and has got children, is inwardly aware that marriage to him is unsatisfactory. He is, therefore, eager to change and suddenly decides to leave his house, wife and children in the hope of encountering the “Other”—represented in this phase by Italy—and achieving the desired renewal.

The book is essentially rooted in the war, but observes a debilitated post-war Europe. Everything is contaminated, from sexual relations down to food and drink; the world is like a shell-shocked soldier unhurt, but wounded somewhere deeper than the brain:

In this officer there was a lightness and an appearance of bright diffidence and humour. But underneath it all was the same as in the common men of all combatant nations: the hot, scared burn of unbearable experience, which did not heal nor cool, and whose irritation was not to be relieved. The experience gradually cooled on the top: but only with a surface crust. The soul did not heal, did not recover.<sup>96</sup>

Lawrence's hatred of the human world which plunged into war in 1914 leads him to explore various possibilities of detaching himself from it. On 18 January 1915, he writes to William Hopkin:

I want to gather together about twenty souls and sail away from this world of war and squalor and found a little colony where there shall be no money but a sort of communism as far as necessaries of life go, and some real decency.<sup>97</sup>

A few days later, the Lawrences move to Viola Meynell's cottage at Greatham. In a letter to her, he thanks Viola for the loan of it and expresses the positive effect that her place has exerted on her:

I feel as I had been afresh there, got a new, sure, separate soul: as a mark in a monastery, or St. John, in the wilderness. Now we must go back into the world to fight. I don't want to, they are so many and they have so many roots.

---

<sup>96</sup> Chap.X, "The War Again", *Aaron's Rod*, ed. by Mara Kalnins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 114.

<sup>97</sup> *Letters*, ii., p. 259.

But we must set about cleaning the face of the earth a bit, or everything will perish.<sup>98</sup>

In effect, Lawrence in this period starts revising his formerly hostile attitude to Christianity:

I have been reading S. Bernard's *Letters*, and I realise that the greatest thing the world has seen, is Christianity, and one must be endlessly thankful for it, and weep that the world has learned the lesson so badly.<sup>99</sup>

In February 1920 he has the chance to clarify his feelings about monasticism by going to visit Maurice Magnus at Monte Cassino, the birthplace of European monasticism. So, looking down from the mountain top to the plain below Lawrence feels himself split between two worlds:

There swarmed the *ferrovieri* like ants. There was democracy, industrialism, socialism, the red flag of the communists and the red, white and green tricolor of the fascisti. That was another world. And how bitter, how barren a world! Barren like the black-cinder track of the railway, with its two steel lines. And here above, sitting with the little stretch of pale, dry thistles around us, our back to a warm rock, we were in the Middle Ages. Both worlds were agony to me. But here, on the mountain top was worst: the past, the poignancy of the not-quite-dead past.<sup>100</sup>

However, he gradually realises that the high sense of sacredness he feels is but an emanation of the spirit of place:

---

<sup>98</sup> Letter of 31th July 1915 , *ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>99</sup> Letter of 16th July 1916 to Catherine Carswell, *ibid.*, p. 633.

<sup>100</sup> Introduction to "Memoirs of the Foreign Legion", in *Phoenix II*, p. 325.



The peaks of those Italian mountains in the sunset, the extinguishing twinkle of the plain away below, as the sun declined and grew yellow; the intensely powerful mediaeval spirit lingering on the wild hill summit, all the wonder of the mediaeval past... all this overcame me so powerfully this afternoon, that I was almost speechless...<sup>101</sup>

So strongly does Monte Cassino affect Lawrence that it helps him to solve the deadlock he had reached after fighting for over two years with *Aaron's Rod*. As he reveals it when she meets the Brewsters in the spring of 1921:

He told us that he was writing *Aaron's Rod*, and began outlining the story... Suddenly he stopped after Aaron had left his wife and home and broken with his past, gravely asking what he should do with him now. We ventured that only two possible courses were left to a man in his straits—either to go to Monte Cassino and repent, or else through the whole cycle of experience... first he had intended sending him to Monte Cassino, but found instead Aaron had to go to the destruction to find his way through from the lowest depths.<sup>102</sup>

The novel, on the whole, gives an intelligible representation of Lawrence in the years between 1917 and 1921, but also brings to light the people he meets, during the composition of the book, on his Italian journey.

The protagonist, Aaron Sisson, is a miner living with his wife and his children in the same place as the young Lawrence. He suddenly walks out on his family and becomes a flautist in the Covent Garden

---

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp. 325-6.

<sup>102</sup> Earl and Achsah Brewster, *D.H.Lawrence: Reminiscences and Correspondence* (London: Secker, 1934), p. 243.

orchestra in London. However, he is not happy with the several acquaintances he makes there. He himself does not really know what has pushed him to such a decision but his desire for freedom:

'Why I left her [his wife]' he said. 'For no particular reason. They're all right without me'...  
'Yes, I did. For no reason—except I wanted to have some free room round me—to loose myself.'<sup>103</sup>

He is invited to a musical party in a village by the sea, and here he meets for the first time an English writer, Rawdon Lilly, who will have a remarkable influence on him.

After a while, Aaron goes back home, but the contrasting relationship with his wife gets more serious as each of them tries to prevail over the other :

The illusion of love was gone for ever. Love was a battle in which each party strove for the mastery of the other's soul.<sup>104</sup>

After a brief sojourn in London, he eventually decides to go to Italy and reach his friend Lilly in search of perfected “singleness”:

He found London got on his nerves. He felt it rubbed him the wrong way... This state of mind was by no means acceptable. Therefore he determined to clear out—to disappear...<sup>105</sup> To be alone, to be oneself, not to be driven or

---

<sup>103</sup> Chap.VII, "The Dark Square Garden", *Aaron's Rod*, p. 66.

<sup>104</sup> Chap.XI, "More Pillar of Salt", *ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>105</sup> Chap.XII, "Novara", *ibid.*, p. 130.

violated into something which is not oneself... That is the only way to final, living unison: through sheer, finished singleness.<sup>106</sup>

His first step is at Novara, where he gets impressed by such a luxurious sense of richness being there and the complete vainness of the people, who are not interested in anything but in money:

the couple of hours in front promising the tedium of small-talk of tedious people who had really nothing to say and no particular originality in saying it... Money! What a curious thing it is! Aaron noticed the deference of all the guests at table: a touch of obsequiousness before the money!<sup>107</sup>

By contrast, Aaron feels deeply affected by the natural beauty of Italy rather than by materialistic things:

He looked out of the window. Through the darkness of trees, the lights of a city below. Italy! The air was cold with snow...a clear blue morning—sky, Alpine, and the watchful, snow-streaked mountain tops bunched in the distance, as if waiting... Aaron looked, and looked again. In the near distance, under the house elm-tree tops were yellowing. He felt himself changing inside his skin.<sup>108</sup>

The majesty of the Alps—“the tyger-like Alps”—surrounding the city lets him think of man as a microcosm if compared to them—the “vastness” of nature against the “littleness” of a human being:

He noticed for the first time the littleness and the momentaneousness of the Italians in the streets... The people seemed little upright figures moving in a certain isolation, like tiny figures on a big stage.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> Chap.XI, "More Pillar of Salt", *ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>107</sup> "Novara", p. 141; p. 136.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>109</sup> Chap.XIII, "Wie es Ihnen Gefällt", *ibid.*, pp. 151-2.

One single day in a different country is enough for Aaron to become absolutely aware that fulfilment equals pure “singleness”:

He realised that he had never intended to yield himself fully to her [his wife Lottie] or to anything... That his very being pivoted on the fact of his isolate self-responsibility, aloneness. His intrinsic and central aloneness was the very centre of his being.<sup>110</sup>

He sets off for Milan, but something has changed within himself and leads him to pay hardly any attention to his surroundings:

There was nothingness. There was just himself, and blank nothingness... he was not moving *towards* anything: he was moving almost violently away from everything. And that was what he wanted.<sup>111</sup>

Everything around him seems to be “empty” and “depressing”:

And there seemed a curious vacancy in the city—something empty and depressing in the great human centre. Not that there was really a lack of people. But the spirit of the town seemed depressed and empty... little groups of dark, aimless-seeming men, a little bit poorer looking—perhaps rather shorter in stature—but very much like in any other town. Yet the feeling of the city was so different from that of London. There seemed a curious emptiness.<sup>112</sup>

During his railway journey to Florence, Aaron has the possibility to get in touch with his Italian fellow-passengers, and feels particularly

---

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>111</sup> Chap.XIV, "XX Settembre", *ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

enthusiastic as they appear so different and far more captivating than British people:

Aaron was impressed and fascinated. He looked with a new interest at the Italians in the carriage with him—for this same boldness and indifference and exposed gesture. And he found it in them too. And again it fascinated him. It seemed so much bigger, as if the walls of life had fallen—Nay, the walls of English life will have to fall.<sup>113</sup>

He especially admires the Italian spontaneity and generosity as opposed to the marked English tightness—although he himself has inherited the typically English attitude of ignoring people and being isolated in their midst:

In England everybody seems held tight and gripped, nothing is left free. Every passenger seems like a parcel holding his string as fast as he can about him, lest one corner of the wrapper should come undone and reveal what is made... But there, in the third class carriage, there was no tight string round every man... They did not seem to care if bits of themselves did show, through the gaps in the wrapping. Aaron winced—but he preferred it to English tightness. He was pleased, he was happy with the Italians. He thought how generous and natural they were.<sup>114</sup>

As soon as Aaron arrives in Florence, a “new self”, longing for life, rises within him:

The magic of Florence at once overcame him...<sup>115</sup> Aaron felt a new self, a new life-urge rising inside himself. Florence seemed to start a new man in him.<sup>116</sup>

---

113 Chap.XV, "A Railway Journey", *ibid.*, p. 199.

114 *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

115 *Ibid.*, p. 206.

116 "Florence", *ibid.* p. 212.

He even shows a predilection for the Italian “uncosiness” rather than for the real English “homeliness”, so expressing aversion for his country:

At home, in England, the bright grate and the ruddy fire, the thick hearth-rug and the man's arm-chair, these had been inevitable. And now he was glad to get away from it all... He preferred the Italian way of no fires, no heating. If the day was cold, he was willing to be cold too. If it was dark, he was willing to be dark. The cosy brightness of a real home—it had stifled him till he felt his lungs would burst. The horrors of real domesticity. No, the Italian brutal way was better.<sup>117</sup>

Again, the landscape and the abundance of vegetation capture him:

It had a flowery effect, the skyline irregular against the morning light... Beyond, towards the sun, glimpse of green, sky-bloomed country: Tuscany... the sun just beginning to come in, and a lovely view on to the river, towards Ponte Vecchio, and at the hills with their pines and villas and verdure opposite.<sup>118</sup>

Walking all day into the countryside around Settignano, a hamlet a few miles from Florence, he establishes a direct communion with the surrounding nature, in particular with the cypress trees:<sup>119</sup>

He sat for long hours among the cypress trees of Tuscany. And never had any trees seemed so like ghosts, like soft, strange, pregnant presences. He lay and watched tall cypresses breathing and communicating...<sup>120</sup>

---

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 209.

<sup>118</sup> "A Railway Journey", *ibid.*, pp. 206-7.

<sup>119</sup> See, in this connection, one of Lawrence's poems, "Cypresses", included in a collection entitled *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, in *Complete Poems*, vol. I, pp. 296-8.

<sup>120</sup> Chap. XIX, "Cleopatra, but not Anthony", *Aaron's Rod*, p. 265.

However, Aaron's experience in Florence offers him also something unpleasant: his flute, called "rod" in the title of the novel, which enables him to survive alone and is, therefore, symbol of his individuality and male creativity, is destroyed on the occasion of an anarchic riot.

He looked at it [the flute] , and his heart stood still. No need to look for the rest... Aaron was quite dumbfounded by the night's event: the loss of his flute. Here was a blow he had not expected.<sup>121</sup>

But his friend Lilly brings him a certain hope for the future by explaining that his salvation will consist in fusing his destiny with that of a superior being—just as women will have to submit to men in order to be themselves:

'And men must submit to the greater soul in a man, for their guidance: and women must submit to the positive power-soul in man, for their being.'<sup>122</sup>

In this context, it might seem that the motif of the fusion between two different cultures has little importance, yet it marks, here, a significant stage: the narrator's voice prevails, and subverts the boundary line between the two worlds, which is neatly perceived in Lawrence's previous works.

---

<sup>121</sup> Chap.XX, "The Broken Rod", *ibid.*, pp. 284-5.

<sup>122</sup> Chap.XX, "Words", *ibid.*, pp. 298-9.

Aaron is blinded by what is presented to him as belonging to the *Other* and, therefore, is not able to discern the process which from the North is extending to the South. In this respect, the narrator's voice appears and warns that even in the magical South a civilisation of masses is gradually developing and spreading throughout a uniform sterility:

Alas, however, the verbal and the ostensible, the accursed mechanical ideal gains day by day over the spontaneous life—dynamic, so that Italy becomes as idea-bound and as automatic as England: just a business proposition... The horrible sameness that was spreading like a disease over Italy from England and the north.<sup>123</sup>

In other words, it seems now that “similarity” between the two polarities instead of “diversity” or endeavour at encounter is the principal motif of Lawrence's quest. The author himself is unable to find the *blood-consciousness* which at the beginning he has found in Italy. Of remarkable importance are the words pronounced in the final pages by the character that might resemble Lawrence himself, Lilly:

I would very much like to try in another continent, among another race. I feel Europe becoming like a cage to me. Europe may be all right in herself. But I find myself chafing. Another year I shall get out. I shall leave Europe. I begin to feel caged.<sup>124</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> Chap.XIII, "Wie es Ihnen Gefällt", *ibid.*, pp. 152-3.

<sup>124</sup> "Words", *ibid.*, p. 291.



#### iv. "Sun" and other short stories

##### iv.i. "Sun"

Lawrence focuses on dualism with considerable efficacy also in his shorter fiction. The reason for this lies essentially in his dialectical state of mind, which considers man and nature in terms of opposite values. Such polarities are in enduring tension and often in permanent conflict in all Laurentian art, and express themselves in different types: passion-marriage, suppressed self-suppressing self, self-destructive identity-healthy identity, and so on. What he stresses by creating his character is, therefore, their frequent fighting with their known self and the suppressed desires of the conscious self. Their inhibition, their failure in love and consequent despair lead them to search for an alien contact (a new country, a new kind of love, etc.). The main dualism emphasized, then, is that between the "passional" and the "intellectual" selves. In this respect, a particularly productive period is that between 1919 and 1925, when Lawrence leaves again for Italy and later for Mexico and New Mexico: beyond the central motif of a man-woman relationship, the impact of a different culture on the protagonist is

often highlighted. His hope now resides only away from England towards the sun-kissed countries.

Clear evidence is found in one of Lawrence's simplest tales, "Sun" (1928). The focal point is a clear chart of the typical Laurentian triad, in which contradictory twin principles are in conflict, with a "third element" uniting them in a dynamic state of equilibrium. Here a "wicked triangle" emerges: two opposite male characters, an English intellectual, Maurice, and an Italian peasant, between whom there is a woman, Juliet.

At table she watched her husband, his grey city face, his fixed, black-grey hair; his very precise table manners, and his extreme moderation in eating and drinking... Below, beyond, on the next podere across the steep little gully, a peasant and his wife were sitting under an almond tree, near the green wheat, eating their midday meal from a little cloth spread on the ground.<sup>125</sup>

What is emphasized here are her contrasting feelings, since she faces her desire for the peasant but accepts her husband's desire for herself:

Her sentiments had fallen like petals. She had seen the flushed blood in the burnt face, and the flame in the southern blue eyes, and the answer in her had been a gush of fire. He would have been a procreative sun-bath to her, and she wanted it. Nevertheless her next child would be Maurice's. The fatal chain of continuity would cause it.<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> "Sun", in *The Complete Short Stories* (London: Heinemann, 1955), vol.II, p. 542. Hereafter *Short Stories*.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 544-5.

Juliet is offered a chance to escape the greyness of New York and the “dark” marriage with Maurice, a proper businessman, through a change of scene to the “sunny” isle of Sicily. Here, under the influence of the sun, she starts to feel her entire being restored and reawakened:

It was not just taking sunbaths... By some mysterious power inside her, she was put into connection with the sun, and the stream flowed of itself, from her womb...The true Juliet was this dark flow from her deep body to the sun... Now she felt inside her quite another sort of power, something greater than herself... Now she was vague, but she had a power beyond herself.<sup>127</sup>

The sun is very much a cosmic phallus, rising each dawn, penetrating the woman's willing self, declining each night. It seems as if Juliet were engaging in a sort of *mythic intercourse* with the sun-god, as she gradually learns to relax and give herself fully to it:

She could feel the sun penetrating even into her bones; nay, farther, even into her emotions and her thoughts. The dark tensions of her emotion began to give way, the cold dark clots of her thoughts began to dissolve.<sup>128</sup>

In this respect, it seems worth pointing out the connection between Lawrence's dualism and Nietzsche's idea of the dialectical processes of thought—the opposing principles of the Apollonian and the Dionysian—lying behind creative art.<sup>129</sup> Identifying the arts of

---

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 535.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 530.

<sup>129</sup> Lawrence was well acquainted with German culture, which has certainly played a significant role in his thinking, especially as regards the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy.

Apollo, lord of "light", with sculpture and epic poetry, and the arts of Dionysus, lord of "darkness", with music, dance and lyric poetry, Nietzsche sets up two opposed cultural traditions.<sup>130</sup> Apollonian forces are at work with "exterior" objects involving, therefore, the "rational" faculty. As a result, the intellectual seeker tends to detach himself from his own self to search for the light of truth in the "outer" world. On the other hand, Dionysian forces are related to "interior" perceptions and, then, make the "intuitive" faculty develop.<sup>131</sup> In this mode, there is a clear tendency to incorporate the outer world into the inner world in search of the "darkness" of truth within the self.<sup>132</sup> A reasonable connection seems to be found in "Sun": the sun-god, strictly associated with Juliet, might be related to Dionysus, the ancient, dark power of blood-consciousness.

---

<sup>130</sup> In his youthful manifesto, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), the philosopher tends to stress the opposing forces of the two Greek divinities, Apollo and Dionysus. See Friedrich Nietzsche's "Die Geburt Der Tragödie", in *Wierke*, I, 19, as quoted in Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology* (New York: Viking Press, 1968), p. 334.

<sup>131</sup> Lawrence's dualism is strictly related to Nietzsche's concept of the dialectical processes of thought denoted by the two opposed classical prototypes of the Apollonian and Dionysian. See, in this connection, James C. Cowan, "D.H. Lawrence's Dualism: the Apollonian, Dionysian Polarity and *The Ladybird*", in *Forms of Modern British Fiction* (Austin & London: University of Texas Press, 1975), especially pp. 77-8.

<sup>132</sup> A similar kind of relation is manifest in one of Lawrence's philosophical writings, "The Crown" (1915). Yet, here, two forces are represented by two beasts, the Dionysian "lion" and the Apollonian "unicorn", between which a "crown" is interpolated, metaphor of eternal and perfect unity in opposition. See, in particular, "The Crown", in *Reflections*, p. 259.

On the whole, the core of Lawrence's poetics, with its craving for a return to pre-industrialized modes of living and the exaltation of the intuitive and emotional sides of man that modern civilization has tried to repress, is neatly expressed in the tale: Italy is seen as a pre-industrialized country, potentially able to retain its classical and pagan values and, therefore, either a good source for a mythical rebirth or a positive alternative way of life.

#### iv.ii. **Other short stories**

Of particular interest seems to be the story "New Eve and Old Adam" which deals with a contrasting relationship between the Frieda-figure Paula and the Lawrence-figure Peter Moest. This opposition is in turn marked by geographical coordinates, since Peter, as a businessman, often moves freely to Italy, while Paula stays in London, each accusing the other of failure to love. An odd misunderstanding makes the events of the story worse: a telegram, inviting to a *rendez-vous*, is addressed to "Moest", someone of the same name staying in the same block of flats. Thinking that it is a message to his wife from a lover, Peter reacts instinctively by convicting her. They both agree to separate for a while, and this is a confession of failure:

They would probably, if they parted in such a crisis, never come together again... He would go away for a month. He could easily make business in Italy.<sup>133</sup>

Before leaving for Milan, he spends one night in a hotel in London, suffocating in his sense of enclosure. He simply has a bath and goes to bed without saying anything since he is alone, but inner conflicting movements appall him. The first movement is in the “light”, symbol of “intellectual consciousness”:

He was trying, with the voluptuous warm water, and the exciting thrill of the shower-bath, to bring back the life into his dazed body... It was instinct that made him want to back. But that, too, was a failure. He went under the shower-spray with his mind occupied by business.<sup>134</sup>

The second one, on the other hand, is in the “dark”, emblem of the “sense awareness”:

As soon as he had turned out the light, and there was nothing left for his mental consciousness to flourish amongst, it dropped, and it was dark inside him as without. It was his blood, and the elemental male in it, that now rose from him.<sup>135</sup>

Once Paula finds out the misunderstanding, they have a brief reconciliation, leading to a love-making, which clearly denotes a

---

<sup>133</sup> "New Eve and Old Adam", *Love Among the Haystacks and Other Essays*, ed. by John Worthen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 168. Hereafter *Other Essays*.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

temporary submission of the mind to the blood, but it does not solve the problem:

Like lovers, they were just deliciously waiting for the night to come up. But there remained in him always the slightly broken feeling which the night before had left.<sup>136</sup>

So the battle goes on: they could never stay together for long because both feel that complete abandonment to the other would destroy the self, and fear that in relinquishing self to the other there could be a loss of power.

The story ends, therefore, with a failure: both of them resort to counter-accusations, in letters written between her in London and him in Milan, which openly declare the irreconcilable positions. On the one hand, Paula asserts that she, the "New Eve", cannot be what Adam called "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh":<sup>137</sup>

'Your idea of your woman is that she is an expansion, no, a rib of yourself, without any existence of her own. That I am a being by myself is more than you can grasp.'<sup>138</sup>

---

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>137</sup> Genesis 2:23.

<sup>138</sup> "New Eve and Old Adam", *Other Essays*, p. 182.

On the other hand, Peter's words express either his despair or simply his point of view:<sup>139</sup>

'For my side, without you, I am done. But you lie to yourself. You *wouldn't* love *me*, and you won't be able to love anybody else—except generally.'<sup>140</sup>

Manifest Italian connections are also found in "Smile" (1928): it is mostly set in Italy, and probably the occasion of writing it is the death of tuberculosis of Lawrence's friend Katherine Mansfield in 1923. The tale consists of brief images depicting frequent glancing out of "life" in the reality of "death" by Matthew, the central character. It is not by chance that the predominant opposing elements are "dark" and "white", implying flashes of "light" set by the author against a "dark" background.

After being informed that Ophelia's condition is critical, Matthew leaves for Italy, and visit her at the convent of the Blue Sisters, where she has chosen to retreat. He feels deeply depressed, as if he were dead himself, and conveys his gloomy inner state to everything surrounding him. Even Italy, therefore, gives him a sense of repugnance:

---

<sup>139</sup> See, in this connection, Chap.9, "Short Stories IV", in Michael Black, *D.H. Lawrence: The Early Fiction* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1986), pp. 242-56.

<sup>140</sup> "New Eve and Old Adam", *Other Essays*, p. 183.



He was in Italy: he looked at the country with faint aversion. Not capable of much feeling any more, he had only a tinge of aversion as he saw the olives and the sea.<sup>141</sup>

As opposed to his “gloom”, and object of the tale's basic conflict, is a fascinating and uncontrollable “smile” he puts up while facing the corpse of Ophelia:

Matthew saw the dead, beautiful composure of his wife's face, and instantly, something leaped like laughter in the depths of him, he gave a little grunt, and an extraordinary smile came over his face.<sup>142</sup>

In effect, the smile, also spreading to the attendant nuns, openly symbolizes his preoccupation with his own gloom and his intention to remove any sentimental memory of Ophelia rather than to revel in his martyrdom.

Neatly completing this image are the repeated portrayals of the nuns' fluttering hands and their voluminous skirts. Again, a couple of symbolic antinomies recurs, with their “white”, soft hands set against their “dark” skirts:

The Mother Superior softly put her white, handsome hand on his arm... Matthew, walking in far-off Hades, still was aware of the soft, fine voluminousness of the women's black skirts.<sup>143</sup>

---

<sup>141</sup> "Smile", *Short Stories*, vol.II, p. 582.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 583.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

Voluptuously aware of that, Matthew yearns to hold in particular the hands of one of them:

And, he was secretly thinking, he wished he could hold both her creamy-dusky hands, that were folded like mating birds, voluptuously.<sup>144</sup>

Nevertheless, he eventually does not succeed in either longing or smiling: he rather represses them getting out of the convent and running away. In the end, he refuses to face Ophelia and, consequently, avoids his own ability for joy and desire, previously expressed through a constant smile:

He made a desperate, moving sweep with his arm, and never was man more utterly smileless.<sup>145</sup>

Finally, it might seem worth citing a satirical tale, “Things” (1928), which highlights the opposition between two different cultures, American and European—Italian included.

The protagonists, Erasmus and Valerie Melville, living in wartime, wander all around the world, from New England to Paris, Italy, New York, the Rocky Mountains, California, Massachusetts,

---

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 585.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 586.

Europe again, and eventually Cleveland, Ohio, in search of freedom. They are idealists, lovers of art and architecture, interested in Buddhism, and longing for an intense life:

Ah! Freedom! To be free to live one's own life! All one wishes to do is to live a full and beautiful life. In Europe, of course, right at the fountain-head of tradition.<sup>146</sup>

They, therefore, leave for Europe, the cradle of tradition, and settle in Paris for some years. But, after a while, living there disappoints them because they consider the French too materialistic:

The endlessly clever *materialism* of the French leaves you cold, in the end, gives a sense of barrenness and incompatibility with true New England depth. So our two idealists felt.<sup>147</sup>

However, it seems to them that human freedom is not achievable without support: through their long period of constant travelling, they are like "vines", always trying to find something strong to grasp.

A 'full and beautiful life' means a tight attachment to *something*... Such is freedom!—a clutching of the right pole. And human beings are all vines. But especially the idealist. He is a vine, and he needs to clutch and climb.<sup>148</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> "Things", in *Short Stories*, vol. III, p. 844.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 845.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

When the war begins, they set off for Italy, which enchants them: they like it very much, since it resembles New England in its pure beauty, and opposes the abhorrent cynical materialism of the French:

They loved Italy. They found it beautiful and more poignant than France. It seemed much nearer to the New England conception of beauty: something pure, and full of sympathy, without the *materialism* and the *cynicism* of the French. The two idealists seemed to breathe their own true air in Italy.<sup>149</sup>

Although the war upsets them, they still have Italy, their “freedom”, “beauty” and now also a child, Peter:

They still had Italy—dear Italy. And they still had freedom, the priceless treasure. And they still had so much 'beauty'... They had one little boy, whom they loved as parents should love their children...<sup>150</sup>

Nevertheless, Europe gradually starts to disappoint the couple. Although they love Italy for its beauty, they realise that is dead, materialistic, lacking soul, a place for mere survivors:

Europe was lovely, but it was dead. Living in Europe, you were living on the past... They [Europeans] were materialistic, they had no *real soul*. They just did not understand the inner urge of the spirit, because the inner urge was dead in them, they were all survivals.<sup>151</sup>

---

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 847.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

Meanwhile, the idealists have their lovely house in Florence, with a nice view on the river Arno, full of beautiful “things” picked up since the first day they landed Europe:

They had made their home here: a home such as you could never make in America. Their watchword had been 'beauty'. They had rented, the last four years, the second floor of an old palazzo on the Arno... The lofty, silent, ancient rooms with windows on the river, with glistening, dark-red floors, and the beautiful furniture.<sup>152</sup>

However, Valerie and Erasmus eventually decide to go back to materialistic America “for the boy's sake”:

'We can't *bear* to leave Europe. But Peter is an American, so he had better look at America while he's young.'<sup>153</sup>

They get to America with several van-loads of “things” because they would never be detached from the “things” they have collected with such passion:

that woebegone débris of Europe: Bologna cupboard, Venice book-shelves, Ravenna bishop's chair, Louis-Quinze side-tables, 'Chartres' curtains, Siena bronze lamps...<sup>154</sup>

The journey ends at Cleveland, where Erasmus gets a job as a professor at University. Their house is wonderfully furnished with

---

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., pp. 847-8.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 849.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 853.

European “things” and admired by all. But if Valerie is really happy with them, Erasmus now realises that he is a materialist, and feels to be in a cage:

A load was off him. He was inside the cage... He was in the cage: but it was safe inside. And she, evidently, was her real self at last. She had got the goods. Yet round his nose was a queer, evil scholastic look of pure scepticism.<sup>155</sup>

In effect, the idealism that the couple have felt in their youth grows into pure scepticism and materialism in their middle ages. The central process of the tale is, then, easily discernible in the beginning and the end, where a clear pattern of opposition is derived: the key words of the opening paragraph are “idealism”, “freedom”, “beauty”,<sup>156</sup> contrasting with those of the closing one, “scepticism”, “caged”, and “lobster and mayonnaise”.<sup>157</sup> In other words, Europe seems to have descended from the “fountain-head of tradition”<sup>158</sup> and beauty to a mere supplier of mayonnaise for American lobsters:

'Europe's the mayonnaise all right, but America supplies the good old lobster—what?'  
'Every time!' she said, with satisfaction.<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 844.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 853.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 844.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 853.

## Chapter IV

# Lawrence's poetry: dualistic views within an Italian context

### i. Lawrence's poetic heritage

The poet who plays the most striking role in the development of Lawrence's thought is undoubtedly Walt Whitman, whom he acknowledges as the first modern poet to develop free verse successfully, and whose poetry he defines:

Without beginning and without end, without any base and pediment, it sweeps past for ever, like a wind that is forever in passage, and unchainable.<sup>1</sup>

To the “mechanicalness” of the metric poetry, Lawrence prefers the “spontaneity” of free verse. His strong desire for naturalness is evident in a letter to Marsh, where he makes a comparison between his poetry and something related to “space” rather than to “earth”:

I think I read my poetry more by length than by stress—as a matter of movements in space than footsteps hitting the earth... I think more of a bird

---

<sup>1</sup> D.H. Lawrence, "Poetry of Present", in *Complete Poems*, vol. I, p. 183.

with broad wings and lapsing through the air, than anything, when I think of metre...<sup>2</sup>

He does not formulate any rule for this new poetic art: vague rhythms and stereotyped expressions characterise some poems, such as “Manifesto” and “The Evangelic Beasts”. These ones, together with other famous poems included in *Look! We Have Come Through!*, “Elysium” and “New Heaven and New Earth”, clearly reflect Whitman's influence on him.

Whitman's is the best expression of Laurentian kind of poetry: unlike traditional poetry, consisting of elegant form, perfect rhythm and symmetry, detailed moments in the past and in the future—the lyrics of Shelley and Keats are Lawrence's examples—, Lawrence searches for the pure, vital flux of life and, consequently, aims at achieving an organic form of poetry, in which nothing is finished.

the poetry of that which is at hand: the immediate present. In the immediate present there is no perfection, no consummation, nothing finished... the living plasm vibrates unspeakably, it inhales the future, it exhales the past, it is the quick of both, and yet it is neither.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Letter of 19 November 1913 to Marsh, in *Letters*, i., p. 242.

<sup>3</sup> “Poetry of Present”, in *Complete Poems*, p. 182.



He expands his rejection of the *static* and the *perfected* to all the forms of nature. He tends to grasp “the moment, the immediate present, the Now”<sup>4</sup> also by looking merely at flowers:

The perfect rose is only running flame, emerging and flowing off, and never in any sense at rest, static, finished. Herein lies its transcendent loveliness... A water-lily heaves herself from the flood, looks round, gleams, and is gone. We have seen the incarnation, the quick of the ever-swirling flood... If you tell me about the lotus, tell me of nothing changeless or eternal... tell me of the incarnate disclosure of the flux, mutation in blossom...<sup>5</sup>

R.P. Blackmur, in one of his essays, “Lawrence and Expressive Form”, launches a forthright attack on Lawrence's poetry by considering it “poetry without a mask”,<sup>6</sup> lacking in “expressive form”, where “mask”, that is, traditional form of poetry, represents a necessary element for the creation of good poetry:

Once material becomes words it is its own best form...<sup>7</sup>

By contrast, Lawrence gives an opposite definition of his own poetical form in a letter to Marsh:

I think, don't you know, that my rhythms fit my mood pretty well, in the verse. And if the mood is out of joint, the rhythm often is. I have always tried to get an emotion out in its own course, without altering it. It needs the finest instinct imaginable, much finer than the skill of the craftsmen. That Japanese

---

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Language as Gesture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p. 288.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 289.

Yoni Noguchi tried it. He doesn't quite bring it off. Often I don't—sometimes I do. Sometimes Whitman is perfect. Remember skilled verse is dead in fifty years...<sup>8</sup>

Likewise, what Lawrence praises in Whitman's poetry is the "instant moment":

the sheer appreciation of the instant moment, life surging itself into utterance at its very well-head. Eternity is only abstraction from the actual present. Infinity is only a great reservoir of recollection, or a reservoir of aspiration... the quivering nimble hour of the present, this is the quick of time. This is the immanence...<sup>9</sup>

And the best expression of it is through "free verse", which does not have any stereotyped law, any fixed time as the "restrictive verse" does:

it is neither star nor pearl, but instantaneous like plasm... It has no satisfying stability... It is the instant; the quick; the very jetting source of all will-be and has-been.<sup>10</sup>

In other words, an inner conflict of "attraction" and "repulsion" towards Whitman is deep-rooted in Lawrence. He praises Whitman's great liberating influence on him, since he not only teaches him to

---

<sup>8</sup> Letter of 18 August 1913 to Marsh, in *Letters*, i., p. 221.

<sup>9</sup> "Poetry of Present", in *Complete Poems*, p. 183.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

listen to the rhythms of a common speech, but also stimulates Lawrence to “talk about” experience rather than “express” them:<sup>11</sup>

Whitman, the great poet, has meant so much to me.  
Whitman, the one man breaking a way ahead. Whitman, the one pioneer. And only Whitman... Ahead of Whitman, nothing. Ahead of all poets, pioneering into the wilderness of unopened life, Whitman.<sup>12</sup>

Also in “Poetry of Present”, he clearly shows to appreciate him:

because his heart beats with the urgent, insurgent Now, which is even upon us all... He is so near the quick.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, he perceives a certain weakness affecting Whitman, as he expresses in *Studies in Classic American Literature*:

This awful Whitman. This post-mortem poet. This poet with the private soul looking out of him all the time...<sup>14</sup>

On the whole, Lawrence could be considered as a *master craftsman*: despite his being familiar with Whitman and, sometimes, his lapsing into banality, he is a poet of great skill and emotional power, a brilliant observer of people, creatures and places. The form of his poetry is as original as the content is extremely varied. Many of

---

<sup>11</sup> Clear manifestations of Lawrence's tendency to orate are "Manifesto", "Elysium", and "New Heaven and New Earth", poems comprised in the volume *Look! We Have Come Through!*

<sup>12</sup> *Studies in Classic American Literature*, p. 162.

<sup>13</sup> "Poetry of Present", in *Complete Poems*, p. 184.

<sup>14</sup> *Studies in Classic American Literature*, p. 157.

Lawrence's poems relate to his private life—the relationships with his mother, his wife Frieda, his friend Miriam. Many others deal with the several journeys the author undertakes: of significant interest is his connection with Italy, particularly evident in those poems belonging to the volume *Birds, Beasts, and Flowers*, published in 1923.

## ii. Dualism in *Look! We Have Come Through*

Of remarkable importance for Lawrence's dualism within the whole Laurentian poetical production seems to be the unrhyming volume *Look! We Have Come Through!*, whose poems essentially reflect his inner and emotional life during his early married years. A basic polarity stands out, which relates to the relationship between a newly-married husband and wife, to a kind of male-female conflict strictly connected to another dual opposition between hate and love:

The conflict of love and hate goes on between the man and the woman, and between these two and the world around them, till it reaches some sort of conclusion, they transcend into some condition of blessedness.<sup>15</sup>

Other polarities, essentially referring to animals, symbols of doctrine, characterise the poems. Animal types appear, for example, in

---

<sup>15</sup> "Argument", in *Complete Poems*, p. 191.

“Manifesto”, which proclaims its full strength in sexual consummation lying beyond all dualisms of love-hate, life-death. The predominant polarity following the basic man-woman relationship is that between the tiger and the deer (lamb):<sup>16</sup>

Every man himself and therefore, a surpassing singleness  
of mankind.  
The blazing tiger will spring upon the deer, undimmed,  
the hen will nestle over her chickens,  
we shall love, we shall hate, but it will like music, sheer utterance...  
We shall not look before and after.  
We shall be now...<sup>17</sup>

It should not be undervalued that in the poem entitled “She Said As Well To Me” the male protagonist rejects the praise and possessiveness of the woman, and wants the respect due to a potentially dangerous animal:

Don't touch me and appreciate me.  
It is an infamy.  
You should think twice before you touched a weasel  
on a fence...  
Nor the adder we saw asleep with her head on her shoulder,  
curled up in the sunshine like a princess...  
And the young bull in the field, with his wrinkled, sad face,  
you are afraid if he rises to his feet,  
Though he is all wistful and pathetic, like a monolith,  
arrested, static.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> As already mentioned in Chap.I, two of Lawrence's previous works, “The Lemon Gardens”, belonging to the travel book *Twilight in Italy* (1916), and the philosophical essay “The Crown” (1915), also concern with the same vision of polarity.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

The figure of the adder will also appear in a subsequent Sicilian poem, "Snake", and seems to be drawn by a real personal experience of the kind, which Lawrence relates in a letter to S.S. Koteliansky:

I saw a most beautiful adder, in the spring, coiled up asleep with her head on her shoulder. She did not hear me till I was very near... then turned and moved slowly and with delicate pride into the bushes. She often comes into my mind again, and I think of her asleep in the sun like a Princess of the fairy world. It is queer, the intimations of other worlds, which one catches.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, other poems from the collection of 1917 deal with the polarity of "light" and "dark" recurring throughout many of Lawrence's works he wrote about Italy.<sup>20</sup> As the author expresses it in "First Morning":

The night was a failure  
but why not -?  
In the darkness  
with the pale dawn seething at the window  
through the black frame  
I could not be free...  
Now in the morning  
As we sit in the sunshine on the seat by the little shrine,  
And look at the mountain-walls,  
Walls of blue shadow  
And see so near at our feet in the meadow  
Myriads of dandelion pappus  
Bubbles ravelled in the dark green grass  
Held still beneath the sunshine...<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Letter of 25th November 1916 to Koteliansky, in *Letters*, iii., p. 486.

<sup>20</sup> "Darkness", strictly related to "light", plays a fundamental role in Laurentian symbolism. This kind of dualism is the kernel of Lawrence's travel book *Twilight in Italy*, and corresponds to two opposing ways of living: the typically Italian life of "senses" and the English life of "intellect", but it also permeates the other two Italian travel writings, *Sea and Sardinia* (1921), and *Etruscan Places* (1932). See, in this respect, J. Michaels-Tonks, *Polarity of North and South*, pp. 159-71.

<sup>21</sup> *Complete Poems*, p. 204.

Further, in “She Looks Back”, dualism reappears:

So then there shone within the jungle darkness  
Of the long, lush under-grass, a glow-worm's sudden  
Green lantern of pure light, a little, intense, fusing triumph  
White and haloed with fire-mist, down in the tangled  
darkness.<sup>22</sup>

Also in the short Imagist poem “Green”, consisting of only two stanzas, one is characterised by this polarity:

The dawn was apple-green,  
The sky was green wine held up in the sun,  
The moon was a golden petal between.<sup>23</sup>

However, of considerable importance seems to be “A Doe at Evening”, which stems from his sojourn in Bavaria:

The place is a little summer house belonging to her [Frieda's] brother in law, which he has lent us for a month or two. It is lonely. The deer feed sometimes in the corner among the flowers... And when I whistle to a hare among the grass, he dances round in wild bewilderment.<sup>24</sup>

Here, the communion between man and nature is perfectly accomplished. Lawrence depicts the doe as a fellow creature with whom he shares common passions:

I looked at her  
and felt her watching;

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 206.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>24</sup> Letter of 23rd April 1913 to A.W. McLeod, in *Letters*, i., p. 543.

I became a strange being...<sup>25</sup>

The remaining stanzas suggest a vague, sexual implication in the relationship between the man and the animal and, finally, animal principles are embodied in the human psyche:

Ah yes, being male, is not my head hard-  
balanced, antlered?  
Are not my haunches light?  
How she not fled on the same wind with me?  
Does not my fear cover fear?<sup>26</sup>

Besides, this poem also highlights a central motif which will take the place of the autobiographical theme and which will characterise *Birds, Beasts, and Flowers*, that is, the praise of a “quivering life” which unites the poet to the natural world. In fact, the first verse follows the narrative tradition, but then the rhythm presses while representing the escaping of the doe. In other words, the movement of the verses moves behind her movements and culminates in her perception as a female, who awakens the sexuality of the man, who, in turn, feels himself transformed into a deer with the aim of joining her.

---

<sup>25</sup> *Complete Poems*, p. 222.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*



### iii. Dualism in *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*

The volume *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, published in 1923, is inspired by Lawrence's second sojourn in Italy. The poems, mostly written in Sicily, but also outside Europe, are full expression of the perception of ultra-human life. With them, Lawrence reaches his poetical maturity since he essentially aims at describing the impenetrable secrets of natural life, and succeeds in creating a complete inter-penetration between man and nature—both animal and vegetal. Lawrence, here, appears to be a *physical* poet: he presents us with a clear awareness of animals, plants and trees, making his poetry intensely visual, tactile and sensual.

Intensely close to nature, he describes man in his connection with “birds, beasts and flowers” as part of the living mystery of the cosmos—it is not by chance that most of his finest verses are characterised by Italian flora and fauna. It is the “flux of life” which particularly affects the poet leading him to hail “the insurgent naked throb of the instant moment”:<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> "Poetry of Present", *ibid.*, p. 185.

There must be mutation, swifter than iridescence, haste, not rest, come-and-go, not fixity, inconclusiveness, immediacy, the quality of life itself, without dénouement or close.<sup>28</sup>

In this respect, it is worth quoting Lawrence's philosophical essay "The Crown", which places a great emphasis on flux, attributable to the influence that Heraclitus exerts on him.<sup>29</sup> Lawrence says that "all is flux" and that "matter is a very slow flux".<sup>30</sup> Consequently, if reality is a dynamic flux, man's thinking can only know or participate in that reality by itself being fluid and dynamic:

The cohesion will break down and utterly cease to be. The atoms will return into the flux of the universe.<sup>31</sup>

However, Lawrence's profound love for nature and, particularly, his desire for a direct communion with it through a connection with Italy, emblem of a pure and natural way of life, is perceivable in several letters he writes from the peninsula, where he shows his deep joy in staying there:

It's a lovely position—among the vines, a little pink house just above a rocky bay of the Mediterranean... And the water is warm and buoyant—it is jolly...

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>29</sup> Both for Lawrence and Heraclitus, fire is the best representation of the real nature of things because it is the most dynamic and volatile element, the most in flux. See, in this connection, Philip Wheelwright, *Heraclitus*. (New York: Athenæum, 1971); D.H. Lawrence's "The Crown", in *Reflections*.

<sup>30</sup> "The Crown", *ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

In the morning one wakes and sees the pines all dark and mixed up with perfect rose of dawn, and all day long the olives shimmer in the sun, and fishing boats and strangle sails... and at evening all the sea is milky gold and scarlet with sundown. It is very pretty.<sup>32</sup>

Of striking efficacy are his detailed natural descriptions, manifest expression of his passion for nature:

Figs are falling with ripeness in the garden. I am trying drying some—you dip them in boiling water. But I am in such a rage that the bright and shiny flies hover so thick about them when they are spread out, that they can't really get enough sun to dry them: always clouded with shadow.<sup>33</sup>

It is, coincidentally, to his uncle-in-law Fritz Krenkow that Lawrence writes one of his earliest letters in praise of Sicily:

I like Sicily—oh so much better than Capri. It is so green and living, with the young wheat under the almond trees and the olives. The almond blossom of Sicily is over now—there are groves and groves of almond trees—but the peach is in blossom... Etna is a lovely mountain—deep hooded with snow—such a beautiful long slope right from the sea. He puffs flame at night, and smoke by day...<sup>34</sup>

Here, as if in celebration of the landscape he falls in love with—its green wheat, olives and almond trees — the author produces between May 1920 and September 1921 the bulk of *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, which last “glow with the hot, rich colours of Sicily”.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Letter of 23rd October 1913 to Lady Cynthia Asquith, in *Letters*, i., p. 233.

<sup>33</sup> Letter of 14th October 1913 to Asquith, *ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>34</sup> Letter of 20th March 1920 to Krenkow, in *Letters*, iii., p. 624.

<sup>35</sup> Harry T. Moore, *The Intelligent Heart: The Story of D.H. Lawrence* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Young, 1954), pp. 264-5.

The first section of the volume is devoted to the description of fruits with a certain emphasis on the vulval features of ripe fruits. All the fruits are described as being female:

in them lies the seed. And so when they break  
and show the seed, then we look into the womb and see its secrets...<sup>36</sup>

The “pomegranate”, for example, is the apple of love to the Arabs, or the “fig” has been considered for long the female fissure. In this respect, it is worth quoting the poem “Pomegranate” which describes the pomegranates blossoming in different parts of Italy:

In Syracuse...  
No doubt you have forgotten the pomegranate-trees in  
flower,  
Oh so red, and such a lot of them.  
Whereas at Venice,  
Abhorrent, green, slippery city...  
Pomegranates like bright green stone,  
And barbed, barbed with a crown...  
Now in Tuscany,  
pomegranates to warm your hands at...<sup>37</sup>

“Figs”, on the other hand, focuses in detail on the association of the fruit with the “female part” as a particular Italian tradition:

The Italians vulgarly say, it stands for the female part;  
The fig fruit:  
The fissure, the yoni,  
The wonderful moist conductivity towards the centre...

---

<sup>36</sup> "Fruits", in *Complete Poems*, p. 277.

<sup>37</sup> "Pomegranates", *ibid.*, p. 278.

Fig, fruit of the female mystery, covert and inward,  
Mediterranean fruit, with your covert nakedness...<sup>38</sup>

A typical evocation of Italy is also represented by "Peace", where Lawrence thinks of Etna again in eruption, its bright trail of lava moving like a royal snake down to the sea, to wipe out an old era, and create a new:

Peace is written on the doorstep  
In lava.  
Brilliant, intolerable lava,  
Brilliant as a powerful burning-glass...  
Naxos thousands of feet below the olive-roots  
And now the olive leaves thousands of feet below  
The lava fire...<sup>39</sup>

However, the core of several of the best poems in *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, which does not correspond to the kernel of the above-said poems, is their definition of the limits of human understanding of and participation in other manifestations of life. Here, *otherness* seems to be the only means of approach to this volume; it is usually established in relation to other inhabitants of the environment: bats, snakes, mosquitoes, fishes, and so on. But even these creatures are largely defined by analogy and contrast with human life, and through the often cheerful attribution to them of human feelings. Direct references to

---

<sup>38</sup> "Figs", *ibid.*, pp. 282-3

<sup>39</sup> "Peace", *ibid.*, p. 293

Italy are discernible in the "flowers" poems. More distinctive is "Almond Blossom": in Sicily, a centre of Greek civilisation, the almond is described to be "in exile, in the iron age".<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, it offers encouragement as its blossom bursts from iron-like branches in January:

Think if it, from the iron fastness  
Suddenly to dare to come out naked, in perfection of  
Blossom, beyond the sword-rust.  
Think, to stand there in full-unfolded nudity, smiling,  
With all the snow-wind and the sun-glare, and the dog-star  
Baying epithalanion.<sup>41</sup>

With "Hibiscus and Salvia Flowers" we encounter another age, another mood: Lawrence is disgusted to see Sicilian bolshevists with flowers of the noble hibiscus and flaming salvia in their Sunday suits.

Sicilian bolshevists  
With hibiscus flowers in the buttonholes of your Sunday suits,  
Come now, speaking of rights, what right have you to this  
Flower?...  
Or Salvia!...  
Flame-flushed, enraged, splendid salvia,  
Cock-crested, crowing your orange scarlet like a tocsin  
Along the Corso all this Sunday morning...<sup>42</sup>

The group of creatures stresses the contrasting relationship between man and beast, another basic kind of dualism. In "The

---

<sup>40</sup> "Almond Blossom", *ibid.*, p. 304

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 314

Mosquito", long and short verses alternate as well as the attacks of the mosquito against the man and the escapes from him:

Queer, how you stalk and prowl the air  
In circles and evasions, enveloping me,  
Ghoul on wings  
Winged victory...  
I hate the way you lurch off sideways into air  
Having read my thoughts against you...  
Can I not overtake you?...  
Am I not mosquito enough to out-mosquito you?<sup>43</sup>

"Bat" is based on a play of "light" and "dark" mingled with the description of a sunset in Tuscany:

At evening, sitting on this terrace,  
When the sun from the west, beyond Pisa, beyond the  
Mountains of Carrera  
Departs...  
When the tired flower of Florence is in gloom beneath the  
Glowing  
Brown hills surrounding...  
a green light enters against stream, flush from the west,  
Against the current of obscure Arno...<sup>44</sup>

Finally, in "Man and Bat" Lawrence describes a harsh fight of a man against a reluctant bat in his attempt of getting it out of his hotel room in Florence into the sunlight:

A bird  
Flying round the room in insane circles...  
I flicked him on,  
Trying to drive him through the window.  
Again he swerved into the window bay  
And I ran forward, to frighten him forth.

---

<sup>43</sup> "Mosquito", *ibid.*, pp. 332-4

<sup>44</sup> "Bat", *ibid.*, p. 340

But he rose, and from a terror worse than me he flew past  
Me  
Back into my room, round, round round in my room...<sup>45</sup>

Flashes of vivid descriptions which highlight the essential nature of the bat frame the poem:

he fell in a corner, palpitating, spent.  
And there, a clot, he squatted and looked at me  
With sticking out, bead-berry eyes, black,  
And improper derisive eyes,  
And shut wings,  
And broken, furry body.<sup>46</sup>

However, it is in "Snake", one of the finest poems of the sequence, that Lawrence comes into his own. It depicts a hot sunny Sicilian day in July with a snake appearing as a "king of the underworld", symbol of the *other* way of life. Dualism is predominant here: the relation between the man and the snake, both aiming at going out in search of water, is at the same time rather ambiguous and contrasting.

A snake came to my water-trough  
On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,  
To drink there.<sup>47</sup>

Another opposition is derived from this one: in contrast with the integrity of the snake, the human being is at odds with himself. On the

---

<sup>45</sup> "Man and Bat", *ibid.*, p. 342; p. 344

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345

<sup>47</sup> "Snake", *ibid.*, p. 349



other hand, instinct makes him feel honoured by the presence of a “king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld”;<sup>48</sup> on the other hand, his education, which leads him to drive away the snake, prevails:

The voice of my education said to me  
He must be killed...  
But I must confess how I liked him  
How glad I was he had come like a guest in quiet, to drink  
At my water-trough...<sup>49</sup>

So the snake convulses in haste and disappears, but finally the poet regrets having missed a chance with one of “the lords of life”—the poet's loss of dignity in throwing the log is a “violation of nature”:<sup>50</sup>

I looked round, I put down my pitcher,  
I picked up a clumsy log  
And threw it at the water-trough with a clatter...  
And immediately I regretted it...  
And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords  
Of life...<sup>51</sup>

In other words, it is a common Sicilian snake, “earth-brown”—dark—, “earth golden”—light—, but also a mythical creature which embodies all the mysterious dark forces of nature which man usually fears and rejects. This is a wonderful description of the snake, which highlights

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 351

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 350

<sup>50</sup> There are evident parallelisms here with Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner": man's sense of regret recalls the ancient mariner's who kills the albatross and has to bless the water snakes surrounding the ship in order to expiate his guilt. See, in this respect, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", in Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads* (London: T. N. Longman, 1798).

<sup>51</sup> "Snake", *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, p. 351

both human and divine attributes deriving from his ability to communicate with the bowels of the earth. As Lawrence himself will express it later:

The spirit of man soothing and seeking and making interchange with the spirits of the snakes. For the snakes are more rudimentary, nearer to the great convulsive powers... The snakes lie nearer to the source of potency, the dark lurking, intense sun at the centre of the earth...<sup>52</sup>

Likewise, there is an incomparable attention to natural detail which is further sign of Lawrence's closeness to nature:

He reached down from a fissure in the earth-wall in the gloom  
And trailed his yellow-brown slackness soft-bellied down,  
over the edge of the stone through...  
He sipped with his straight mouth,  
Softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack long  
body...<sup>53</sup>

A basic statement in *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, and a central document in Lawrence's poetic achievement is represented by the "Tortoise", one long poem divided in six different sections, each of them emphasising the tortoise's human psychology and the common Laurentian dualistic concept. Above all, it appears to be an harmonious combination of natural descriptions, comic characterisation, and a powerful vision of the life force driving the world, which gives the

---

<sup>52</sup> "The Hopi Snake Dance", *Mornings in Mexico*, in *Morning in Mexico and Etruscan Places*, p. 68.

<sup>53</sup> "Snake", *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, p. 351.

poems great effect. The Laurentian eye for natural component is present everywhere:

A tiny, fragile, half-animated bean...<sup>54</sup>

Stepping, wee mite, in his loose trousers...  
On his shell-tender, earth-touching belly...<sup>55</sup>

Father and mother,  
And three little brothers,  
And all rambling aimless, like little perambulating pebbles  
Scattered in the garden...<sup>56</sup>

In "Lui et Elle", "Tortoise Gallantry" and "Tortoise Shout" the sexual component—sex is considered the cornerstone of Laurentian art—prevails. In the first poem the poet particularly stresses man-woman polarity with regard to sex:

Poor darling, biting at her feet  
Running beside her like a dog, biting her earthy, splay  
Feet,  
Nipping her ankles...  
Alas, the spear is through the side of his isolation.  
His adolescence saw him crucified into sex...  
Divided into passionate duality...<sup>57</sup>

Other kinds of dualism are derived:

Reptile mistress,  
Your eye is very dark, very bright,  
And it never softens  
Although you watch...<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup>"Baby Tortoise", *ibid.*, p. 352.

<sup>55</sup>"Tortoise Shell", *ibid.*, p. 355.

<sup>56</sup>"Tortoise Family Connections", *ibid.*, p. 357.

<sup>57</sup>"Lui et Elle", *ibid.*, pp. 360-1.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 359.

Two tortoises,  
She huge, he small...<sup>59</sup>

On the whole, passionate duality of male-female, power-love, light-darkness depicts the essential nature of the Laurentian universe, which consists in the achievement of a single, complete being through right relationship of opposites:

The ponderous, preponderate,  
Inanimate universe;  
And you are slowly moving, pioneer, you alone...<sup>60</sup>

Isolation is his birthright,  
This atom.<sup>61</sup>

Finally, the whole poem explodes into an “orgiastic revelation” in the “Tortoise Shout”, where sex seems to be the only way leading to the condition of wholeness. Through a series of similes, Lawrence links birds, beasts and human being in a chain of relationships based on the common sexual instinct, so creating a complete inter-penetration between man and nature—the scream of a frog, the cry of wild geese, the scream of a rabbit and a nightingale, the howl of a cat, the blorting of a heifer, the sound of a woman in labour, the wail of an infant:

The cross,  
The wheel on which our silence first is broken,

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 361.

<sup>60</sup> "Baby Tortoise", *ibid.*, p. 354.

<sup>61</sup> "Tortoise Family Connections", *ibid.*, p. 357.

Sex, which breaks up our integrity, our single inviolability,  
Our deep silence,  
Tearing a cry from us.<sup>62</sup>

In the entire volume, however, there is one poem in particular which assures continuity to the subsequent series of poems entitled *Last Poems*, published in 1932, both recalling, although indirectly, Italy. In the best lyrics of *Last Poems*, the Mediterranean and its myths are a constant source of inspiration; above all, the Etruscan civilisation and its concept of life lead the poet to face death serenely.

Likewise, in "Cypresses", Lawrence evokes the deceased race with the aim of giving life its meaning:<sup>63</sup>

I invoke the spirits of the lost.  
Those that have not survived, the darkly lost,  
To bring the meaning back into life again...<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, he draws a simile between the Etruscans and the Tuscan cypresses—the latter recalling "the delicate magic of life"<sup>65</sup> which is buried with the former:

Such an aroma of lost human life!...  
Which they [the Etruscans] have taken away  
And wrapt inviolable in soft cypress-trees,

---

<sup>62</sup> "Tortoise Shout", *ibid.*, p. 368.

<sup>63</sup> Significant, in this connection, are some pages from T. Billy's *D. H. Lawrence and the Literature of Travel*, p. 118. The author stresses the particular influence that the Etruscan tombs exert on Lawrence since they give him the stimulus to write a novel—the faded frescoes from the tombs are able to communicate him the sense of touch that then exists among men, the touch that unites and transmits life.

<sup>64</sup> "Cypresses", *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, p. 298.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

According to the poet, only one evil exists, and that is the denial of life; this is the reason why he wishes he could restore the meaning which life holds for the Etruscans, and which is now within the Tuscan cypresses. In fact, the world of the Etruscans seems to him to be really alive, and man a part of the flux of the cosmos into whose mystery he ventures in order to absorb an ever greater vitality. Negative ideas about death are, therefore, put aside: by accepting death as inevitable, the soul leaves with a small ship, a "faith-ark", which promises a new life.

On the whole, Lawrence could resemble an unknown animal with the gift of speech—a creature of a different nature than ours. With an enchanting sixth sense, he explores the world, first revealing wonders, then discovering horrors. He has no use for the intellectual consciousness at all, but it is well enough for him, with his sixth sense which enables him to enter the womb of nature: so he makes us into trees, birds, beasts, fishes in his poetry.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> See, in this respect, John Middleton Murry, "The Poems of D. H. Lawrence", *New Adelphi*, Ns 11 (1928), pp. 165-7.

In other words, what can be easily inferred through the analysis of most of the poems included in the two volumes *Look! We Have Come Through!* and *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* is Lawrence's relationship with nature and, consequently, his boundless love for it. It is, above all, a vivid desire for escaping from the oppressive and limited system of the English mechanized society which leads the author to search for all what is primitive, uncontaminated from civilisation, and which he believes is likely to be found in Italy.

In this respect, it is worth quoting a sequence of other poems, all dating from July and August 1929, called *Nettles*, which are mostly related to the issue of censorship—at that time a number of the copies of the privately printed first edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is seized; some of *Pansies* are dropped and some of his paintings are confiscated. This gives rise to a harsh rejection of his country within Lawrence, that he openly conveys in the volume *Nettles*. It attacks the British public, the government, the police, the magistrate Mr. Mead, the critics, editors of the press, and finally the industrial system for its devitalizing effect on the masses and the restrictions and distortions imposed to them. This last issue is one of the two poles of an opposition

associated with precise spatial coordinates—England and Italy—which constitutes the focal point of Lawrence's literary discourse:

when I see the iron hooked in their faces,  
Their poor, their fearful faces  
Then I scream in my soul, for I know I cannot  
Cut the iron hook out of their faces, that makes the them so  
Drawn...<sup>68</sup>

Oh, over the factory cities there seems to hover a doom  
So dark, so dark, the mind is lost in it.<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> "The People", "Nettles", in *Complete Poems*, p. 586.

<sup>69</sup> "The Factory Cities", *ibid.*



## Conclusion

What does Italy represent to Lawrence?

Above all, it has helped determine his wide intellectual development, extending beyond Great Britain, and, through its Mediterranean landscape, has given him a poetic intuition of history and mythology.

Secondly, the reading and the translation of Italian novels and tales, and the contemplation of artistic and natural beauties, have enriched his poetic language with new images and symbols.

More than that, Italy, with its civilization, traditions and way of thinking, which are so different from those of English society, significantly contributes to worsening his crisis, typical of the modern man who aims at giving a sense of unity to the irreconcilable plurality of the universe. He gets fully involved in a clear contradiction residing in the troubled search for “unity in duality”,<sup>1</sup> already manifest in *Twilight in Italy* and, later, in his poetic vision of Etruscan civilization. It is also the contradiction of the intellectual who seeks refuge in the

---

<sup>1</sup> See, in this respect, “The Crown”, in *Reflections*, in particular the section “The Flux of Corruption”: « It [the flux] is only the perfect meeting, the perfect utter interpenetration into oneness, the kiss, the blow, the two-in-one...», p. 272; “The Reality of Peace”, *ibid.*, pp. 38-9.

“spirit”, although he finds the roots of life in “matter”, or the individual who wants to achieve liberty of being and express his *ego* openly, despite his feeling dominated by instincts and atavistic laws that he cannot escape.

Italy, therefore, has not only enriched Lawrence's quest, but has also contributed to revealing the deep anguish rooted in his human and highly tragic search.

Lawrence's message is unchangeable, essentially based on a basic conflict between nature—instinct and primitivism—and society—reason and modernity.

The way that the author considers the best to communicate his own thought, centred on the deep relationships existing between man and the primitive vital flux and which are denied by history, is myth. According to him, Italy represents the first step towards a mythical rebirth which will involve wider implications leading him to explore further lands. An alternative way of life is easily discernible in Italy, then among the Red Indians of America, and finally in the archaic

world of the Mediterranean, a conception of the present and history which is essentially modernist.<sup>2</sup>

Man's return to a primitive state means to Lawrence to deny radically not only the present, but also history and, consequently, to establish a dimension where the individual, freed from external restraints, can regain a universal mythical mankind. Nature is alive; Lawrence feels that it belongs to him, although it is folded in mystery, and exteriorizes such feelings through the wonderful natural descriptions he makes. Nature, therefore, constitutes the *trait-d'union* among all Laurentian works just as dualism embodies his vision of the world and life.

In effect, it is the idea of polarity which enables Lawrence to grasp the relation between soul and body as a unity.

In the ancient world, the two halves of man's psyche, the upper or "intellectual" mind and the lower or "passional" mind, were in harmony. They subsequently split up and Lawrence's goal was to reunite them. *The Symbolic Meaning* expresses one of the most important statements about his own purposes as an artist-philosopher:

---

<sup>2</sup> For a theoretical and historical analysis of the Modernist world, see M. Bradbury and J. McFarlane, *Modernism 1890-1930* (Sussex: The Harvester Press; New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1978).

The progression of man's conscious understanding is dual. The primary or sensual mind begins with the huge, profound, passional generalities of myth... Parallel to this, the reasoning mind starts from the great cosmic theories of the ancient world, and proceeds... The progress is a progression towards harmony between the two halves of the psyche. The approach is towards a pure unison between religion and science... But the progress of religion is to remove all that is repugnant to reason, and the progress of science is towards a reconciliation with the personal, passional soul. The last steps remain to be taken, and then man can really begin to be free, really to live his whole self, his whole life, in fulness.<sup>3</sup>

The reconciliation of opposites occurs in "pure art, where the sensual mind is harmonious with the ideal mind".<sup>4</sup> Art only can restore the harmony "between the two halves of psyche":

In the highest art, the primary mind expresses itself direct, in direct dynamic pulsating communication. But this expression is harmonious with the outer or cerebral consciousness.<sup>5</sup>

Italian civilization plays a basic role within this dualistic context. According to Lawrence, Italy embodies an ambivalent and opposite meaning: on the one hand, he is convinced that it has enriched his life; on the other hand, he is aware that it is time it was put aside.

Italy has given me back I know not what of myself, but a very, very great deal. She has found for me so much that was lost: like a restored Osiris... Apart from the great discovery backwards, which one must take before one can be whole at all, there is a move forwards.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Armin Arnold, *The Symbolic Meaning* (London: Centaur Press, 1962), pp. 137-8.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> D.H. Lawrence, "To Nuoro", *Sea and Sardinia*, p. 123.

However, the choice of Italy as a promising alternative way of life keeps unchanged in him, although his spirit is constantly opposed by the idea that each single thing belonging to nature is dual.

Not only does Italy, with its characteristic folklore, wonderful art and varied landscape, represent a fundamental guiding line to the development of Lawrence's thought and literary productions. It also signifies an existence suffused with a vital and authentic religiosity, and a way of participating actively in a cosmic life, a way of achieving fulfilment and self-knowledge.

## SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

I list only those works used in the dissertation. Throughout, I have used either Cambridge or Heinemann editions of my main texts, except for *Twilight in Italy, Sea and Sardinia* and *Etruscan Places* where I have used the Penguin one-volume edition, *D.H. Lawrence and Italy*.

*Aaron's Rod*. Ed. Mara Kalnins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

*Apocalypse and the Writings on Revelation*. Ed. Mara Kalnins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

*The Complete Poems of D.H. Lawrence*. Ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts. 2 vols. London: Heinemann, 1964.

*The Complete Short Stories*. 3 vols. London: Heinemann, 1955.

*D.H. Lawrence and Italy: Twilight in Italy, Sea and Sardinia and Etruscan Places*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985.

*Fantasia of the Unconscious*. London: Martin Secker, 1930.

*The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, i. Ed. James T. Boulton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

- The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, ii. Ed. George J. Zytaruk and James T. Boulton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, iii. Ed. James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, iv. Ed. Warren Roberts, James T. Boulton and Elizabeth Mansfield. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, v. Ed. James T. Boulton and Lindeth Vasey. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, vii. Ed. Keith Sagar and James T. Boulton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- The Lost Girl*. Ed. John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Love Among the Haystacks and Other Stories*. Ed. John Worthen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Mornings in Mexico and Etruscan Places*. London: Heinemann, 1965.
- Mr Noon*. Ed. Lindeth Vasey. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

- Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence.* Ed. Edward D. McDonald. London: Heinemann, 1961.
- Phoenix II. Uncollected, Unpublished and Other Prose Works.* Ed. Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore. London: Heinemann, 1968.
- The Rainbow.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976.
- Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine and Other Essays.* Ed. Michael Herbert. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Sketches of Etruscan Places and Other Italian Essays.* Ed. Simonetta De Filippis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Studies in Classic American Literature.* London: Heinemann, 1924.
- Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays.* Ed. Bruce Steele. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.



## Secondary Sources

Fuller, though somewhat outdated, bibliographies can be found in *D.H. Lawrence: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings About Him*. 2 vols. Compiled and Edited by James C. Cowan. De Kalb: Northern Illinois Press, 1982; and Thomas Jackson Rice. *D.H. Lawrence: A Guide to Research*. New York: Garland, 1983.

Alcorn, John. *The Nature Novel from Hardy to Lawrence*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.

Arnold, Armin. *D.H. Lawrence and America*. London: Linden, 1958.

-----*The Symbolic Meaning*. London: Centaur Press, 1962.

Bedient, Calvin Bernard. *Architects of the Self: George Eliot, D.H. Lawrence, and E.M. Forster*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1972.

Black, Michael. *D.H. Lawrence: The Early Fiction*. London: Macmillan Press, 1986.

----- *D.H. Lawrence: The Philosophical Writings*. London: Macmillan Press, 1991.

Blackmur, R.P. *Language as Gesture*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.

Bonadeo, Barbara Bates. "D.H. Lawrence's View of the Italians."

*English Miscellany*, Rome, XXIV (1973-74), 271-97.

Bradbury, Malcolm and McFarlane, James. *Modernism 1890-1930*.

Sussex: The Harvester Press; New Jersey: Humanities Press,  
1978.

Brewster, Earl and Achsah. *D.H. Lawrence: Reminiscences and  
Correspondence*. London: Secker, 1934.

Burnet, John. *Early Greek Philosophy*. Second Edition. London: Adam  
and Charles Black, 1908.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology*. New York:  
Viking Press, 1968.

Carroll, La Von B. "Syzygy: A Study of the Light-Dark Imagery in  
Five of the Novels of D.H. Lawrence." *Proceedings of the  
Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*, XLIV, No.1  
(1967), 139-49.

Cavitch, David. *D.H. Lawrence and the New World*. Oxford: Oxford  
University Press, 1969.

Chambers, Jessie. *D.H. Lawrence. A Personal Record*. Second Edition.  
London: Frank Cass & Co.Ltd, 1965.

- Clark, L.D. *The Minoan Distance: The Symbolism of Travel in D.H. Lawrence*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor and Wordsworth, William. *Lyrical Ballads*. London: T.N. Longman, 1798.
- Corsani, Mary. *D.H. Lawrence e l'Italia*. Milan: Mursia, 1965.
- Cowan, James C. "D.H. Lawrence's Dualism: The Apollonian, Dionysian Polarity and *The Ladybird*." *Forms of Modern British Fiction*. Austin & London: University of Texas Press, 1975, 73-99.
- De Zordo, Ornella. *The Parable of Transition. A Study of D.H. Lawrence on D.H. Lawrence and Modernism*. Pisa: ETS Editrice, 1987.
- Dircks, Rudolf. *Essays of Schopenhauer*. Newcastle: Walter Scott, 1897.
- Eagleton, Mary and Pierce, David. *Attitudes to Class in the English Novel from Walter Scott to David Storey*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1979.
- Ellis, David. "Reading D.H. Lawrence: The Case of *Sea and Sardinia*." *D.H. Lawrence Review*, 10 (1977), 52-63.

- Ellis, David and Mills, Howard. *D.H. Lawrence's Non-Fiction: Art, Thought, and Genre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Forster, E.M. *Camera con vista*. Milan: Mondadori, 1991.
- Gray, Ronald. *The German Tradition in Literature 1871-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.
- Green, Eleanor H. "Lawrence, Schopenhauer, and the Dual Nature of the Universe." *South Atlantic Bulletin* 42 (1977), 84-92.
- Holbrook, David. "Sons & Mothers: D.H. Lawrence & *Mr Noon*." *Encounter* 70:3 (1988), 44-54.
- Holderness, Graham. *D.H. Lawrence. History, Ideology and Fiction*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd; USA and Canada: Humanities Press, 1982.
- Hough, Graham. *The Dark Sun*. London: Duckworth, 1956.
- Huxley, Aldous. "Lawrence in Etruria." *Spectator*, CXLIX (4 November 1932), 629.
- Inniss, Kenneth B. *D.H. Lawrence's Bestiary. A Study of His Use of Animal Trope and Symbol*. The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1971.

- Leavis, F.R. *D.H. Lawrence*. New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd, 1972.
- Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso. *Selected Writings*. Ed. R.W. Flint. London: Secker & Warburg, 1971.
- Michaels-Tonks, Jennifer. *The Polarity of North and South: Germany and Italy in His Prose Works*. Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1976.
- Moore, Harry T. *The Intelligent Heart: The Story of D.H. Lawrence*. New York: Farrar Straus and Young, 1954.
- Murry, John Middleton. "The Poems of D.H. Lawrence." *New Adelphi* ns 11 (1928), 165-7.
- Nardi, Piero. *La vita di D.H. Lawrence*. Milan: Mondadori, 1947.
- Nehls, Edward. *D.H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography*, 3 vols. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957-9.
- Orage, A.R. "Twilight in Mr D.H. Lawrence." *Selected Essays and Critical Writings of A.R. Orage*. Ed. Herbert Read and Denis Saurat. London: Stanley Nott, 1935, 65-7.
- Price, A. Wigham. "D.H. Lawrence and Congregationalism." *Congregational Quarterly*, XXXIV, No. 4 (1956), 322-4.

- Schneider, Daniel. "The Symbolism of the Soul: D.H. Lawrence and Some Others." *D.H. Lawrence Review*, VII (1974), 107-26.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Sämtlike Werke*. Ed. Wolfgang von Löhneysen. Stuttgart-Frankfurt am Main, 1960.
- Squires, Michael and Cushman, Keith. *The Challenge of D.H. Lawrence*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.
- Tracy, Billy T. *D.H. Lawrence and the Literature of Travel*. Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1983.
- Wheelwright, Philip. *Heraclitus*. New York: Athenæum, 1971.
- Yeats, William Butler. *Autobiographies*. London: Macmillan Press, 1955.
- Zoll, Allan R. "Vitalism and the Metaphysics of Love." *D.H. Lawrence Review*; II, No.1 (1978), 1-20.